

ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE
COVER

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
9 DECEMBER 2025



PORT STEPHENS
C O U N C I L

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ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 PLANNING PROPOSAL - 339 TAREAN ROAD,
KARUAH.



APPLICATION FOR A PLANNING PROPOSAL

Amendment to Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 to Rezone No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah to part RU2 Rural Landscape, part R2 Low Density Residential and part C2 Environmental Conservation, in addition to changes to mapping for the minimum lot size, height of buildings and urban release areas.

339 Tarean Road, Karuah

Prepared for: Australia Oracles Pty Ltd

REF: M250152

Date: 25 July 2025

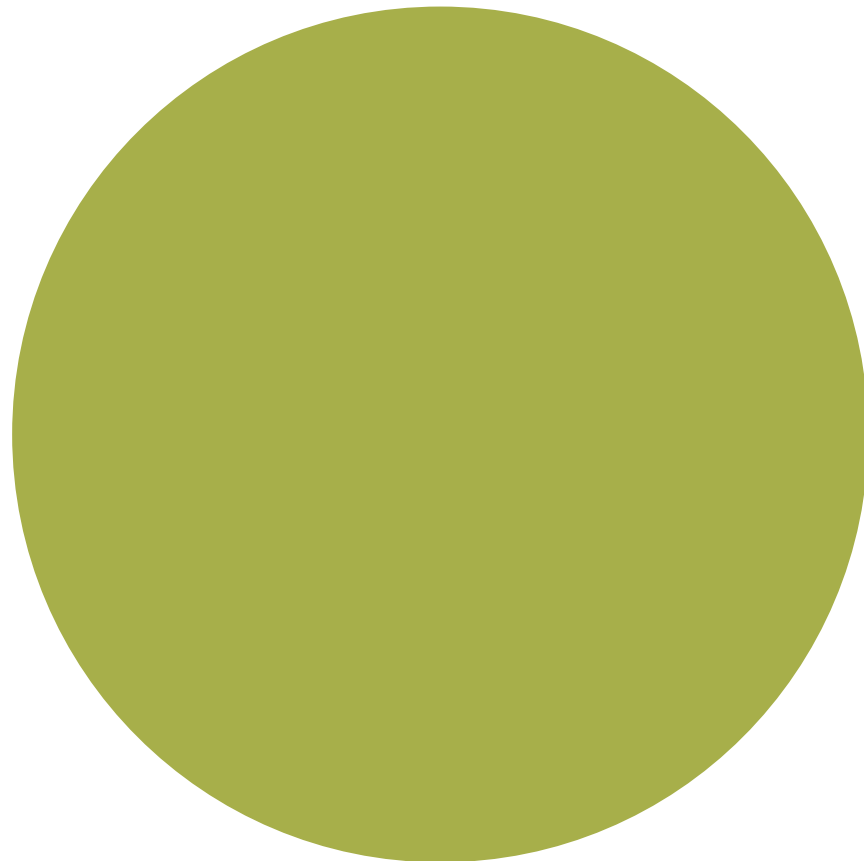


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KARUAH.



APPLICATION FOR A
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Acknowledgement of Country: Planning Ingenuity acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. We recognise First Nations peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

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Executive Summary

This application for a Planning Proposal seeks to amend the provisions of the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 as they apply to No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah ("Site"). Specifically, the Planning Proposal seeks to rezone the Site to part RU2 Rural Landscape, part R2 Low Density Residential and part C2 Environmental Conservation to facilitate the delivery of approximately 157 residential lots, infrastructure and new public connections whilst protecting environmentally sensitive wetland and riparian areas through appropriate conservation zoning. The rezoning of the land will be accompanied by concomitant changes to mapping in relation to minimum lot size, height of buildings and Urban Release Areas (URA) to facilitate future urban development in appropriate locations.

There are compelling planning and environmental reasons to support the rezoning as set out within this Planning Proposal. The rezoning represents a logical and coordinated extension of Karuah to ensure lineal development along Tarean Road whilst providing much-needed housing supply within a defined urban growth boundary. Importantly, the Planning Proposal will also secure the long-term conservation of biodiversity, wetlands and riparian corridors associated with Mustons Gully. The proposal aligns with the strategic direction of the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), the Port Stephens Housing Strategy (2020), and the Karuah Place Plan (2022), as well as the broader objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and North Coast Regional Plan 2041.

The rezoning provides a unique opportunity to unlock the development potential of a large, well-located landholding of approximately 30.2 hectares. The Planning Proposal seeks to deliver:

- A new low density residential neighbourhood within walking distance of Karuah's town centre, consistent with the existing urban character and adjoining R2 zoned land on the southern side of Tarean Road;
- Approximately 15 hectares of land for residential subdivision with the ability to deliver approximately 157 residential lots;
- Approximately 9.8 hectares of land for permanent protection under C2 Environmental Conservation zoning;
- Retention of a rural interface along the north-eastern edge of the site through RU2 zoning (5.4 hectares).

The Planning Proposal demonstrates both strategic and site-specific merit, responding to identified housing demand, aligning with infrastructure servicing strategies, and delivering meaningful environmental outcomes. The vision for the Planning Proposal is to:

- Provide a logical, lineal and sustainable extension of Karuah's urban footprint, supporting the town's growth and vitality;
- Secure permanent protection of sensitive environmental land, including wetlands, biodiversity corridors and riparian areas;
- Deliver a range of residential lot sizes that reflect the existing and desired character of Karuah's R2 zoned land;
- Support local economic growth through increased population and employment opportunities generated during construction and occupation;
- Facilitate the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure capacity.

This Planning Proposal is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports addressing biodiversity, bushfire risk, flooding and stormwater management, site contamination, servicing infrastructure, traffic and transport, and socio-economic impacts. These assessments confirm the site's suitability for the proposed zoning and future development. The proposal provides an important opportunity to deliver new housing supply within the existing town limits in a manner that is well-aligned with local, regional and State planning policy, while achieving enduring environmental benefits through targeted conservation outcomes.



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1. Introduction

This application for a Planning Proposal ('the Proposal') has been prepared on behalf of Australia Oracles Pty Ltd for the land at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah ('the site'). The purpose of this application is to initiate a revised Planning Proposal process to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) to facilitate the future development of the site for residential and environmental conservation purposes.

The Planning Proposal seeks to:

- Amend the zoning maps to provide a part RU2 Rural Landscape, part R2 Low Density Residential and part C2 Environmental Conservation to enable the balanced delivery of future residential development whilst protecting sensitive environmental areas on the Site;
- Amend the minimum lot size map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land from 20Ha to 500sqm;
- Amend the minimum height of buildings map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to provide a 9m height limit; and
- Amend the Urban Release Area (URA) map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to ensure the relevant provisions under Part 6 of PSLEP 2013 are applicable to the site.

This Planning Proposal replaces and supersedes the earlier Planning Proposal submitted in 2019, which sought a similar rezoning outcome but did not proceed to finalisation. That previous Planning Proposal was subject to a Gateway Determination (PP_2019_PORTS_007_00) issued by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in April 2020, which identified the need for further strategic justification, infrastructure servicing strategies, and detailed environmental studies.

In response to those requirements, this current Proposal is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical assessments and is informed by the updated Port Stephens Housing Strategy (2020), Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) and the Karuah Place Plan (2022). The Proposal has also been prepared having regard to the broader strategic objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and the North Coast Regional Plan 2041. It is important to note that since the original Gateway Determination, Council has adopted the Karuah Place Plan which includes a portion of the subject site which clearly demonstrates there is site specific and strategic merit for the Proposal.

The current Proposal addresses all matters raised in the previous Gateway Determination, including updated assessments of infrastructure servicing capacity, flood risk, biodiversity values, and consistency with Council's adopted strategic framework. It also delivers a refined zoning outcome that reflects current expectations for the site's development and environmental protection.

The Planning Proposal has been prepared in accordance with Division 3.4 and Division 3.5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline (August 2023). It explains the intended effect of the proposed amendments to the PSLEP 2013 and sets out the justification for those amendments.

This Proposal demonstrates the site has both strategic and site-specific merit to justify the amendments to PSLEP 2013 and aligns with the relevant considerations under Council's adopted planning framework. The primary intent of this application is to enable the future residential development of the site in accordance with the objectives of the R2 Low Density Residential zone, while securing long-term conservation outcomes through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone to protect key environmental features.

The Planning Proposal is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical studies, as outlined in Table 1 below. These studies confirm the suitability of the land for rezoning and future urban development and ensure that environmental and infrastructure considerations have been fully addressed in accordance with State and local planning policy:



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Table 1 Supporting Documents

Document	Author
Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR)	<i>De Witt Ecology</i>
Biodiversity Credit Report	<i>NSW</i>
Bushfire Assessment	<i>Tattersall Lander</i>
Preliminary Site Investigation (Contamination)	<i>Douglas Partners</i>
Flood Impact and Risk Assessment	<i>Northrop Consulting Engineers</i>
Stormwater Management Report	<i>Tattersall Lander</i>
Sewer Servicing Report	<i>GCA Engineering Solutions</i>
Water Servicing Report	<i>GCA Engineering Solutions</i>
Electrical Servicing Assessment	<i>Power Solutions</i>
Traffic and Transport Assessment	<i>SECA Solutions</i>
Social and Economic Impact Assessment	<i>Macroplan</i>
Preliminary Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment	<i>East Coast Heritage & Archaeology</i>
Servicing Strategy / Preliminary Advice	<i>Hunter Water / Ausgrid (via Tattersall Lander, GCA)</i>

These supporting studies demonstrate the site's suitability for the proposed amendments to the planning controls and provide the necessary evidence to confirm that environmental, servicing, infrastructure, and planning considerations have been appropriately addressed.

This Planning Proposal is structured to include a site and locality analysis, background, existing planning provisions, proposed amendments, justification, project timeline, and conclusion. It demonstrates that the proposed amendments will deliver positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes for Karuah and the wider Port Stephens Local Government Area.

Background

The site at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah has been the subject of a previous Planning Proposal lodged with Port Stephens Council in 2019. That Planning Proposal sought to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) to facilitate the rezoning of the site from RU2 Rural Landscape to R2 Low Density Residential and E2 Environmental Conservation (now C2) to enable the future subdivision of approximately 182 residential lots, together with environmental conservation outcomes.

The 2019 Planning Proposal was considered by Council at its meeting on 10 December 2019, where Council resolved to forward the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for Gateway Determination. A Gateway Determination (PP_2019_PORTS_007_00) was subsequently issued by DPIE, as delegate for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, on 6 April 2020.

The Gateway Determination required the Planning Proposal to be revised to address several matters prior to exhibition and finalisation. These matters included alignment with Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), the need for further strategic justification through either an updated Karuah Growth Strategy or Council's Housing Strategy, confirmation of infrastructure capacity to support growth in Karuah, and further investigations into biodiversity constraints, including the provision of updated ecological assessments and consultation with the Biodiversity Conservation Division. The Gateway Determination required the Planning Proposal to be resubmitted by 31 March 2021.

During this time, Council adopted its Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), its Housing Strategy (2020), and had drafted the Karuah Place Plan (2022), all of which identify the subject site as suitable for future urban development subject to infrastructure capacity and environmental protections being resolved. However, the Planning Proposal was

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not resubmitted within the required timeframe. As a result, the Gateway Determination is considered to have lapsed, and no amendments were made to the Port Stephens LEP 2013 in relation to the site.

This current Planning Proposal effectively supersedes the 2019 proposal and has been prepared to directly respond to the issues raised through the previous Gateway process. It is informed by the adopted strategic planning framework now in place, which clearly identifies the site for future urban purposes. The Proposal is also supported by a comprehensive suite of updated technical studies that address biodiversity, bushfire risk, flooding and stormwater management, site contamination, servicing infrastructure, traffic and transport, and socio-economic impacts.

Importantly, this Proposal secures significant environmental outcomes through the rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares of land to C2 Environmental Conservation, while facilitating a logical and lineal extension of the existing urban area through the rezoning of approximately 15 hectares to R2 Low Density Residential. A portion of the site is also proposed to remain RU2 Rural Landscape (5.4 hectares) to maintain an appropriate interface to the surrounds.

This Proposal has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline (2023). It demonstrates both strategic and site-specific merit and provides for a coordinated and sustainable outcome consistent with Council's adopted strategies and the State Government's broader objectives for the delivery of housing and environmental conservation outcomes within the Hunter Region.

This report is structured into sections addressing the site and locality analysis, background, existing planning provisions, the proposed amendments, justification for the proposal, project timeline and conclusion. This Planning Proposal demonstrates, through detailed evidence, that the proposed rezoning will deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes for Karuah and the broader Port Stephens Local Government Area.



2. Locality and Site Analysis

2.1 THE CONTEXT

2.1.1 Regional Context

The subject site is located within the town of Karuah, approximately 50km north of Newcastle CBD and 185km north of the Sydney CBD. Karuah is situated within the Hunter Region and is identified in the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 as part of the Lower Hunter Urban Area, which is planned to accommodate continued population growth through the delivery of additional housing, infrastructure and employment opportunities.

Karuah is located on the banks of the Karuah River, adjacent to the Pacific Highway (M1 Motorway), providing direct regional connectivity to Newcastle, Port Stephens, the Mid North Coast and Greater Sydney. The town is recognised as a Local Centre within the Port Stephens LGA, providing essential services to the surrounding rural and coastal communities and is positioned to support additional housing supply consistent with regional and local strategic planning frameworks.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 identifies the Hunter Region's role in supporting housing supply, environmental protection, and economic diversification. The Lower Hunter Urban Area, which includes Karuah, is projected to accommodate significant population growth through the delivery of well-located residential land, with Karuah specifically identified for urban expansion in the Port Stephens LSPS (2020) and Karuah Place Plan (2022).

The population of the Hunter Region is projected to grow from approximately 760,000 in 2021 to over 850,000 by 2041, with key growth centres, identified to help accommodate this growth through sustainable and infrastructure-ready land releases.

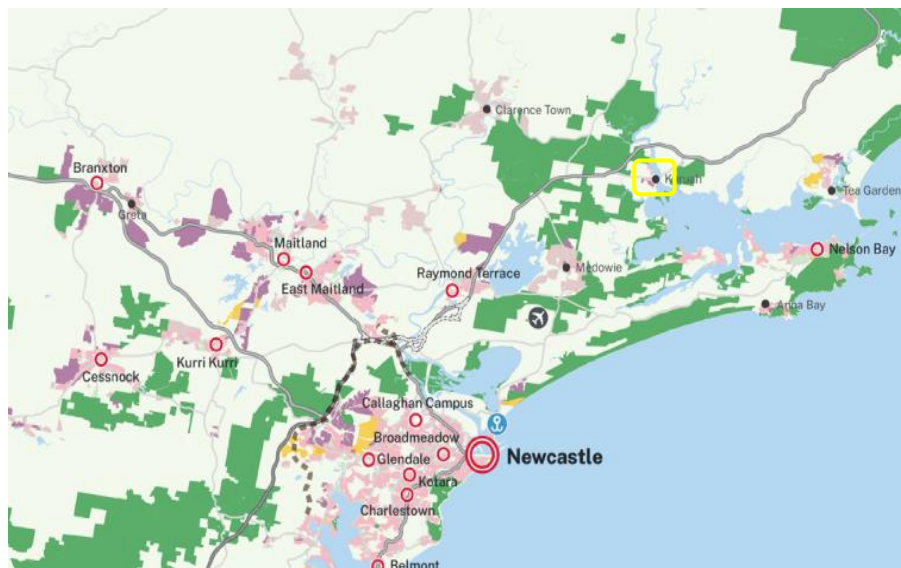


Figure 1 The metropolitan context (approx. site location bounded in yellow)(Source: Hunter Regional Plan 2041)



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The subject site is situated within the town of Karuah, approximately 600 metres northwest of the Karuah town centre and within close proximity to local amenities and services. The site benefits from a strategic location along Tarean Road, the primary local connector between the Pacific Highway (M1 Motorway) and the Karuah town centre, providing convenient access for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Figure 2 below demonstrates the location of the subject site in relation to the Karuah town centre, Tarean Road, the Pacific Highway, and surrounding residential areas..



The subject site is known as No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah and is legally described as Lot 52 in DP 735066. The site has a total area of approximately 30.2 hectares and comprises a large, irregular shaped allotment under single ownership. The site benefits from an extensive frontage to Tarean Road, being the primary local road connecting Karuah to the Pacific Highway (M1 Motorway). Refer to Figure 3 overpage showing the subject site (outlined dashed yellow) and neighbouring development.

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Figure 3 Aerial image of subject site (outlined in dashed yellow) (Source: Near Maps)

The site is currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape under the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013. It adjoins land zoned R2 Low Density Residential to the south and east, forming part of the established urban footprint of Karuah. To the west and north, the site adjoins land that remains predominantly rural in nature, with larger lot holdings and vegetated landscapes.

The site is characterised by a combination of cleared land and natural features, including an area of wetland and riparian vegetation associated with Mustons Gully, which traverses the eastern portion of the site. These areas are identified for permanent environmental protection through the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zoning.

The balance of the site is largely vegetated and has historically been used for low-intensity rural activities, including informal access, stockpiling of materials, and grazing. Some areas of the site contain remnants of rural fencing, old sheds, and evidence of illegal dumping of materials. These activities have been recorded through site inspections and environmental assessments prepared in support of this Planning Proposal.

A context images of the subject site is provided at **Figure 4**.





Figure 4 Subject site as viewed from Tarean Road



Figure 5 View towards the subject site from Mustons Road (behind trees and wetlands in the foreground)



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The topography of the site is generally undulating, falling from west to east towards the wetland corridor associated with Mustons Gully. The land is suitable for development of residential lots with site levels capable of achieving compliance with Council's flood planning and infrastructure servicing requirements (typically to the western portion of the site).

The site contains no items of environmental heritage but is identified as bushfire prone land and is partially flood-affected in relation to the wetland area. These constraints have been addressed through detailed technical studies, as outlined in the supporting documentation.

The site benefits from proximity to existing infrastructure, with connections available for water, sewer, electricity and telecommunications services along the frontage. Servicing strategies confirm that appropriate infrastructure can be extended to support the future residential subdivision of the site.

Contextually, the site forms a logical and lineal extension of the existing Karuah urban area. The adjoining R2 zoned residential land to the south and east is similarly developed for low-density housing. The site's rezoning and subdivision will enable the continuation of this development pattern in a manner that respects the environmental constraints and reinforces Karuah's planned urban growth. To not permit redevelopment on this site will result in a "missing tooth" within the Karuah urban area as it will retain a large pocket of rural land surrounded by low density residential development.

2.3 EXISTING AND DESIRED FUTURE CHARACTER

The subject site is currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape under the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013). The RU2 zone generally applies to land intended for low-scale rural activities and environmental conservation purposes. While the subject site reflects this rural zoning through some areas of cleared paddock and minor ancillary structures, it sits immediately adjacent to established R2 Low Density Residential zoned land to the south and east, which forms part of the urban footprint of Karuah.

The existing character of the locality is one of gradual transition. Karuah, historically a small riverside village known for oyster farming with strong cultural ties to the Worimi People and characterised by a combination of residential, commercial and tourism uses, is now identified as an area for growth within the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) and the Karuah Place Plan (2022). These strategies recognise Karuah's strategic location, its connectivity via the Pacific Highway (M1 Motorway), and its potential to support additional housing and population growth while maintaining its distinctive community character and connection to Country.

The Karuah Place Plan (2022) identifies the site as falling within the 'Stage 1 Urban Investigation Area', earmarked to provide new residential opportunities to help meet the town's forecast housing demand. The Place Plan acknowledges that Karuah's existing supply of residential land is limited and constrained by environmental factors such as flooding and biodiversity values. As detailed in Figure 3 (above) the majority of the residential land has been developed and this site is identified as one of the few areas capable of logical urban expansion due to its proximity to services, infrastructure, and the existing urban area. The Place Plan explicitly supports new housing in this location to reinforce Karuah's role as a local centre with a growing population and an improving range of services and facilities as detailed in Figure 6 below.



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Figure 6 Karuah Place Plan

The desired future character of the site, as expressed through the Karuah Place Plan and Council's broader strategic documents, is for it to transition from rural land to a low-density residential neighbourhood. This future character reflects the vision for Karuah as a walkable, connected, and liveable town that supports its growing community with appropriate housing diversity and infrastructure, while protecting key environmental corridors such as Mustons Gully. The proposed subdivision pattern, comprising residential lots with a minimum area of 500m², aligns with the established urban grain of the adjoining R2 lands and reinforces Karuah's intended future-built form character.

Furthermore, the Place Plan highlights the importance of retaining and enhancing environmental features as part of future urban expansion. The proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zoning over the wetland and riparian corridor within the site will ensure the long-term protection and management of these important natural assets, consistent with the environmental objectives outlined in the Place Plan.

The Planning Proposal will facilitate a coordinated and infrastructure-led approach to urban expansion that is fully aligned with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, the Port Stephens LSPS (2020), the Port Stephens Housing Strategy (2020) and the Karuah Place Plan (2022). These strategies collectively identify Karuah as a town positioned for sustainable growth that enhances its role as a service centre while respecting its environmental, cultural and social values.

In summary, while the site's existing character reflects its current rural zoning, the strategic direction for Karuah is clear. The desired future character for the site is as a natural extension of the existing residential area, contributing to Karuah's ongoing evolution into a well-served, sustainable and connected town.

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2.4 SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT

The subject site is located within a transitional area between the established urban footprint of Karuah and surrounding rural lands. The site adjoins existing R2 Low Density Residential zoned land to the north east/ east and south, which has been progressively developed for detached residential dwellings and forms part of the established Karuah town.

Surrounding development is characterised by single detached dwellings on lots ranging from approximately 500m² to 600m², consistent with the existing R2 zoning. These residential streets provide a direct link to the Karuah town centre and the existing community facilities, including schools, childcare centres, local shops and recreational areas. The residential areas immediately adjoining the site are accessed via a connected local road network which links into Tarean Road, the primary access route for the town. Figure 7 below provide an example of a typical subdivision and dwelling to the south of the site on Tarean Road.



Figure 7 Developments to the south of site as viewed from Tarean Road.

To the west of the site are larger rural residential properties, which are currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape and consist predominantly of cleared land with scattered dwellings and outbuildings. These properties are typically used for low-scale rural activities and provide a landscape buffer between the existing town and the Pacific Highway corridor. Much like the subject site, the Karuah Place Plan outlines that the land to the west is to be rezoned for low density residential development to provide for a logical and lineal expansion of Kurah. It makes sense that the subject site be rezoned prior to the development to the west to maintain a staged transition of urban development. Figure 8 (below) details the current character of the development to the west of the site from Tarean Road.





Figure 8 Looking west towards the adjoining property from Tarean Road.

To the north of the site, land is predominantly vegetated and associated with either rural or environmental conservation areas, drainage corridors and riparian lands connected to the Karuah River and its tributaries. These lands contribute to the environmental character of the locality and provide ecological connectivity throughout the area.

The surrounding urban development of Karuah includes key community infrastructure and services within a 600-metre walking distance of the site, including:

- Karuah town centre with retail, medical and commercial services.
- Karuah Public School, childcare centres and community facilities.
- Public open space and recreational facilities, including parks and riverfront reserves.
- Public transport connections, with existing bus routes servicing Tarean Road and the town centre.

Karuah's urban structure reflects a traditional town layout, focused around Tarean Road as the primary thoroughfare, with residential neighbourhoods extending to the north and east. The proposed development of the subject site will integrate with this pattern, providing a logical and lineal extension of the existing road network and residential areas.

2.5 AMENITY

The subject site is located within walking and cycling distance of the Karuah town centre, which provides access to a range of services, including retail, education, health, community and recreational facilities. The site is well connected via Tarean Road, providing easy access to the Pacific Highway (M1 Motorway) and nearby centres such as Raymond Terrace and Newcastle. The indicative layout will provide for a direct connection with Lionel Morton Oval and Mustons Road further to the east.

The site currently exhibits a rural-residential setting adjacent to established low-density residential areas. Future residential development will achieve high levels of solar access, natural ventilation and outlook, consistent with typical subdivision outcomes for R2 Low Density Residential zoned land.



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The surrounding road network experiences low traffic volumes, and acoustic impacts are not expected to present a constraint to the future use of the site for residential purposes. Amenity considerations such as solar access, acoustic management, privacy and open space provision will be addressed at the future development application stage through detailed subdivision and dwelling design.

The Proposal will support the continuation of the existing residential character of Karuah, providing a high standard of residential amenity for future occupants through appropriate subdivision design and environmental protection measures

2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

The subject site contains areas of significant environmental value, including wetland and riparian corridors associated with Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands along the eastern boundary. These areas provide important biodiversity, drainage and habitat functions and contribute to the broader environmental network of Karuah and the Port Stephens LGA. The sign for Karuah Wetlands as accessed from Mustons Road is provided in Figure 9 below.



Figure 9 The Karuah Wetlands area to the east and within the site as accessed from Mustons Road

The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) confirms that portions of the site contain native vegetation and habitat that warrant protection under relevant planning legislation. This Planning Proposal responds to these findings and seeks to avoid impacts to these environmentally sensitive areas by applying a C2 Environmental Conservation zone to approximately 9.8 hectares of the site. This zoning coupled with the lack of development potential will ensure the permanent environmental protection and management of these sensitive areas.

Additionally, the site is identified under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 as containing land mapped as "coastal wetlands" within the Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforests Area. These



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mapped areas align with the Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands corridor and are afforded statutory protections that restrict development. The proposed C2 zoning reinforces and aligns with these existing State-level protections, ensuring these sensitive environmental assets remain free from future development.

The proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zoning aligns with the objectives of:

- Protecting areas of high biodiversity value;
- Maintaining ecological connectivity;
- Safeguarding riparian corridors and associated wetland functions; and
- Managing land in accordance with best practice environmental principles.

The balance of the site, proposed for R2 Low Density Residential zoning or RU2 Rural Landscape, has been carefully planned to avoid areas of high environmental sensitivity. This ensures that future residential development occurs on land suitable for urban purposes while protecting key environmental assets.

The proposed zoning outcome is consistent with the Karuah Place Plan (2022), which identifies the need to balance urban growth with environmental protection and highlights Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands (including its related corridors) as significant landscape and ecological features.

In addition to biodiversity protection, detailed flood impact assessments and stormwater management strategies prepared in support of this Planning Proposal confirm that future development will incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to protect the function and integrity of the wetland and floodplain areas.

The environmental outcomes of this Planning Proposal deliver long-term public benefits through:

- Permanent conservation of wetlands and riparian land;
- Protection of ecological corridors and habitat values;
- Appropriate urban development confined to less sensitive areas; and
- Compliance with State and local environmental planning objectives, including the Resilience and Hazards SEPP 2021.



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3. Background

3.1 PREVIOUS PLANNING PROPOSAL

The site at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah has been subject to a previous Planning Proposal lodged with Port Stephens Council in 2019. That Planning Proposal sought to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) to facilitate the rezoning of the site from RU2 Rural Landscape to R2 Low Density Residential and E2 Environmental Conservation (now C2 Environmental Conservation) to enable the future subdivision of approximately 182 residential lots together with environmental conservation outcomes.

The 2019 Planning Proposal was considered by Council at its meeting on 10 December 2019, where Council resolved to forward the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for Gateway Determination. A Gateway Determination (PP_2019_PORTS_007_00) was subsequently issued by DPIE, as delegate for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, on 6 April 2020.

The Gateway Determination required the Planning Proposal to be revised to address several matters prior to public exhibition and finalisation. These matters included alignment with Council's adopted strategic planning framework through the Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), further justification through an updated Karuah Growth Strategy or Housing Strategy (2020), confirmation of infrastructure capacity to support growth in Karuah, and detailed investigations into biodiversity constraints, including the preparation of updated ecological assessments and consultation with the Biodiversity Conservation Division.

The Gateway Determination also required the Planning Proposal to be resubmitted by 31 March 2021.

During this time, Council progressed and adopted the Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), Housing Strategy (2020), and draft Karuah Place Plan (2022), all of which identify the subject site as suitable for future urban development, subject to infrastructure capacity and environmental protections being addressed. However, the 2019 Planning Proposal was not resubmitted within the required timeframe and is considered to have lapsed. As a result, no amendments were made to the Port Stephens LEP 2013 in relation to the site.

3.2 CURRENT PLANNING PROPOSAL

This current Planning Proposal effectively supersedes the 2019 proposal and has been prepared to directly respond to the issues identified through the previous Gateway process. A Scoping Report meeting was held with Council where the current Proposal was discussed. The current Proposal is informed by the adopted strategic planning framework now in place, which clearly identifies the site as appropriate for future residential development within the context of Karuah's growth strategy.

The Planning Proposal is supported by a comprehensive suite of updated technical studies addressing:

- Biodiversity and conservation outcomes (BDAR);
- Bushfire risk (Bushfire Assessment Report);
- Flooding and stormwater management (Flood Impact and Risk Assessment, Stormwater Management Report);
- Site contamination (Preliminary Site Investigation);
- Infrastructure servicing (Sewer, Water and Electrical Servicing Reports);
- Traffic and transport (Traffic Impact Assessment);
- Social and economic impacts (Social and Economic Impact Assessment); and



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- Aboriginal cultural heritage (Preliminary Cultural Heritage Assessment).

These studies confirm that the site is suitable for the proposed rezoning to R2 Low Density Residential and C2 Environmental Conservation, with the balance of the site to remain RU2 Rural Landscape as an appropriate interface to the west. The studies also confirm the ability to alter the PSLEP 2013 mapping in relation to minimum lot sizes, height of buildings and Urban Release Areas (URA).

The current Planning Proposal provides a refined zoning outcome when compared to the 2019 Planning Proposal that ensures permanent protection of sensitive environmental land while enabling the logical extension of the Karuah urban area to deliver much-needed housing supply. This approach reflects the objectives of the Karuah Place Plan (2022), the Port Stephens LSPS (2020) and the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, supporting the coordinated and sustainable growth of Karuah.

3.3 2022 SCOPING REPORT

A 2022 Scoping Report for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah was prepared in response to previous Council and Gateway feedback on an earlier Planning Proposal, originally submitted under PP_2019_PORTS_007_00. That earlier proposal sought to rezone the land from RU2 Rural Landscape to R2 Low Density Residential and E2 Environmental Conservation and was supported by a Council resolution on 10 December 2019. However, following the Gateway Determination issued in April 2020, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) and Council raised concerns that the proposal lacked strategic merit, particularly due to its inconsistencies with the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) 2020.

In particular, Council's internal assessment (Attachment 2 of the 2019 Council report) recommended that additional work was needed to demonstrate how the site would:

- Integrate with the existing township of Karuah;
- Provide infrastructure servicing and environmental protection outcomes;
- Align with the broader strategic planning framework, especially as Karuah was not identified as a strategic growth location in the LSPS or the regional plan .

The 2022 Scoping Report was therefore prepared as a response to this earlier feedback. It served the following purposes:

- To demonstrate how a revised Planning Proposal could now align with more recent strategic planning frameworks, including the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, the Port Stephens LSPS (2020), and the Karuah Place Plan (2022);
- To provide updated technical assessments (e.g. biodiversity, flooding, stormwater, contamination, bushfire risk, servicing infrastructure);
- To respond directly to concerns from the DPIE Gateway Determination and Council's planning team regarding the site's strategic and site-specific merit;
- To scope the appropriate scale, zoning configuration (including the introduction of C2 Environmental Conservation), and delivery mechanisms for infrastructure and environmental outcomes.

This scoping process effectively led to the superseding of the previous planning proposal with the current Planning Proposal, which seeks a more balanced outcome by:

- Reducing the area proposed for residential zoning;
- Introducing approximately 9.8 hectares of land to be zoned C2 for permanent environmental protection;
- Retaining an interface to the west that will link in with any future residential zoning in accordance with the Karuah Place Plan;



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- Providing a more detailed and technically supported justification for infrastructure, environmental management, and planning alignment.

A point-by-point response to the Scoping Report is now included in the revised Planning Proposal to transparently address each issue raised during that process. Let me know if you would like that table formatted and integrated into your Planning Proposal.

Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)	
Scoping Report Requirement	Response Summary
STRATEGIC PLANNING - Hunter Regional Plan 2041: Remove references to superseded plans Assess consistency with HRP 2041, including Greater Newcastle and Hinterland chapters. Respond to Priority 1: Prioritise housing within 30 minutes of Williamtown Respond to Priority 6: Support the NSW Koala Strategy Respond to the Hinterland District chapter and relevant priorities Landscape response, walkability, connectivity to town centre, schools, amenities Discussion of how the planning proposal will meet HRP 2041 density targets and housing diversity goals	The updated Planning Proposal omits reference to the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006, replacing them with current alignment to HRP 2041. The proposal acknowledges Karuah's inclusion in the Hinterland District and its location within a 30-minute catchment of Williamtown. It reinforces walkability, public domain outcomes, and integrated land use and transport connections The site is approximately 20 minutes from Williamtown by vehicle, providing a logical location for future residential development close to regional jobs, in line with the priority of increasing housing accessibility near employment hubs. (See Strategic Merit Section). The Planning Proposal zones approximately 9.8 hectares as C2 Environmental Conservation, ensuring permanent protection of riparian areas and eucalypt vegetation associated with Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands, which may form part of local or regional koala habitat corridors. (See Environmental Values section). The proposal supports growth within a defined town footprint, integrates with existing urban character, protects natural features, and enhances connections to the Karuah township, aligning with priorities for managing sustainable growth in Hinterland areas. (See Strategic Justification; Local Context Analysis). The Planning Proposal promotes walkable neighbourhood principles, including proximity to the Karuah town centre, schools, and linkages to Lionel Morten Oval to the east in addition to other surrounding open space. Future subdivision design will reinforce connectivity to local services, aligning with HRP 2041 active transport and placemaking goals. (See Vision and Site Analysis). The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone supports a mix of housing types across approximately 15 hectares. The site enables standard and small lot housing outcomes consistent with strategic objectives for housing diversity and a compact settlement pattern.
STRATEGIC PLANNING - Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036: Respond to Planning Priorities 4,5,6,7, 8,10 and 11 Ensure that the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation boundary responds to LSPS planning priority 7.	The Planning Proposal has addressed the strategic planning matters raised in the Scoping Report Request for Further Information, including the requirements to respond to the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 and the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). Specifically, the Planning Proposal responds to the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036, as detailed in this document. These matters are addressed throughout the Planning Proposal and supported by the accompanying technical documentation.
LOCAL PLANS: Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 (LSPS):	The proposed boundary of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone responds directly to all relevant LSPS Planning Priorities including number 7 – <i>Conserve biodiversity values and corridors</i>, as informed by the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report and site-specific ecological constraints mapping.

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Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)

Respond to Planning Priorities 4,5,6,7, 8,10 and 11 Ensure that the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation boundary responds to LSPS planning priority 7.	These matters are addressed throughout the Planning Proposal and supported by the accompanying technical documentation.
LOCAL PLANS: Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy (LHS): Respond to Planning Priorities 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. • Address Greenfield Housing Criteria in Appendix 1.	The Planning Proposal addresses relevant Planning Priorities of the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy by delivering diverse housing options within an identified growth area, protecting environmental land, and supporting sustainable urban expansion and Greenfield Housing Criteria through detailed technical studies, clear zoning boundaries, servicing strategies, and integration with Karuah's existing urban structure. These matters are addressed throughout the Planning Proposal and supported by the accompanying technical documentation.
LOCAL PLANS: Karuah Place Plan (KPP): The Planning Proposal must include significant justification regarding the proposal's inconsistency with the KPP. This justification could explore demand for residential land in Karuah and the biodiversity constraints of the site.	The Planning Proposal provides detailed justification for the proposed rezoning in the context of the Karuah Place Plan (KPP). While only a portion of the site was identified in the KPP for urban expansion, the proposal responds to demonstrated housing demand in Karuah and the broader Port Stephens LGA. Technical studies support that the proposed R2 zoning is limited to land unconstrained by biodiversity or flood hazards. Approximately 9.8 hectares of environmentally sensitive land is to be set aside for permanent protection through C2 Environmental Conservation zoning, consistent with the KPP's focus on environmental stewardship. The proposal offers a balanced approach that integrates environmental protection with carefully planned urban growth.
LOCAL PLANS: Karuah Growth Strategy and Karuah Local Area Plan: The KLAP and KGS should only be referred to for historical context, rather than as strategic merit for the proposal. The KPP supersedes these documents with regards to Council's adopted position on the site's development potential.	The Planning Proposal acknowledges the Karuah Growth Strategy (KGS) and Karuah Local Area Plan (KLAP) as historic documents that previously informed planning outcomes for the Karuah locality. These documents have not been relied upon to establish strategic merit. Instead, the Planning Proposal responds directly to the Karuah Place Plan (2022), which supersedes the KGS and KLAP and represents Council's current strategic vision for Karuah. As such, the historic documents have been considered only for background context and are not used as justification for the rezoning.
LOCAL PLANS: Development Control Plan: Consideration should be given to the preparation of a site specific DCP, which could address: • Masterplan for the site • access, including connectivity to adjoining development • road hierarchy • Asset Protection Areas • public access to wetland • management of conservation land • housing diversity • identification of infrastructure needed to support the proposal.	Consideration has been given to the preparation of a site-specific Development Control Plan (DCP). However, the Planning Proposal includes a rezoning to Urban Release Area (URA), which triggers the application of Part 6 of the PS LEP 2013. This ensures that the matters raised, including master planning, infrastructure coordination, access and connectivity, road layout, housing diversity, and the protection and management of environmental land are addressed as part of the future development process. Accordingly, the need for a separate site-specific DCP is captured by the URA designation and its statutory framework.
BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION: Biodiversity	The BDAR (by deWitt Ecology July 2025) identifies areas of ecological sensitivity, including the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum-Ironbark Forest and key fauna habitat. The Planning Proposal avoids impacts through the rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares to C2 Environmental Conservation. This land includes high-value

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Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)

Avoidance of impacts to threatened biodiversity in accordance with Section 7.1 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 should be followed. Council recommends further avoidance of impacts to threatened biodiversity in accordance with Section 7.1 of the Biodiversity Assessment Demonstrate survey requirements for each candidate threatened species within the TBDC and relevant guidelines have been met. Provide details of how the retained/avoided land within Lot 52 DP735066 is going to be conserved and managed. Provide assessment in accordance with TBDC and BAM 2020 for the whole KEY ISSUES LODGEMENT REQUIREMENTS Method 2020, including avoidance of impacts to: - o All areas mapped as Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest - o Callistemon linearifolia - o Koala (specifically retention of koala feed trees in accordance with performance criteria c) of the Port Stephens CKPoM "minimise the removal of any individuals of preferred koala food trees, where ever they occur on the site" - o Powerful Owl (or conduct further surveys to determine species presence/absence) - o Masked Owl (or conduct further surveys to determine species presence/absence) - o Glossy Black Cockatoo (or conduct further surveys to determine species presence/absence) - o Southern Myotis The survey for some credit species does not appear to have been undertaken that is consistent with the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) and BAM 2020.	biodiversity areas and riparian corridors, ensuring permanent protection in line with the principles of BAM 2020. The BDAR confirms targeted surveys were conducted in accordance with the TBDC and relevant guidelines for species including Koala, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Powerful Owl, and Masked Owl. It also assessed Southern Myotis habitat suitability. The Koala habitat area is preserved through the C2 zoning, and no Koala feed trees are proposed to be removed within the retained zone, satisfying the performance criteria of the Port Stephens CKPoM. The BDAR outlines survey methodologies and explains that species presence was either confirmed or determined unlikely due to lack of suitable habitat. The entire site was assessed for the relevant survey period and in accordance with the BAM and TBDC protocols. The rezoning of environmentally sensitive parts of the site to C2 Environmental Conservation ensures the long-term conservation of high-value ecological features. While not a formal Biodiversity Stewardship Site, the Planning Proposal commits to ongoing management of this land as a protected environmental corridor that aligns with the regional biodiversity network and floodplain functionality. The BDAR comprehensively addresses the full 30.2 ha subject site, using up-to-date vegetation mapping, fauna habitat assessment, and BAM credit calculations to quantify residual impacts. These informed the environmental outcomes embedded in the rezoning proposal.
BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION: Heritage: Determine whether the site contains items, areas, objects and places of Aboriginal heritage significance. Undertake search on the Aboriginal Heritage and Information Management System (AHIMS).	A due diligence assessment and cultural heritage desktop review were previously undertaken for the subject site. These confirm that the site does not contain any known Aboriginal places or items of significance. An AHIMS search was conducted for the site and surrounding area. The search results confirmed there are no recorded Aboriginal objects or declared Aboriginal Places on the site. The results are included in the Planning Proposal documentation.

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Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)

Complete Heritage Impact Assessment. Demonstrate consistency with Ministerial Direction 3.2 Heritage Conservation	A Heritage Due Diligence Assessment was prepared to support the Planning Proposal. This assessment concluded that the proposal is unlikely to result in harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage, and no further assessment (such as an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR)) is required at this stage. The Planning Proposal is consistent with Ministerial Direction 3.2 as it: – does not propose the rezoning or alteration of heritage-listed land; – does not remove any heritage protection; and – maintains environmental conservation zoning over identified riparian corridors and areas of potential sensitivity. Any future development will be subject to further heritage assessment, if required, at DA stage.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Flooding: The proposed residential zone is not located on flood prone land, however the part of the site • Address Ministerial Direction 4.1 KEY ISSUES LODGEMENT REQUIREMENTS containing the wetland is flood prone. This should be noted in the proposal.	The Planning Proposal has been updated to clarify that the land proposed for R2 Low Density Residential zoning is outside the identified flood-prone area. The flood-prone land associated with the wetland and riparian corridor is proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation to ensure ongoing protection and to prevent future development in these areas. The Flood Impact Assessment confirms that appropriate flood management measures have informed the zoning layout. The flooding constraints for the site have been co-ordinated with the indicative residential layout to minimise any impacts on future residential development.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Stormwater: The development adjoins a sensitive wetland, with • A Stormwater Management Plan must include consideration of impacts of proposal on the wetland. • Demonstrate that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas. • Address Ministerial Direction 9.3 Oyster Aquaculture.	A Stormwater Management Strategy has been prepared and submitted with the Planning Proposal. The strategy addresses the treatment and conveyance of stormwater runoff and confirms that the development can be appropriately managed to avoid adverse impacts on the adjoining Karuah Wetland and downstream receiving environments. No stormwater and sewage infrastructure is proposed within the C2 Environmental Conservation zone. The wetland will be protected through appropriate zoning and the implementation of water quality treatment measures prior to discharge. The proposal is consistent with the objectives of Ministerial Direction 9.3 (Oyster Aquaculture), as it ensures that stormwater runoff from urban areas will be treated to achieve the required water quality outcomes, and will not compromise the viability of downstream Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Coastal Management: Part of the site is mapped within the State Environmental planning Policy (SEPP) (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 Coastal Environment Area. • Respond to SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 to demonstrate the coastal environment area will be maintained. • Address Ministerial Direction 4.2 to demonstrate consistency with the coastal environment area objectives in the Coastal Management Act 2016.	The portion of the site mapped as falling within the Coastal Environment Area under the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 corresponds to land identified for permanent protection under the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zone. No development is proposed within this zone. The Planning Proposal protects the mapped coastal area by excluding it from future development and facilitating its ongoing environmental management. As such, the proposal is consistent with the objectives of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and Ministerial Direction 4.2, as it maintains and enhances coastal environmental values, avoids development in sensitive coastal locations, and supports the objectives of the Coastal Management Act 2016.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Bushfire: The site is identified as bushfire prone land.	A Bushfire Assessment Report has been prepared and accompanies the Planning Proposal. The assessment confirms that the proposed land uses are suitable and can comply with the relevant requirements of Planning for Bushfire Protection (2019). The report recommends appropriate Asset Protection Zones (APZs) and identifies measures for bushfire protection that will be implemented at subdivision and development stages.

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Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)

A Bushfire Assessment Report will be needed to demonstrate consistency with Ministerial Direction 4.3 – Planning for Bushfire Protection.	The Planning Proposal is therefore consistent with Ministerial Direction 4.3 – Planning for Bushfire Protection.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Contamination: • A Preliminary Contamination Report is required to support the proposal. • Address Ministerial Direction 4.3	A Preliminary Site Investigation (Contamination Assessment) has been prepared by Geotechnical & Environmental Specialists (GES) and is included in the supporting documentation. The report concludes that the site is suitable for the proposed residential and environmental conservation zoning, subject to further assessment and management (if required) at the development application stage. The Planning Proposal therefore appropriately responds to Ministerial Direction 4.3 by demonstrating the land is unlikely to present a contamination risk that would prevent its future intended use.
RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS: Acid Sulfate Soils: The site contains Class 2 and 5 acid sulphate soils. Due to proposed C2 zoning, this is likely to be of minor significance.	The Planning Proposal acknowledges the presence of Class 2 and 5 acid sulfate soils as mapped under the Port Stephens LEP 2013. As the affected areas are predominantly proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, the potential for ground disturbance is minimal. Any future development within or near these areas will be subject to detailed site assessment (if required) or an Acid Sulfate Soils Management Plan at the development application stage. This is consistent with Clause 7.1 of the LEP. As such, the risk is considered minor and manageable.
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Traffic and Transport: The proposal has the potential to generate an increase in traffic along the broader classified road network. Provide a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) to support the site-specific merits of the proposal, including traffic analysis, using SIDRA (or a similar traffic model), of the two intersections between the Western Karuah interchange entry ramps and Tarean Road to identify necessary road upgrades, assessments of routes and intersections and predicted traffic flows (and any other required improvements) as a result of increased vehicle traffic. Provide a response to Ministerial Direction 5.1 and demonstrate consistency with Improving Transport Choice – Guidelines for planning and development and The Right Place for Business and Services – Planning Policy	A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) accompanies the Planning Proposal and assesses the likely traffic generation of the proposed development. The TIA includes analysis of local and regional road capacity and operation, including SIDRA modelling of the intersections of Tarean Road and the western interchange ramps of the Pacific Highway. The assessment concludes that the surrounding road network, with appropriate upgrades and traffic management, can accommodate the expected increase in traffic volumes. The proposal is consistent with Ministerial Direction 5.1 – Integrating Land Use and Transport, by promoting land use that supports efficient transport connections and integrates with existing infrastructure. It also aligns with the principles of the "Improving Transport Choice – Guidelines for planning and development" and "The Right Place for Business and Services – Planning Policy" through its walkable proximity to the Karuah town centre, support for active and public transport use, and location within an existing urban fringe area.
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Water and Wastewater: Servicing Hunter Water needs to undertake detailed investigations into the capacity of their assets.	A Preliminary Servicing Strategy accompanies the Planning Proposal and outlines the anticipated provision of water and wastewater services for the development. The report confirms that the site can be feasibly serviced by connection to Hunter Water's existing network, subject to future detailed design and augmentation.

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Table 2 Response to Scoping Report Items (2022)

Lodge a Preliminary Servicing Application via the Hunter Water Self Service Portal. Hunter Water will subsequently provide a letter outlining preliminary servicing advice for the provision of water and sewerage services to the proposed In accordance with the KPP, Council will not accept a Planning Proposal without correspondence from Hunter Water confirming that the land can be serviced.	A Preliminary Servicing Application has been lodged with Hunter Water via the Self Service Portal, and written correspondence confirming the availability of water and wastewater services will be provided upon receipt. The Planning Proposal acknowledges that final acceptance by Council is subject to this correspondence and will ensure it is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Karuah Place Plan (KPP)
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Services and infrastructure: The Planning Proposal must demonstrate that services and infrastructure are available to meet the demands arising from the proposal.	The Planning Proposal is supported by an updated Rezoning Servicing Strategy, which demonstrates that the subject site can be adequately serviced by existing and planned infrastructure. The strategy addresses potable water, wastewater, electricity, telecommunications, and stormwater drainage. No critical constraints were identified that would preclude development of the site for urban purposes. The servicing strategy confirms that upgrades, where required, can be accommodated within the future development application process. The strategy also aligns with the broader infrastructure objectives of the Karuah Place Plan and Hunter Regional Plan 2041.
INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT: Social and Economic Impact/Benefit: Provide an estimate of the number of jobs and housing growth the proposal will achieve. Consider any impacts on social infrastructure and open space, including mitigation measures. Identify proposed public benefits.	The Planning Proposal will facilitate the development of approximately 157 residential lots, delivering much-needed housing supply to support population growth within the Karuah township. The future development will generate construction-related employment and ongoing local economic activity associated with population uplift. The Economic Impact Statement submitted with the Planning Proposal estimates up to 61 direct jobs during construction and 48 ongoing jobs through increased demand for goods and services. Social infrastructure and access to open space have been considered through the proposed C2 zoning, which protects approximately 9.8 hectares of environmentally sensitive land and provides opportunities for passive recreation, access to wetlands, and biodiversity conservation. Public benefits include the provision of a new residential neighbourhood within walking distance of Karuah town centre, enhanced accessibility to Lionel Morton Oval, improved housing choice, and enhanced environmental protection through permanent conservation zoning.

This section provides a detailed response to the Request for Further Information (RFI) issued following the submission of the Scoping Report for the Planning Proposal at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah. The feedback outlined in the RFI has been reviewed in the context of updated technical documentation and revised planning justification submitted as part of this Planning Proposal.

The current Planning Proposal now directly addresses the strategic planning context, environmental constraints, infrastructure servicing, and site-specific considerations raised by Council and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. This includes a clear response to the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036, Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement, and the Karuah Place Plan. It also incorporates updated information on biodiversity impacts and offsetting, infrastructure servicing, traffic generation, flooding, stormwater management, and bushfire risk.

This Planning Proposal now provides a more robust and strategically justified rezoning application and is consistent with the updated strategic planning framework for the Port Stephens LGA and the Hunter region.

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4. Existing Planning Provisions

4.1 PORT STEPHENS LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2013 (PSLEP 2013)

The current planning controls that apply to the site under PSLEP 2013 are summarised as follows:

Table 3 Summary of Current Planning Controls		
Control	Existing Requirement	Figure
Zoning	RU2 Rural Landscape	10
Clause 4.1 – Minimum Lot size	20Ha	11
Clause 4.3 - Height of Buildings	No Maximum Height	12
Clause 5.11 – Bush fire hazard reduction	Subject Site is mapped as Bushfire prone.	13
Clause 5.21 - Flood Planning	Portion of the site identified as flood prone land	14
Clause 7.1 – Acid Sulfate Soils	Subject site is mapped as Class 2 and Class 5 Acid Sulfate Soils	15
Clause 7.9 - Wetlands	Subject site contains wetlands	16

The subject site is not identified as a heritage item, nor is it located within a Heritage Conservation Area. The site is also not affected by any active frontage requirements under the PSLEP 2-13.

Portions of the site adjacent to Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands are identified as flood prone land and subject to the requirements of Clause 5.21 Flood Planning. These areas are proposed to be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation to ensure long-term protection from future development.

There are no maximum height of buildings or floor space ratio controls applicable to land zoned RU2 Rural Landscape under the PSLEP 2013. Similarly, the R2 Low Density Residential zone proposed by this Planning Proposal does not include an FSR control under the LEP. The 9m building height control that applies to adjoining R2 land will also apply to the proposed R2 area, ensuring consistency with existing development patterns.

4.1.1 Existing Zoning

The zoning table for the RU2– Rural Landscape Zone states the following:

Zone RU2 Rural Landscape

1 Objectives of zone

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To maintain the rural landscape character of the land.
- To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture.
- To facilitate a variety of tourist and visitor-orientated land uses that complement and promote a stronger rural sector appropriate for the area.

2 Permitted without consent

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Extensive agriculture; Home occupations; Intensive plant agriculture

3 Permitted with consent

Agriculture; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Aquaculture; Artisan food and drink industries; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Camping grounds; Cellar door premises; Cemeteries; Centre-based child care facilities; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Community facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Eco-tourist facilities; Environmental facilities; Environmental protection works; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Flood mitigation works; Forestry; Function centres; Garden centres; Group homes; Helipads; High technology industries; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Home industries; Information and education facilities; Jetties; Landscaping material supplies; Plant nurseries; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Research stations; Respite day care centres; Restaurants or cafes; Roads; Roadside stalls; Rural industries; Rural supplies; Secondary dwellings; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Turf farming; Veterinary hospitals; Water recreation structures; Water supply systems

4 Prohibited

Backpackers' accommodation; Hotel or motel accommodation; Serviced apartments; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 3

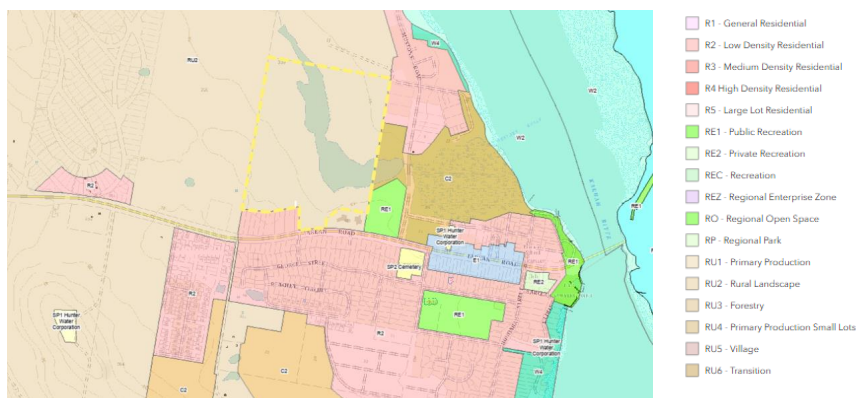


Figure 10 Extract from PSLEP 2013 Land Zoning Map (site edged in yellow)

4.1.2 Current Development Standards

The current development standards are detailed in the following maps:

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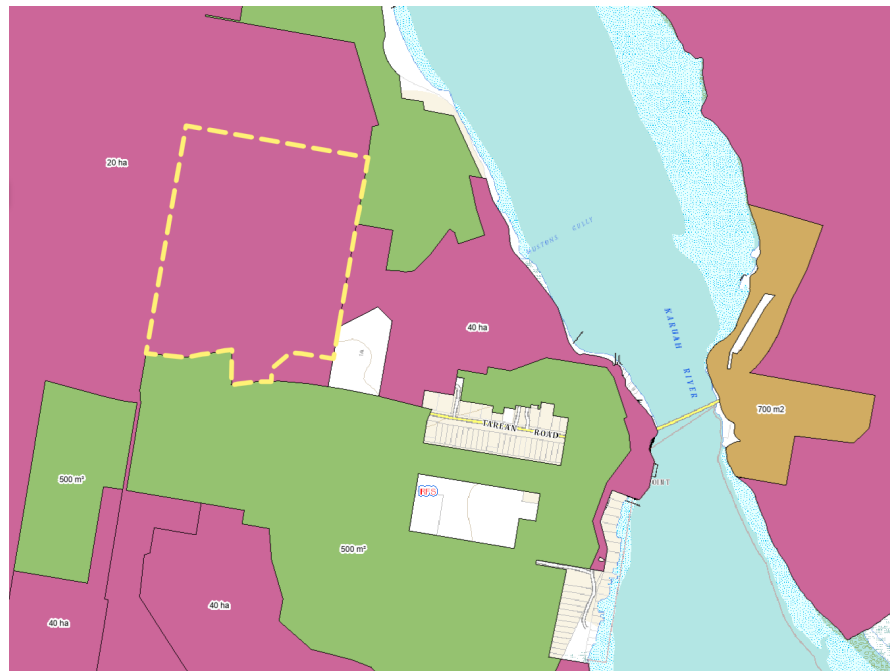


Figure 11 Extract from PSLEP 2013 Lot Size Map (site edged in yellow)

Per the above, a minimum lot size of 20Ha currently applies to the subject site.



Figure 12 Extract from PSLEP 2013 Height of Buildings Map 004 (site edged in red)

Per the above, no maximum height of buildings applies to the subject site.

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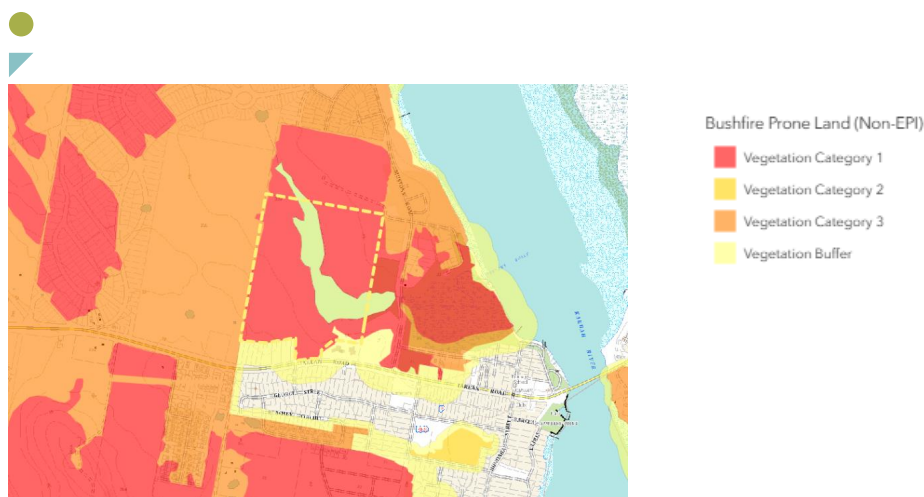


Figure 13 Extract from PSLEP 2022 Bushfire Map (site edged in yellow)

The subject site is not within a heritage conservation area or identified as a heritage item.

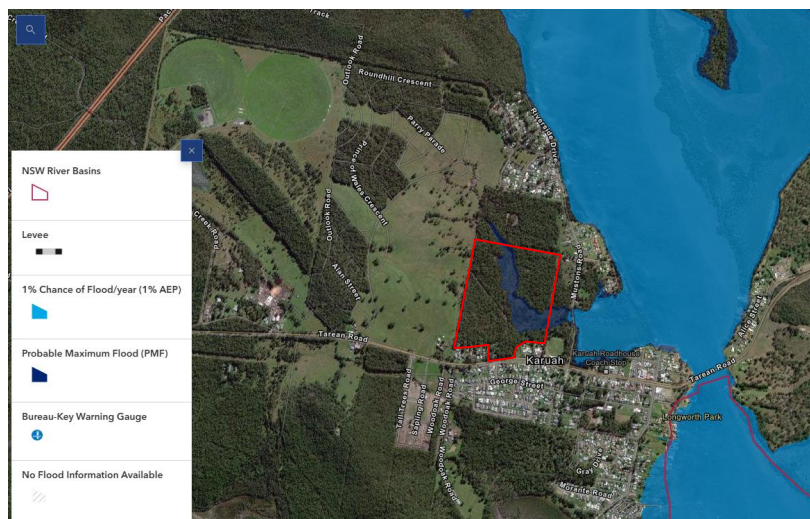


Figure 14 Extract from SES local Flood Insights: Karuah and Myall Rivers (site edged in red)

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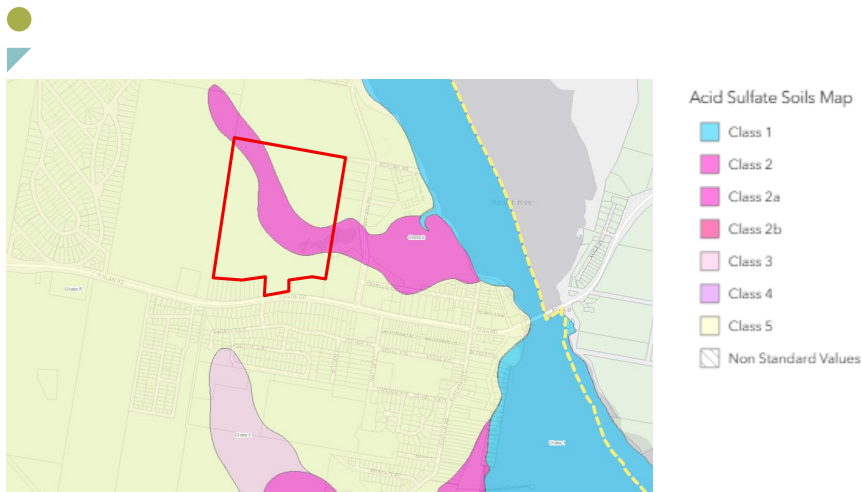


Figure 15 Extract from PSLEP 2013 Acid Sulfate Map (site edged in red)

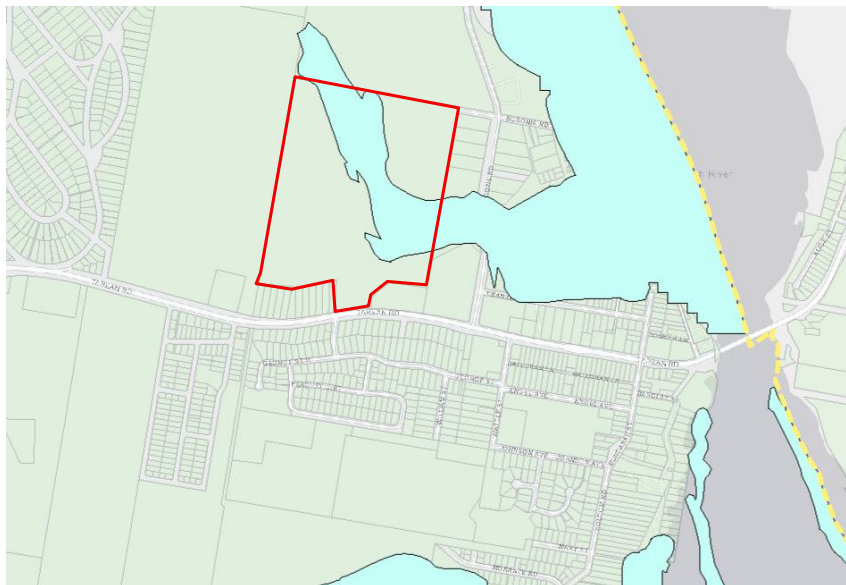


Figure 16 Extract from PSLEP 2013 Wetlands Map (site edged in red)

4.2 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (RESILIENCE AND HAZARDS)

Portions of the subject site are identified on the Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforests Area Map under Chapter 2, Part 2.7 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Resilience and Hazards SEPP). These mapped areas correspond to the Mustons Gully riparian corridor and associated Karuah Wetland systems located within the eastern portion of the site.

The Resilience and Hazards SEPP affords statutory protection to these areas, restricting development within the coastal wetlands and their proximity areas without appropriate environmental assessment under Clause 2.7(4) of the

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SEPP. These controls apply regardless of local zoning and are intended to protect the environmental and hydrological functions of sensitive wetland environments.

This Planning Proposal responds to these existing protections through the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zoning of the areas mapped as coastal wetlands. The proposed C2 zoning avoids and reinforces the environmental protections provided under the Resilience and Hazards SEPP by:

- Excluding these areas from urban development;
- Ensuring the long-term protection and management of wetlands and riparian corridors;
- Maintaining the ecological and floodplain functions of these sensitive lands.

Part of the site mapped as proximity area for coastal wetlands will be located in the R2 zoned land. Cl2.8 of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP permits development with consent in this zone provided the proposal will not impact on the hydrological or ecological integrity of the wetlands. This will be considered in a future DA however the Stormwater Management Report prepared by Tattersall Lander demonstrates that the proposal is capable of compliance with the provisions of the SEPP.

The wetlands mapping identified under the Resilience and Hazards SEPP has also informed the preparation of the supporting Bushfire Risk Assessment (*Tattersall Lander, June 2025*) and Flood Impact and Risk Assessment (*Northrop, July 2025*), ensuring consistency between environmental protection, bushfire management and flood hazard mitigation.

The proposed rezoning is therefore consistent with the objectives and mapping of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP 2021 and provides a land use planning response that aligns with State policy for the protection of environmental assets in coastal environments.

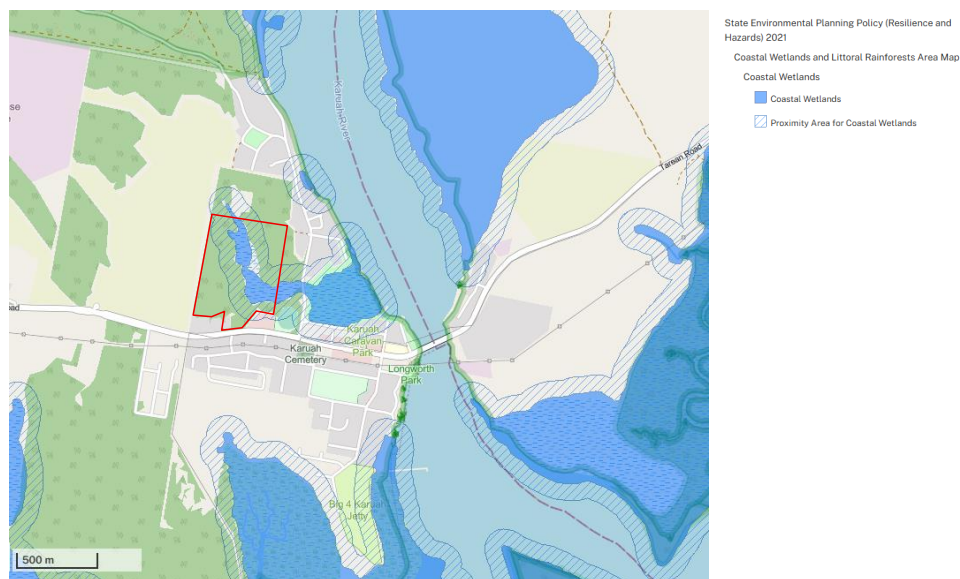


Figure 17 SEPP Resilience and Hazards 2021 Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforests Area Map (Site outlined in red)

Other than the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021, there are no other State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) that are directly relevant to the consideration of this Planning Proposal. While other SEPPs apply on a state-wide basis these instruments do not have any specific provisions that materially affect the Planning Proposal at this stage. Matters arising under these SEPPs, where applicable, will be addressed at the future Development Application stage.

ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 PLANNING PROPOSAL - 339 TAREAN ROAD, KARUAH.**4.3 PORT STEPHENS DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN 2014 (PSDCP 2014)**

The provisions of the Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014 (PSDCP 2014) are applicable to the subject site. The DCP provides general controls relating to residential subdivision design, bushfire protection, flooding, stormwater management, biodiversity protection, and site-responsive planning that will guide future detailed design at the Development Application stage.

This Planning Proposal does not seek to amend the PSDCP 2014 or introduce any site-specific DCP controls at this stage. Rather, the provisions of Part 6 – Urban Release Areas under PSLEP 2013 will apply to the subject site which necessitate the provision of a site specific DCP prior to development consent of a future residential subdivision.

Future development, including subdivision and the establishment of residential lots, will be required to comply with the relevant provisions of the PSDCP 2014, including:

- Section B – General Provisions;
- Section C – Development Types; and
- Section D2 – Karuah.

The proposal provides sufficient strategic justification for the intended zoning outcomes through the supporting technical reports and concept plans. Detailed subdivision design and built form outcomes will be resolved through the DA process in accordance with the DCP.

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5. The Proposal

5.1.1 Description

This Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) as it applies to No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah (Lot 52 DP 735066). Specifically, the Proposal seeks to amend the PSLEP 2013 as follows:

- Amend the zoning maps to provide a part RU2 Rural Landscape, part R2 Low Density Residential and part C2 Environmental Conservation to enable the balanced delivery of future residential development whilst protecting sensitive environmental areas on the Site (Figure 18);
- Amend the minimum lot size map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land from 20Ha to 500sqm (Figure 19);
- Amend the minimum height of buildings map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to provide a 9m height limit (Figure 20); and
- Amend the Urban Release Area (URA) map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to ensure the relevant provisions under Part 6 of PSLEP 2013 are applicable to the site (Figure 21).

The proposed R2 zoning will enable future subdivision in a manner consistent with the surrounding urban area, delivering a range of residential lots with a minimum size of 500m², aligning with the prevailing character and planning controls in Karuah. The indicative subdivision layout supports a logical and lineal extension of the existing road network and provides opportunities for internal connectivity and linkages to open space and future residential subdivision to the west consistent with the Karuah Place Plan

The C2 Environmental Conservation zoning secures long-term environmental protection over significant wetlands and riparian corridors within the site. These areas will be protected in perpetuity and excluded from future development, consistent with the outcomes identified in the supporting Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) and flood management studies.

The proposed zoning outcomes align with the adopted Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), Housing Strategy (2020), and Karuah Place Plan (2022), all of which identify the site as suitable for future residential development, subject to environmental protections being secured and infrastructure capacity being confirmed.

The intended future development will deliver:

- A low-density residential subdivision providing additional housing supply for Karuah in accordance with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041;
- Enhanced environmental outcomes through permanent zoning protection of wetlands and ecological corridors;
- Infrastructure-led growth supported by water, sewer, stormwater and electricity services, as confirmed through detailed servicing reports.

A summary of the draft controls are as follows:

Table 4 Proposed Mapping Amendments	
Current Zoning (PSLEP 2013)	Proposed Zoning (PSLEP 2013)
RU2 Rural Landscape	R2 Low Density Residential (approx. 15ha)
RU2 Rural Landscape	C2 Environmental Conservation (approx. 9.8ha)

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Table 4 Proposed Mapping Amendments

RU2 Rural Landscape	RU2 Rural Landscape (approx. 5.4ha)
Current Minimum Lot Size (PSLEP 2013)	Proposed Minimum Lot Size (PSLEP 2013)
20Ha	500sqm
Current Height of Building (PSLEP 2013)	Proposed Height of Building PSLEP 2013)
No height	9m for R2 land no height for the balance
Current Urban Release Areas (PSLEP 2013)	Proposed Urban Release Areas (PSLEP 2013)
Not mapped	R2 land mapped only

The proposed amendments to the PSLEP 2013 maps are illustrated below.

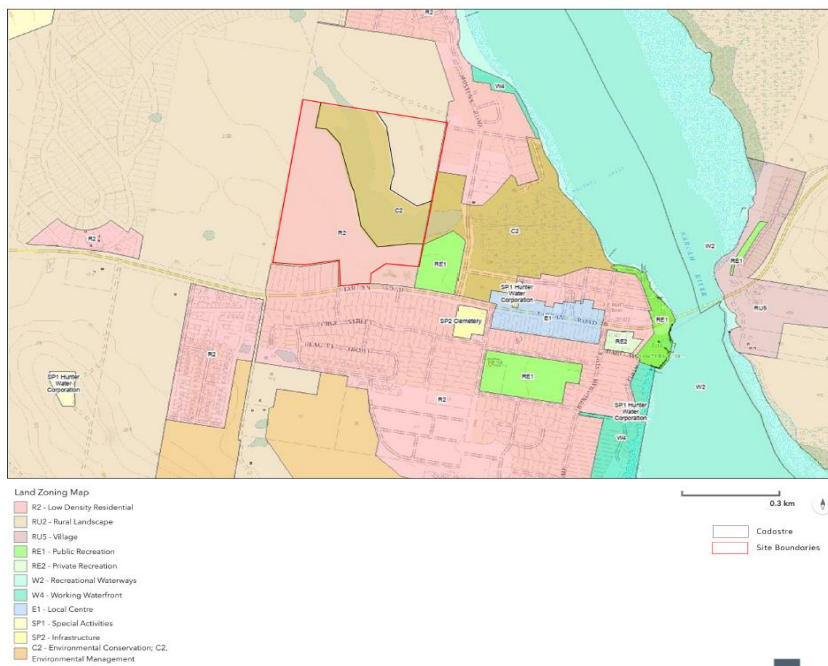


Figure 18 Proposed Zoning Map

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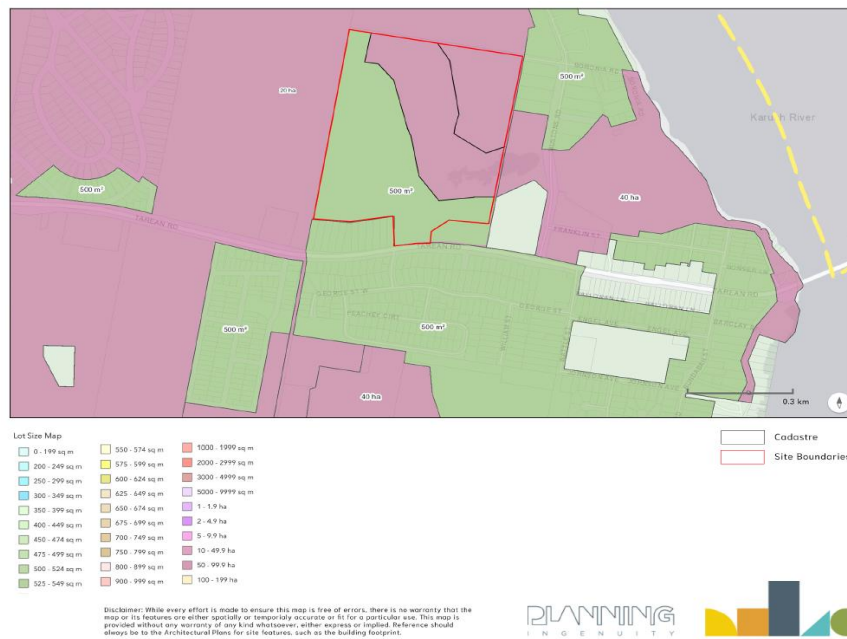


Figure 19 Proposed Minimum Lot Size Map

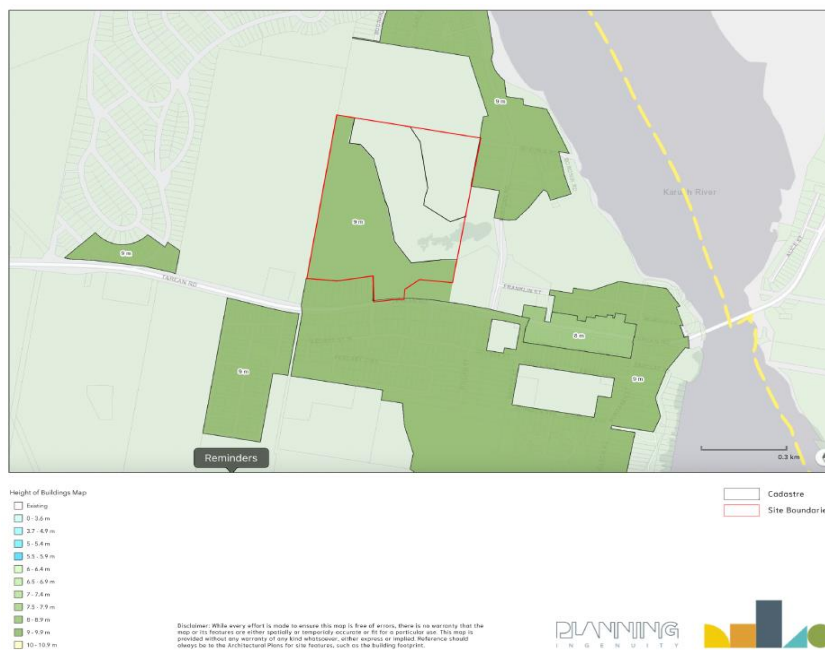
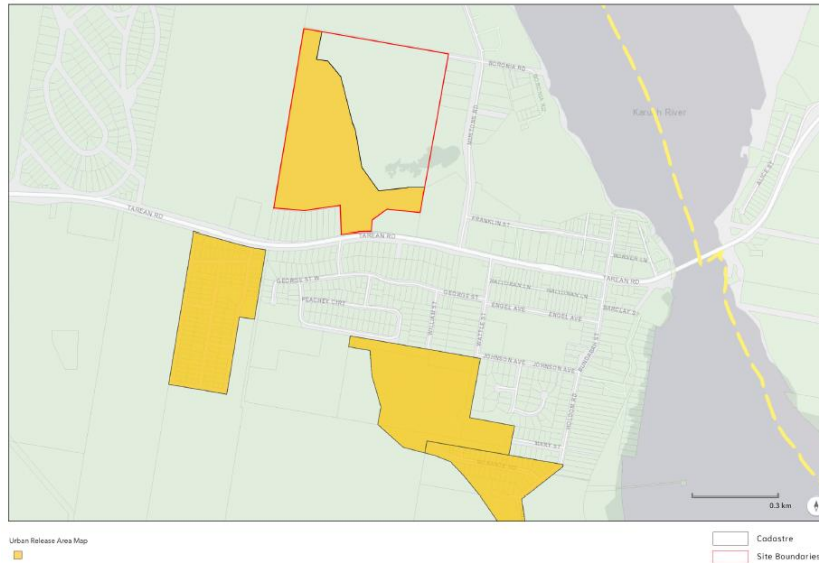


Figure 20 Proposed Height of Building Map

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Disclaimer: While every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, there is no warranty that the map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate as it is for a particular use. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either express or implied. Reference should always be to the Architectural Plans for site features, such as the building footprint.



Figure 21 Proposed Urban Release Areas Map

In summary, the proposed LEP amendments will facilitate:

- A logical and lineal extension of the existing urban footprint of Karuah, providing additional land for low-density residential housing.
- Permanent protection of sensitive wetland and riparian areas through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone.
- Retention of the RU2 Rural Landscape zone along the western interface to ensure appropriate land use transition.

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6. Planning Proposal

6.1 PART 1 - OBJECTIVES OR INTENDED OUTCOMES

6.1.1 Objectives

The objectives for this application for a Planning Proposal are:

- i. Facilitate the logical, lineal and sustainable expansion of the Karuah town through rezoning land for low-density residential development to meet future housing demand;
- ii. Permanently protect sensitive environmental lands associated with Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone;
- iii. Provide clarity and certainty in the planning framework for the future use and protection of the site's land;
- iv. Support the delivery of housing in accordance with the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), Housing Strategy (2020) and Karuah Place Plan (2022); and
- v. Align land use planning outcomes with relevant State environmental policies and flood management strategies.

6.1.2 Intended Outcomes

The Planning Proposal will amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) to facilitate the future subdivision and development of the site for residential purposes while securing permanent protection of environmentally sensitive land. The intended outcomes are as follows:

- i. Rezone approximately 15 hectares to R2 Low Density Residential to enable future residential subdivision;
- ii. Rezone approximately 9.8 hectares to C2 Environmental Conservation to protect areas of biodiversity value, wetlands and riparian corridors;
- iii. Retain part of the site (5.4 hectares) as RU2 Rural Landscape to provide an appropriate interface with adjacent rural land and accommodate infrastructure where required;
- iv. Facilitate future development consistent with existing development standards applying to R2 zoned land (including a 9-metre building height and 500sqm minimum lot size) without the need for a floor space ratio control;
- v. Ensure consistency with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and avoid development within areas mapped as coastal wetlands; and;
- vi. Support the orderly and economic development of land through coordinated infrastructure delivery in alignment with Council's adopted strategic plans.

This Planning Proposal is informed by a suite of specialist studies addressing environmental constraints, bushfire risk, flooding, stormwater, infrastructure servicing, biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, traffic, and social and economic impacts. These assessments confirm the suitability of the site for the proposed zoning outcomes and demonstrate the Proposal's alignment with broader strategic planning objectives.

6.2 PART 2 - EXPLANATION OF PROVISIONS

The proposed outcome will be achieved by amending the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) as follows:

- Amend the zoning maps to provide a part RU2 Rural Landscape, part R2 Low Density Residential and part C2 Environmental Conservation to enable the balanced delivery of future residential development whilst protecting sensitive environmental areas on the Site (Figure 18);

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- Amend the minimum lot size map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land from 20Ha to 500sqm (Figure 19);
- Amend the minimum height of buildings map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to provide a 9m height limit (Figure 20); and
- Amend the Urban Release Area (URA) map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to ensure the relevant provisions under Part 6 of PSLEP 2013 are applicable to the site (Figure 21).

All other provisions of PSLEP 2013 are to remain unchanged.

6.3 PART 3 – JUSTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC AND SITE-SPECIFIC MERIT

This section outlines the justification for the proposed amendment to the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013). It is structured to respond to the matters for consideration outlined in the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline (August 2023). These matters include assessment of the strategic planning context, consideration of strategic and site-specific merit, potential implications for State and Commonwealth agencies, and the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposal.

In summary, the proposed amendments to the PSLEP 2013 as they apply to No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah:

- Align with the objectives and strategic intent of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 and the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020);
- Are consistent with the directions and objectives contained in the Port Stephens Housing Strategy (2020);
- Align with the objectives of the Karuah Place Plan (2022) which identifies the site for future urban expansion balanced with environmental conservation outcomes;
- Facilitate the logical extension of the existing Karuah urban area to support future population growth and housing supply targets in a sustainable and coordinated manner;
- Permanently protect significant environmental values, including wetlands and riparian corridors associated with Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands, through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone;
- Are informed by and supported through detailed technical assessments addressing biodiversity, bushfire risk, flooding, stormwater management, infrastructure servicing, contamination, traffic, and social and economic impacts;
- Represent a sustainable, orderly, and logical planning outcome with clear strategic and site-specific merit.

Questions for consideration in demonstrating justification

6.3.1 Section A - The Need for the Planning Proposal

Q1: Is the Planning Proposal the result of any strategic study or report?

Yes. This Planning Proposal responds directly to the strategic planning work undertaken by Port Stephens Council through its adopted Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), Housing Strategy (2020) and Karuah Place Plan (2022). These strategies identify the subject site as suitable for future urban development, subject to appropriate environmental and infrastructure investigations.

The site has also been the subject of a previous Planning Proposal lodged with Council in 2019, which sought similar zoning outcomes to those now proposed. That earlier Planning Proposal progressed to Gateway Determination but effectively lapsed due to the need for further strategic alignment and supporting studies which were not provided by the applicant at the time.

Since then, the strategic context has changed including the adoption of the Karuah Place Plan (2022) which postdates the previous Planning Proposal. The site is now clearly identified within Council's adopted strategic framework as an

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appropriate location for urban expansion to support housing supply, provided environmental constraints are addressed. This current Planning Proposal has been prepared specifically to respond to the strategic intent set by Council's more recent strategic documents and to incorporate the outcomes of updated technical assessments relating to biodiversity, flooding, bushfire risk, infrastructure capacity, and land capability.

Therefore, while this is an applicant-initiated, site-specific Planning Proposal, it is directly aligned with and gives effect to Council's adopted strategic planning framework for Karuah. Refer to Figure 22 below.

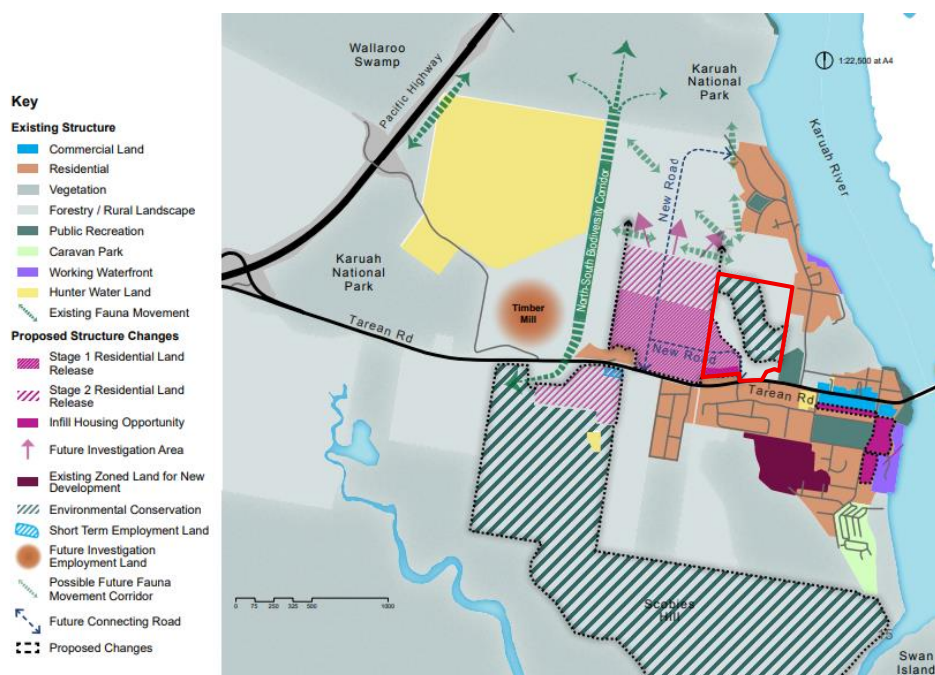


Figure 22 Karuah Place Plan (approximate site edged in red)

Q2: Is the Planning Proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Yes. A Planning Proposal is the best and only means of achieving the objectives and intended outcomes as identified in Section 6.1 of this report.

The site is currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape under the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013). This zone does not permit residential subdivision of the type and scale proposed. Therefore, without a Planning Proposal to amend the zoning and applicable development standards, the site cannot contribute to meeting Council's identified need for additional low-density housing in Karuah or achieve the environmental protection outcomes sought for Mustons Gully and associated Karuah Wetlands.

The rezoning to R2 Low Density Residential and C2 Environmental Conservation represents the most appropriate, coordinated and strategic method of achieving the desired strategic planning outcomes, as it will:

- Align the zoning with Council's adopted strategic planning framework, including the Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), Housing Strategy (2020) and Karuah Place Plan (2022);
- Enable a logical, lineal and sustainable extension of Karuah's urban footprint in a manner that reflects the existing and desired future character of the locality;

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- Facilitate the delivery of new housing supply on land already identified as suitable for urban purposes;
- Secure long-term protection of areas of environmental sensitivity through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone, consistent with the objectives of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP 2021.

There is no alternative planning pathway under the current LEP to achieve these outcomes. A Planning Proposal is the standard and appropriate mechanism for amending land zoning under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The public benefits delivered through this Planning Proposal include:

- Additional housing supply to meet identified demand in accordance with Council's strategic planning framework;
- Permanent protection of ecologically sensitive lands;
- Logical, linear and sustainable urban expansion consistent with infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints;
- Defined connections to existing open spaces and infrastructure; and
- A clear and transparent planning outcome that aligns with both local and State planning policy.

This Planning Proposal fits within the 'Standard' Planning Proposal category under the LEP Making Guideline (August 2023) as it seeks to make a conventional zoning change to facilitate residential development and environmental protection, consistent with established strategic planning directions:

Standard

A standard planning proposal refers to any one or more of the following proposed LEP amendment types, including an amendment:

- To change the land use zone where the proposal is consistent with the objectives identified in the LEP for that proposed zone
- That relates to altering the principal development standards of the LEP
- That relates to the addition of a permissible land use or uses and/or any conditional arrangements under Schedule 1 Additional Permitted Uses of the LEP
- That is consistent with an endorsed District/Regional Strategic Plan and/or LSPS
- Relating to classification or reclassification of public land through the LEP

As discussed, this Planning Proposal seeks to amend the zoning of the site to enable low-density residential subdivision and permanent environmental protection of wetlands and riparian land. Concomitant amendments to the minimum lot size, height of buildings and Urban Release Area maps will also be undertaken to permit residential development consistent with surrounding R2 zoned land. A Planning Proposal is the only way to satisfy the objectives and intended outcomes as detailed above.

6.3.2 Section B – Relationship to the Strategic Planning Framework

Assessment of the following matters for consideration listed in the guidelines (Questions 3–6) demonstrates that this Planning Proposal has clear strategic and site-specific planning merit.

This application for a Planning Proposal is consistent with the applicable regional and local strategic planning framework. The relevant strategic plans, including the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036, the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020), the Port Stephens Housing Strategy (2020) and the Karuah Place Plan (2022), all recognise the need to support sustainable population growth and housing delivery through the logical expansion of existing urban areas.

Specifically, the Karuah Place Plan (2022) identifies the subject site as part of a logical urban extension, supporting low-density residential development where environmental constraints can be appropriately managed (refer to Figure 22 above). The Place Plan also recognises the importance of balancing urban expansion with the protection of Karuah

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Wetlands and riparian corridors associated with Mustons Gully, which this Planning Proposal achieves through the proposed application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone.

This Planning Proposal seeks to facilitate future low-density residential subdivision on land identified as suitable for urban development and to secure the permanent protection of sensitive environmental land. These outcomes are entirely consistent with the site's strategic role and the broader planning objectives for Karuah and the Port Stephens LGA.

The Planning Proposal is also consistent with the objectives of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021, which identifies and protects coastal wetlands and flood-affected land on the site.

Q3: Will the planning proposal give effect to the objectives and actions of the applicable regional, or district plan or strategy (including any exhibited draft plans or strategies)?

6.3.2.1 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 was formally updated and finalised in December 2022, extending its planning horizon from 2036 to 2041. It involved extensive public and stakeholder consultation, with the draft plan on exhibition from 6 December 2021 to 4 March 2022. The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 sets out a vision to make the Hunter the leading regional economy in NSW, while also protecting its unique environmental values and supporting healthy, connected communities. The Plan provides the strategic context for growth, housing delivery, infrastructure planning and environmental protection for Port Stephens and specifically identifies the need for housing supply in established centres such as Karuah, balanced with environmental management.

The Planning Proposal directly aligns with the Vision and Goals of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 by:

- Supporting the delivery of housing in locations identified for urban expansion;
- Protecting environmentally sensitive land through appropriate zoning;
- Ensuring land use is planned to reflect flooding, biodiversity and bushfire risks;
- Contributing to the sustainable growth of a local centre identified for future housing growth.



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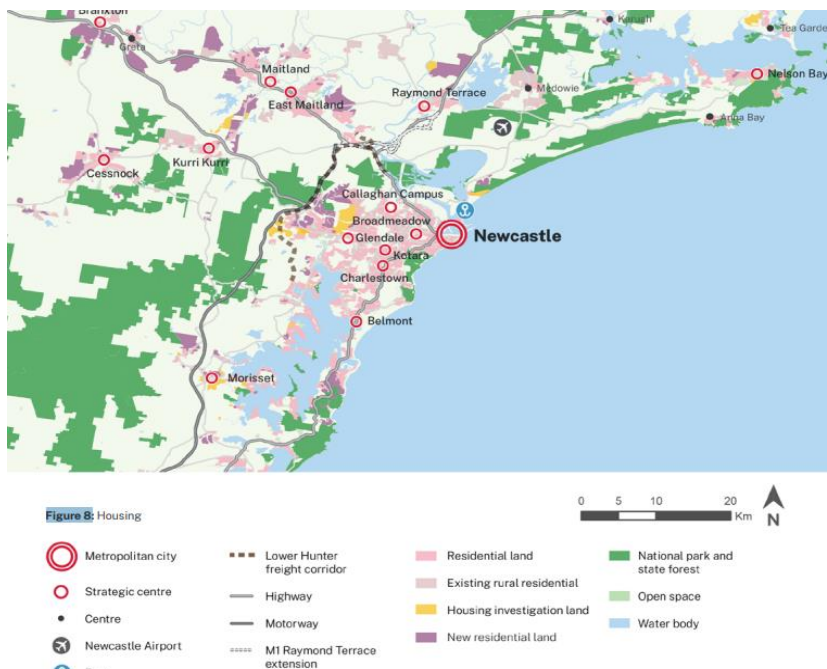


Figure 23 Hunter Regional Plan Housing (Source: Hunter Regional Plan 2041)

An assessment of the relevant directions and their objectives is provided in the table below.

Table 5 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

Objective 1: Diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity

Focuses on retaining and expanding the Hunter's industrial base, particularly through renewables, manufacturing, and the circular economy. Supports the transition from traditional coal-based industries.

While not specifically zoned for employment land, this Planning Proposal indirectly supports Objective 1 by facilitating population growth in Karuah through appropriately zoned residential land. This supports the workforce demands of the broader region's diversifying industries, particularly in nearby industrial hubs (Tomago, Heatherbrae, Williamtown) and ensures growth is located in serviced, sustainable locations.

Objective 2: Support the Right of Aboriginal Residents to Economic Self-Determination

The subject site at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah, is located within the lands of the Worimi people, who maintain ongoing cultural and historical connection to Country. The Karuah Aboriginal community plays a central role in the town's social, cultural and economic life.

This Planning Proposal does not directly seek to deliver Aboriginal-led development; however, it is supportive of the broader self-determination objectives through the following key points:

- Alignment with the Karuah Place Plan (2022)
The Place Plan acknowledges the importance of Karuah's Aboriginal heritage and the active role of the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) in the future of the town. The Place Plan and Housing Strategy, both endorsed by Council, identify this site as suitable for urban development, providing growth opportunities for the whole community, including the Aboriginal population. This Planning Proposal is consistent with this endorsed strategic framework.

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Table 5 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

- Opportunities for Aboriginal Participation in Future Development
The rezoning will provide future residential opportunities which may include opportunities for the Karuah Aboriginal community in land development, housing, or associated services. Increased population supports the viability of existing Aboriginal-run enterprises and enables opportunities for further Aboriginal-led business growth.
- Respect for Country and Environmental Values
The Proposal respects Country through the protection of approximately 9.8 hectares of land to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, safeguarding ecological corridors and areas of cultural significance such as Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands. This aligns with the Worimi people's stewardship of Country and supports broader ecological management practices.
- Enabling Economic Self-Determination through Infrastructure and Growth
While not an Aboriginal-led initiative, the Planning Proposal contributes to the economic viability and growth of Karuah, thereby supporting the conditions under which Aboriginal people can exercise self-determination through land-based activities, business opportunities and social enterprise.
- Consultation with Aboriginal Stakeholders
Any future development will continue to engage with the Karuah Aboriginal community and respect cultural heritage obligations. This Planning Proposal acknowledges the principles of cultural respect and recognition of Aboriginal peoples' rights and interests in planning decisions.

Objective 3: Create 15-minute neighbourhoods to support mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant communities

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah will contribute to achieving Objective 3 of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 by facilitating a logical and lineal urban expansion to enable a well-connected, walkable, and sustainable neighbourhood that integrates with the existing infrastructure, services, and community facilities of Karuah. This directly supports the ambition for 15-minute neighbourhoods in the Hunter Region.

The Planning Proposal facilitates new R2 Low Density Residential zoning in a location within close proximity to existing shops, schools, health services, and recreational opportunities within Karuah. This ensures that future residents will have convenient, walkable access to daily needs, reducing reliance on private vehicles and supporting inclusive, connected communities.

The Planning Proposal also includes the dedication of approximately 9.8 hectares of C2 Environmental Conservation zoning, protecting and enhancing important ecological corridors and open space networks. This contributes to the amenity, health, and liveability of the local area by maintaining access to nature and supporting active lifestyles through walkable environments.

By focusing new residential development in an area with established infrastructure and services, the Planning Proposal helps strengthen Karuah's function as a local centre capable of supporting additional housing and population growth. This in turn underpins the viability of existing local businesses, services and transport, aligning with the broader goals of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 for sustainable and resilient regional communities.

In summary, the Planning Proposal aligns with Objective 3 by:

- Supporting compact urban development adjacent to existing services and facilities;
- Enabling access to open space, natural environments, and walking connections;
- Reinforcing Karuah's role as a local centre in the regional settlement hierarchy;
- Facilitating future development that can integrate with and enhance walkability and connectivity within the town.

Objective 4: An inter-connected and globally-focused Hunter without car dependent communities

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Objective 4 by enabling a modest and logical expansion of Karuah's residential area in a location that is already integrated with the town's existing transport connections and services. While Karuah is not a metropolitan centre, it plays a recognised role within the Hunter Region's settlement hierarchy as a small town with existing road connections to the Pacific Highway, linking to Newcastle, Port Stephens, and the broader Hunter region.

The Planning Proposal supports this objective in the following ways:

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Table 5 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

- Reducing Car Dependency Within Karuah: By situating new housing adjacent to existing services, retail, education, and recreation areas, the Planning Proposal enables future residents to meet daily needs locally. This helps reduce the need for car travel within the town itself and promotes more sustainable transport choices, including walking and cycling.
- Leveraging Existing Connections to the Region: While Karuah's scale necessitates some reliance on private vehicles for regional connectivity, the Planning Proposal does not expand urban development into remote or isolated areas. Instead, it strengthens an existing urban centre already connected to major road infrastructure (Pacific Highway) and aligned with the broader Hunter Regional Plan's focus on efficient infrastructure utilisation.
- Promoting Integration Rather than Isolation: The rezoning supports a compact and integrated community form rather than creating fragmented or car-dependent suburbs. This aligns with the Plan's goal to avoid further isolation of small communities through unsustainable, dispersed development patterns.
- Conserving Land for Environmental and Connectivity Benefits: Approximately 9.8 hectares of the site are proposed for C2 Environmental Conservation zoning, protecting biodiversity corridors and riparian lands along Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands. This conservation outcome not only delivers environmental benefits but maintains important natural connections across the landscape consistent with broader Hunter Region ecological and connectivity objectives.

Objective 5: Plan for 'nimble neighbourhoods', diverse housing and sequenced development

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Objective 5 through its structured and balanced approach to facilitating logical, lineal and staged urban expansion alongside environmental conservation. The Planning Proposal responds directly to the strategic planning framework adopted by Port Stephens Council, including the Karuah Place Plan (2022), which identifies this site as appropriate for future urban development subject to the resolution of infrastructure and environmental considerations.

The Proposal demonstrates alignment with this objective as follows:

- Supports Diverse Housing Typologies:
The rezoning from RU2 Rural Landscape to R2 Low Density Residential facilitates the potential future delivery of a mix of lot sizes suitable for a range of housing types, including detached dwellings, dual occupancies, and potentially small-lot housing. This will expand housing choice within Karuah, responding to demographic changes, affordability pressures, and local housing demand, as encouraged by this objective.
- Provides Flexibility for Future Change:
The Planning Proposal sets a clear structure for future subdivision and development that can adapt over time to changing market conditions, policy settings, and infrastructure availability. This allows for flexibility ('nimbleness') in how the site is ultimately delivered, rather than prescribing a rigid development model from the outset.
- Enables Sequenced Development:
The proposal represents a logical and lineal extension of the existing urban area, adjacent to existing services and infrastructure, allowing for efficient and cost-effective extension of utilities and roads. It avoids premature or fragmented expansion by concentrating growth within a location already identified through strategic planning processes. Infrastructure servicing strategies, including sewer, water, and stormwater management, have been carefully considered to support orderly staging.
- Balancing Growth with Conservation:
Approximately 9.8 hectares of the site is proposed for C2 Environmental Conservation zoning to permanently protect areas of high environmental value, particularly along Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands. This ensures growth occurs in appropriate locations while preserving environmental assets, aligning with the Hunter Regional Plan's focus on careful sequencing and integration of urban and conservation outcomes.
- Supports Local Employment and Services:
By concentrating residential growth within Karuah, the proposal helps underpin demand for local services, shops, and employment, supporting the resilience of the town's economy over time, which aligns with the idea of 'nimble neighbourhoods' capable of adapting and thriving through incremental growth.

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Objective 6: Conserve heritage, landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, waterways and drinking water catchments

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah directly aligns with Objective 6 through its clear and deliberate approach to environmental conservation and protection of significant natural assets on the site.

Alignment with Objective 6 is achieved as follows:

- **Permanent Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Land:**
The Planning Proposal identifies approximately 9.8 hectares of the site for C2 Environmental Conservation zoning. This zoning will permanently protect key environmental features, particularly along Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands, which are recognised for its biodiversity values and role as a riparian corridor. These areas will be excluded from future residential development, ensuring long-term conservation outcomes.
- **Recognition of Ecological Values:**
The proposal is informed by a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), which confirms the environmental sensitivity of the site's eastern portions to the zoned C2 Environmental Conservation. The BDAR and subsequent Planning Proposal respond by avoiding and securing these areas under a conservation zoning that supports biodiversity protection, habitat connectivity, and the maintenance of ecological functions.
- **Protection of Waterways and Wetlands:**
The site contains land identified as part of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 – Wetlands Map, associated with the Mustons Gully and Kurah Wetlands corridor. The C2 zoning and the flood management strategy prepared for the site ensure that future development will not encroach upon or degrade these wetland areas, aligning with the objective to protect waterways and their ecological functions.
- **Management of Flood Risk:**
A Flood Impact Assessment has been prepared which demonstrates that the proposed development footprint avoids areas of flood risk and ensures no adverse impact on the function of the floodplain. This protects not only the future residential community but also the environmental integrity of Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands, including its broader catchment.
- **Catchment and Water Quality Protection:**
The Planning Proposal aligns with the objective of protecting drinking water catchments and water quality. Detailed stormwater management strategies have been prepared to ensure that future development will achieve best-practice water quality outcomes, including measures to protect the adjoining wetland and riparian areas from urban runoff impacts.
- **Conservation of Landscape Values:**
The site planning respects the existing natural topography, ecological features, and watercourses. By concentrating urban development to the western and central portions of the site and retaining the natural areas within the C2 zone, the proposal safeguards the landscape character and visual qualities associated with the Mustons Gully corridor.
- **No Impact on Aboriginal or European Heritage:**
Investigations confirm there are no known Aboriginal or European heritage items on the site. However, the Planning Proposal and future development will be required to comply with relevant legislative protections should unexpected heritage items be identified.

Objective 7: Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Objective 7 through proposing a coordinated and forward-looking approach to delivering resilient, low-impact residential development while permanently conserving significant environmental assets.

Alignment with Objective 7 is achieved as follows:

- **Sustainable Infrastructure Provision:**
The Planning Proposal is supported by detailed technical assessments including servicing, stormwater, and flood studies, which demonstrate that future infrastructure will be delivered in accordance with contemporary standards for environmental performance and resilience. These reports confirm the site can be efficiently serviced without placing

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unsustainable demands on existing infrastructure networks, supporting a coordinated and sustainable pattern of urban growth.

- **Climate Resilience:**
The rezoning deliberately avoids land identified as flood-prone or environmentally constrained, ensuring that future development is located on land suitable for urban purposes and resilient to the risks associated with climate change, such as flooding. The protection of Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and adjacent riparian lands through C2 zoning further enhances natural systems' capacity to manage and mitigate flooding and heat impacts.
- **Natural Carbon Sequestration through Conservation:**
Approximately 9.8 hectares of the site is proposed for C2 Environmental Conservation, protecting wetlands, riparian corridors, and native vegetation. This will contribute to broader carbon sequestration efforts through the preservation of vegetation that captures and stores carbon, aligning with the objective to reach net zero.
- **Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD):**
The Stormwater Management Strategy prepared for the site demonstrates how future development will incorporate best practice WSUD principles, including on-site detention and treatment measures to improve water quality and reduce pollutant loads entering sensitive downstream environments such as the Karuah River. These initiatives will contribute to the resilience of local ecosystems and maintain water quality standards.
- **Efficient Urban Form:**
By concentrating development within the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone, the Planning Proposal achieves a compact, logical extension to the existing urban footprint of Karuah. This supports infrastructure efficiency by minimising the need for new, dispersed infrastructure networks and maximises opportunities for efficient servicing connections.
- **Net Zero Capable Housing Outcomes:**
The proposal enables future residential development that can be designed in accordance with current BASIX and NSW sustainability frameworks for energy and water efficiency. This includes the opportunity for new housing to incorporate energy-efficient design, solar energy, and sustainable building materials, contributing to net zero objectives over time.
- **Integrated Transport and Access:**
While Karuah lacks direct public transport services, the proposed development will strengthen the town's urban structure in a way that supports future opportunities for improved connections and reduces reliance on dispersed, car-dependent settlement patterns.

Objective 8: Plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Objective 8 by supporting the orderly expansion of the Karuah urban area in a manner that complements and strengthens the role of the existing town centre as the primary location for businesses and services.

Alignment with Objective 8 is achieved as follows:

- **Supports the Role of Karuah as a Local Centre:**
The proposal reinforces Karuah's existing urban structure by concentrating residential growth within walkable distance of the town centre, which hosts a range of existing services including retail, community facilities, and recreation. This aligns with the Hunter Regional Plan's objective of placing services at the heart of communities, ensuring that population growth helps to sustain and strengthen the viability of local businesses.
- **Facilitates Economic Growth through Population Support:**
The introduction of additional housing through the R2 Low Density Residential zone will expand the local catchment population, supporting the ongoing demand for retail, hospitality, health services, and other small business activities within Karuah. This growth assists in underpinning the economic sustainability of the town and aligns with the objective to create prosperous communities supported by thriving services.
- **Promotes a Compact and Walkable Community Structure:**
The Planning Proposal facilitates logical and lineal urban expansion contiguous with the existing settlement, promoting a pattern of development that reduces car dependency and enhances accessibility to existing services and

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businesses within Karuah. This supports the creation of healthy communities through walkable neighbourhoods and better access to essential services.

- Encourages Investment Confidence:
By providing a clear and planned pathway for growth through rezoning, the Planning Proposal gives certainty to infrastructure and service providers, encouraging future investment in facilities and services that meet the needs of a growing population.
- Supports Innovation through Infrastructure Coordination:
The coordinated servicing strategy prepared for the site demonstrates that infrastructure can be efficiently delivered, aligning with the broader objective of ensuring that services and infrastructure enable prosperous, resilient communities. This provides the foundation for innovative responses to housing and service provision as Karuah grows.

Objective 9: Sustain and balance productive rural landscapes

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Objective 9 by recognising the importance of protecting productive rural landscapes while enabling appropriate urban expansion within a clearly defined settlement boundary that avoids fragmentation or adverse impacts on surrounding rural uses.

Alignment with Objective 9 is achieved as follows:

- Retains Rural Character Beyond the Urban Edge:
The Planning Proposal carefully delineates between land suitable for urban development and land to remain within the RU2 Rural Landscape zone, ensuring that productive rural landscapes on the western portion of the site (5.4 hectares) and beyond are maintained. This prevents the unnecessary expansion of residential development into areas that contribute to the rural economy or landscape character.
- Avoids Fragmentation of Rural Lands:
The proposal confines urban rezoning to land immediately adjacent to existing residential areas, avoiding the spread of isolated residential lots that would undermine the viability and integrity of surrounding rural lands. This approach aligns with the Hunter Regional Plan's intent to maintain the cohesion of rural landscapes and their contribution to the region's character and productivity.
- Environmental Conservation to Protect Natural Assets:
Approximately 9.8 hectares of the site is proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, protecting significant ecological areas, riparian corridors, and wetlands that contribute to the environmental functions of the rural landscape. This ensures the ongoing protection of sensitive lands that also serve environmental and biodiversity values, supporting broader rural sustainability.
- Supports a Clear Settlement Boundary:
By reinforcing a logical urban boundary at Karuah, the Planning Proposal supports the strategic planning principle of containing urban growth within areas that are well-served and identified for future development. This avoids encroachment into productive rural areas and ensures that urban pressures are directed towards appropriate land rather than scattered rural lots.
- Compatible with Surrounding Land Uses:
The proposal ensures an appropriate transition from residential land to environmental and rural zones, maintaining buffers and land use compatibility. This protects the function and amenity of adjoining rural areas while providing certainty about the future land use pattern.

6.3.2.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

The *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 (GNMP)*, prepared by the NSW Government, provides a strategic framework to guide growth, development and investment across the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area. This area includes the five local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock and Port Stephens. The Plan supports the implementation of the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041*, and focuses on establishing Greater Newcastle as a globally competitive, sustainable and liveable metropolitan city.

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The GNMP sets out a vision for sustainable growth and outlines 16 Planning Priorities to guide land use decisions and planning proposals within the region. It aims to deliver housing, employment, environmental protection, and infrastructure investment in ways that strengthen the liveability and economic productivity of the region.

Karuah is situated within the Port Stephens LGA, one of the key coastal communities that interfaces with both the Greater Newcastle metropolitan region and the broader Hunter and MidCoast areas. While Karuah is not within one of the identified metropolitan strategic centres, its role as a local centre and gateway to the Mid North Coast positions it to contribute to the housing and environmental objectives of the GNMP.

The Planning Proposal demonstrates consistency with the GNMP's intent to manage population growth in a sustainable manner while delivering improved urban and environmental outcomes across the Greater Newcastle region. Specifically, it contributes to the strategies detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

Strategy 11 – Create more great public spaces where people come together:

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah supports Strategy 11 by facilitating the creation of a new residential neighbourhood that integrates high-quality public and communal open spaces.

While the Planning Proposal seeks amendments to the provisions of PSLEP identified in Part 5 of this Report (above), the underlying vision, supported by the accompanying technical studies, demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the public realm. The future subdivision layout will incorporate:

- A connected street and path network, designed to encourage walkability and link future residential lots with existing neighbourhoods, the Karuah town centre, and environmental open space corridors;
- Retention of significant natural features, including the Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully riparian corridor, to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, which offers opportunities for passive recreation and visual amenity;
- Potential embellishment of the C2 land with walking tracks or interpretive signage (subject to ecological constraints) to improve public awareness and appreciation of local biodiversity;
- Integrated water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) elements, such as vegetated swales and bio-retention basins, which contribute to both amenity and environmental function.

These components contribute to the delivery of public spaces that foster community interaction, promote active transport, and celebrate the site's environmental and landscape character—consistent with the intent of Strategy 11 of the GNMP 2036.

Action 11.1 – Activation and Enhancement of Public Spaces

• Creation and activation of public spaces suitable for community events

While the subject site is located outside a designated strategic centre, the Planning Proposal enables the creation of a walkable, connected neighbourhood in close proximity to the Karuah town centre. The proposal ensures the integration of existing and new public domain areas, including open space and riparian corridors, which have the potential subject to ecological constraints to support low-impact community use such as walking, gathering, and passive recreation.

• Enhancement of access to sporting, recreational, cultural and community services

The site's proximity (within walking distance) to the Karuah town centre allows future residents to easily access existing community infrastructure. Additionally, the street layout and pedestrian network proposed in future development stages will be designed to enhance accessibility and promote active transport.

• Implementation of public art strategies (storytelling, interpretation, expression)

While not delivered at the Planning Proposal stage, future development may provide opportunities for interpretive signage or low-impact public art within the C2 Environmental Conservation zone or along pedestrian pathways. These could reflect the Aboriginal and European cultural history of the Karuah area and contribute to place identity and community cohesion.

• Provision of public lookouts and protection of views

The topography of the site is generally flat to gently sloping, with views towards the adjacent Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and broader bushland. The permanent zoning of the riparian corridor as C2 Environmental Conservation preserves open space character and views across the landscape, and may provide informal visual amenity opportunities (e.g., trail lookouts or rest points).

Table 6 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

• *Protection and enhancement of waterfront parkland*

Although the site itself does not directly adjoin Karuah's waterfront, the Planning Proposal strengthens the ecological network leading towards the Karuah River. The protection of Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and surrounding native vegetation contributes to catchment health and downstream environmental values, which ultimately support the character of waterfront parklands.

• *Recognition and protection of Aboriginal and other cultural heritage*

The Planning Proposal is informed by a Due Diligence Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment. This identifies that any future works will be required to comply with the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and include further archaeological due diligence and consultation as needed. Future development applications will be conditioned to protect known or potential Aboriginal and historic heritage values, consistent with this action.

Strategy 12: Enhance the Blue and Green Grid and the Urban Tree Canopy

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah aligns with Strategy 12 of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 by embedding environmental resilience and landscape connectivity as core structuring elements of the rezoning. Central to this is the proposed rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares of land to C2 Environmental Conservation, which provides for the permanent protection of Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and its riparian corridor. This area forms part of a larger green and blue network that contributes to the ecological health of the Karuah River catchment. By avoiding and securing this corridor through an appropriate planning mechanism, the proposal directly supports the vision of an interconnected and protected regional landscape.

The Planning Proposal facilitates future opportunities for passive recreation and improved accessibility to natural areas through the integration of new and existing open space networks within and adjacent to the conservation lands. While no built public open space is proposed at this stage, the structure of the rezoning provides a clear framework for potential future walking paths or ecological interpretive trails that connect residents to the surrounding environment, in line with the goals of an expanded and publicly accessible Blue and Green Grid.

Additionally, the urban design proposal for the R2 Low Density Residential zone provides for a landscape-responsive neighbourhood pattern, with adequate deep soil zones to allow for canopy tree planting and the enhancement of local tree cover. This supports the broader urban tree canopy objectives of the Strategy, which seek to integrate greening as a fundamental aspect of neighbourhood planning rather than a secondary consideration. Further landscaping and planting requirements will be detailed at the development application stage, ensuring the delivery of meaningful on-lot and streetscape vegetation.

Importantly, the accompanying Stormwater Management Strategy confirms that the development will incorporate water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) principles. These measures will protect the function and water quality of natural waterways and support ecological connectivity, reinforcing the environmental integrity of the Blue Grid. The coordinated approach to ecological conservation, stormwater design, and low-impact residential development reflects the integrated planning outcomes envisaged in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.

In summary, the Planning Proposal demonstrates a clear and measurable response to Strategy 12 through the protection of environmental corridors, support for landscape permeability, commitment to WSUD, and provision for increased tree canopy and green infrastructure in future urban development.

Action 12.1 – Open Spaces

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah responds meaningfully to Action 12.1 of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* by integrating key green infrastructure and accessibility outcomes into the structure of the rezoning.

Firstly, the proposal delivers improved access to open space and natural areas by embedding approximately 9.8 hectares of C2 Environmental Conservation zoning, which secures permanent protection of the Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully riparian

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Table 6 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

corridor. This corridor not only has ecological value but also presents a future opportunity for passive recreation and nature-based experiences, with potential pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhood. The walkability of the proposed R2 Low Density Residential area has been considered through its proximity to existing services in Karuah, and future subdivision design will be able to ensure that new housing lots are within a 10-minute walk of publicly accessible open space or natural areas, aligning with the 90% accessibility target.

Secondly, the accompanying Stormwater Management Report and Servicing Strategy incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles to ensure the hydrological function of the landscape is maintained. This includes managing water quality, hydrology and stormwater flows in a manner that supports the ecological integrity of the Mustons Gully corridor. This approach is consistent with the Greener Places policy's Green Infrastructure Outcomes, enhancing the Blue and Green Grid as envisaged under Action 12.1.

The Planning Proposal also contributes to urban greening and cooling, with the proposed R2 zone structured to accommodate tree canopy expansion through deep soil areas and future landscaping provisions at the development application stage. While the broader urban heat mitigation network is more relevant to denser parts of Greater Newcastle, this proposal ensures that local climate-responsive design and vegetation integration are prioritised in new residential development.

Finally, the conservation and enhancement of Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully, which forms part of the broader Karuah River catchment, supports nature-based tourism opportunities in Karuah. By protecting these environmental assets and retaining their ecological function and visual appeal, the Planning Proposal aligns with the regional goal of promoting tourism through environmental stewardship. This supports the long-term economic and recreational potential of Karuah and its surrounds, consistent with the objectives of Action 12.1.

Strategy 14 Improve resilience to natural hazards

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah demonstrates strong alignment with Strategy 14 of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*, which seeks to improve resilience to natural hazards through risk-responsive planning, climate adaptation, and integration of natural systems.

A suite of technical studies supports this Planning Proposal and confirms that resilience to key hazards—flooding, bushfire, and climate risk—has been embedded into the proposed land use arrangement:

- **Flooding and Stormwater:** The *Stormwater Management Report* confirms that the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone avoids land affected by the 1% AEP flood event, and that the C2 Environmental Conservation zoning retains the natural function of the Mustons Gully floodplain. This approach ensures that future urban development is resilient to overland flow and that flood risks are managed proactively through appropriate siting and infrastructure design. WSUD measures are incorporated to reduce hydrological impacts and maintain ecological function.
- **Bushfire Risk:** The *Bushfire Assessment Report* demonstrates that the future subdivision layout within the R2 zone can comply with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019* guidelines. Appropriate Asset Protection Zones (APZs) and construction standards can be applied at the Development Application stage to ensure risk to life and property is minimised. Importantly, the C2 zone also buffers areas of high environmental and bushfire hazard, providing a separation between sensitive bushland and future residential areas.
- **Climate Resilience:** The Planning Proposal incorporates land use and design principles that anticipate projected increases in bushfire danger and more intense rainfall events associated with climate change. The inclusion of large tracts of vegetated conservation land not only protects biodiversity but also reinforces the Blue and Green Grid, contributing to natural hazard mitigation, improved microclimate, and ecological resilience.
- **Evacuation and Safety:** The site benefits from direct access to Tarean Road and the broader road network, enabling safe and efficient evacuation if required. The scale and configuration of development is consistent with low-density patterns that support localised emergency response and evacuation planning.

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Table 6 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

Overall, this Planning Proposal responds to Strategy 14 by ensuring that risk-responsive zoning, natural hazard assessments, and ecological buffers are central to the proposed land use strategy. In doing so, it contributes to a safer, more resilient Karuah community and avoids unnecessary burden on emergency services and infrastructure

Action 14.1 – Greater Newcastle Council principles to land use planning and development assessment decisions

The Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah is consistent with Action 14.1 of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*, which outlines principles for improving resilience through land use planning and development assessment.

Specifically, the proposal demonstrates the following:

- Risk-responsive land use controls: The rezoning avoids placing new residential development within areas of known environmental risk. The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone has been carefully delineated to exclude flood-affected land (as confirmed in the *Flood Assessment and Stormwater Management Strategy*) and areas subject to bushfire hazard. These areas have instead been proposed for C2 Environmental Conservation zoning or roads, ensuring that urban development does not occur in high-risk locations.
- Avoidance of intensive development in the Blue and Green Grid: Approximately 9.8 hectares of the site will be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation, permanently protecting sensitive riparian corridors, native vegetation and the broader ecological functions of the Mustons Gully catchment. This aligns with the principle of limiting urban encroachment into the Blue and Green Grid and ensuring that ecological and hazard mitigation values are retained.
- Interface and resilience planning: The Planning Proposal ensures that future development adjoining the C2 zone includes appropriate asset protection zones, setback controls, and water-sensitive urban design measures. This will manage the interface between residential areas and environmentally sensitive land, reducing exposure to extreme events such as bushfire or overland flooding while preserving ecosystem services.
- Triple bottom line benefits: By embedding environmental conservation into the structure of the urban footprint, the Planning Proposal delivers social (improved access to open space and amenity), environmental (protection of biodiversity and waterways), and economic (reduced infrastructure cost and hazard risk) benefits, in line with the resilience-based approach outlined in Action 14.1.

6.3.2.3 Housing 2041 – NSW Housing Strategy (2021)

Housing 2041 is the NSW Government's 20-year housing strategy that seeks to ensure housing is available, diverse, resilient, and affordable for all people at all stages of life. It is structured around four key pillars: Supply, Diversity, Affordability, and Resilience.

Table 7 Housing 2041 – NSW Housing Strategy (2021)

Pillar	Alignment of Planning Proposal for No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah
Supply	The Proposal will enable the delivery of approximately 15 hectares of residential land within the established urban footprint of Karuah. This aligns with the Strategy's objective to provide an ongoing pipeline of housing supply to meet population growth, particularly in identified local centres such as Karuah.
Diversity	The Proposal facilitates the delivery of a range of residential lot sizes under the R2 Low Density Residential zone, supporting flexibility in housing choice. This responds to the Strategy's emphasis on creating diverse housing that meets the needs of people at different life stages, household types and income levels.
Affordability	Increasing the supply of residential land in Karuah contributes to maintaining housing affordability by enabling competition and choice within the housing market. The site's proximity to existing services and infrastructure will also support affordability through reduced development costs.
Resilience	The Proposal integrates significant environmental protections, including the rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares to C2 Environmental Conservation to protect biodiversity, riparian corridors, and flood-prone lands.

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Table 7 Housing 2041 – NSW Housing Strategy (2021)

It is informed by detailed technical studies addressing flood risk, bushfire hazard, and ecological values, ensuring that future housing is delivered in a way that is environmentally sustainable and climate resilient.

The Planning Proposal will deliver outcomes consistent with Housing 2041's guiding principles of:

- Housing that is well-located, connected to infrastructure and services.
- Housing that meets the needs of current and future residents.
- Housing delivery that integrates with planning for sustainable, liveable and resilient communities.

In this regard, the Planning Proposal for Karuah directly supports the implementation of Housing 2041 at the State level through its contribution to supply, housing choice, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.

6.3.2.4 NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023

The NSW Coastal Design Guidelines provide a framework on how to protect natural resources in a coastal area. The guidelines can be used by Councils, developers and anyone involved in designing coastal places. Given this Planning Proposal seeks to change the planning controls in the coastal zone, this document is a relevant consideration and also required by Ministerial Direction 4.2. The guidelines are considered in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Coastal Design Guidelines

Requirement	Relevant coastal management	Applicable to planning proposal	Planning proposal is consistent with guidelines (Y/N) If 'No', justify this
Outcome A.1 Protect coastal ecosystems			
A.1a Avoid development on undeveloped headlands and significant coastal landforms.	CVA, CEA	N	N/A
A.1b Do not increase development or intensify land uses where there is existing development on headlands and significant coastal landforms.	CVA, CEA	N	N/A
A.1c Identify, protect and enhance sensitive coastal ecosystems including coastal wetlands, littoral rainforests and other coastal threatened ecological communities that may be affected by development.	CWLRA, CEA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal recognises and responds to the environmental sensitivity of the site, including areas identified as containing coastal wetlands and threatened ecological communities. Approximately 9.8 ha of the subject site are proposed to be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation, ensuring long-term protection and appropriate management of wetland and riparian areas. These areas will be excluded from development, avoiding direct impacts and ensuring sensitive ecological values are retained and enhanced. Targeted ecological assessments have been undertaken, including a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), to identify and inform the management of threatened species and communities. The proposal aligns with the strategic intent of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 by

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Table 8 Coastal Design Guidelines

			protecting ecologically sensitive land and ensuring it is conserved in perpetuity.
A.1d Maintain and protect the presence of beaches, rock platforms, coastal dunes, riparian vegetation and the natural features of foreshores, including along estuaries and coastal lakes	CWLRA, CVA, CEA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal maintains and protects natural features of the site's foreshore, particularly the riparian vegetation and estuarine wetland located at the eastern extent of the subject land adjacent to the Karuah River. These areas have been identified through ecological assessment and are proposed to be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation, which prevents any future urban development and secures their long-term protection. No development is proposed within the identified wetland or riparian zones, and stormwater infrastructure has been carefully planned to avoid impacts to these natural features. By setting development back from the foreshore and incorporating measures to manage runoff and water quality, the Planning Proposal ensures the ecological and scenic values of the Karuah estuary and associated foreshore are maintained and enhanced.
A.1e Use environmental buffers and limit the number of access points and pathways to protect coastal ecosystems. In some cases, it may not be appropriate to allow public access to areas with highly sensitive ecosystems or animal populations.	CWLRA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal incorporates environmental buffers to protect the sensitive wetland and riparian areas adjoining the Karuah River. These areas are proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, creating a clear interface between urban development and environmentally sensitive land. This can be detailed at the development application stage. Public access to these conservation areas will be managed carefully. While opportunities for passive observation and appreciation of the natural environment may be explored through future planning stages, the proposal does not promote direct public access into the ecologically sensitive zones. Instead, access will be limited and controlled where appropriate, with a focus on maintaining ecological integrity and avoiding disturbance to flora and fauna. The implementation of management mechanisms for the conservation land will further ensure these sensitive ecosystems are protected over the long term.
A.1f Consider if the planning proposal is needed or if development zones	CWLRA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been carefully designed to minimise biodiversity impacts

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Table 8 Coastal Design Guidelines

could be better located to minimise effects on biodiversity			by concentrating residential development within the least constrained parts of the site. The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone is located on land that has been previously disturbed and is largely cleared, avoiding areas of high environmental value. The ecologically sensitive parts of the site, including wetlands, riparian corridors, and areas of threatened ecological communities, are proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation. This zoning will ensure these areas are protected in perpetuity and appropriately managed. The proposal reflects a balance between meeting local housing demand and safeguarding the site's environmental values, and the proposed zoning pattern represents the most suitable and least impactful arrangement based on site-specific ecological assessments.
A.1g Avoid development that may disturb, expose or drain areas of Class 1 and Class 2 acid sulfate soils.	CWLRA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal avoids zoning intensification within the areas identified as Class 1 and Class 2 Acid Sulfate Soils (ASS). These areas are proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, ensuring their protection and preventing ground disturbance through urban development. As noted in the Preliminary Site Contamination Assessment, the acid sulfate soils mapping identifies the site as containing Class 2 and Class 5 soils under the Port Stephens LEP 2013. However, the Class 2 areas are confined to land proposed for environmental protection or where no development is proposed. Furthermore, as stated in the Planning Proposal document (Section 6.6.3 – Acid Sulfate Soils), "future development will be subject to Council's LEP requirements, which require development consent for works in Class 2 and 5 ASS areas. These provisions will ensure that any risk is identified and mitigated through appropriate design and construction measures." Accordingly, the planning proposal is consistent with A.1g of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023, as it avoids rezoning land for urban development in areas with high-risk ASS classifications and includes safeguards for any future works.
A.1h Consider direct and indirect effects of development, including any necessary infrastructure, on water	CEA, CUA	N	N/A

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Table 8 Coastal Design Guidelines

quality, water quantity and hydrological flows of waterways and groundwater.			
Outcome A.2 Protect coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests			
A.2a Identify coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests, including areas that could be rehabilitated or restored in the future, and do not increase development or intensify land uses in these areas.	CWLRA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal does not propose any development or zoning intensification within areas identified as coastal wetlands or littoral rainforests. These environmentally sensitive areas have been identified and mapped, and are proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation under the amendment to the Port Stephens LEP 2013. As noted in the Planning Proposal (Section 3.2.2 and Section 5.2.3), the proposed C2 zoning will provide permanent protection of approximately 9.8 ha of environmentally significant land, including wetland and riparian habitats adjacent to the Karuah River. The land also contains vegetation communities of ecological significance and potential habitat for threatened species. The biodiversity assessment and mapping report confirms that no development will occur within the coastal wetland or riparian zones, and that their protection aligns with the objectives of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021. Further, the rezoning supports potential future ecological restoration and conservation of these areas through appropriate land management practices and potential use of biodiversity offsets. Accordingly, the planning proposal is consistent with A.2a of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023, as it identifies coastal wetlands and avoids intensification of land uses within these sensitive environments.
A.2b Allow for the adaptive management of stormwater run-off so that the quality of water leaving the site is better than pre-development quality to lessen effects on coastal wetlands or other sensitive receiving environments.	CWLRA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal includes a Stormwater Management Strategy, which confirms that stormwater from the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zoned land will be treated and managed to ensure water quality outcomes are equal to or better than pre-development conditions. The proposed stormwater management system incorporates the use of at-source treatment measures, including bio-retention basins, water-sensitive urban

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			design (WSUD) features, and sediment control measures. These are designed to reduce pollutant loads (e.g. total suspended solids, nutrients, hydrocarbons) prior to any discharge towards the downstream receiving environment, namely the wetland system adjacent to the Karuah River, which is mapped as a coastal wetland under the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021. The stormwater design also incorporates flows detention and discharge controls to mitigate the potential for downstream erosion or hydrological change. As the report notes, these controls are aligned with Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines and Council's stormwater design requirements. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal allows for the adaptive and effective management of stormwater run-off, ensuring water leaving the site is of improved quality relative to the pre-development state and does not pose a risk to the adjoining coastal wetland ecosystem, in compliance with the objectives of A.2b.
A.2c Provide environmental buffers and riparian corridors that enable the long-term management and protection of areas of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal includes the rezoning of approximately 9.8 ha of land to C2 Environmental Conservation to protect environmentally sensitive areas, including riparian corridors, wetlands, and native vegetation. These areas are primarily located within Lot 52 DP 735066 and align with mapped biodiversity values, including the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum–Ironbark Forest, a listed Threatened Ecological Community. The Ecological Assessment Report identifies areas of high ecological value on the site, including riparian corridors along the existing drainage lines and wetland edges. The proposed C2 zoning footprint has been carefully designed to include these areas, ensuring that development is excluded from them and that long-term conservation outcomes are achieved. Additionally, the stormwater strategy and overall site layout incorporate environmental buffers between development zones and conservation lands to protect the integrity of ecological systems. This includes Asset Protection Zones (APZs) located outside of the

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			conservation-zoned land to avoid encroachment and disturbance. Management of the retained conservation land is proposed which may include a future Biodiversity Stewardship Site (BSS), which could provide a secured and funded mechanism for the ongoing protection, monitoring, and enhancement of the biodiversity values of the site. Therefore, the Planning Proposal supports the long-term management and protection of areas of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity by providing appropriately zoned and buffered conservation areas in accordance with the intent of guideline A.2c.
A.2d Identify and protect areas that allow for landward migration pathways for coastal wetlands to respond to climate change.	CWLRA, CEA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been informed by detailed ecological and environmental assessments which identify the extent of the wetland on the site, located in the eastern portion of Lot 52 DP 735066. This wetland is mapped under the Coastal Management SEPP as part of the Coastal Environment Area and includes areas subject to tidal influence and periodic inundation. To facilitate the landward migration of this wetland in response to sea level rise and other climate change impacts, the Planning Proposal includes the rezoning of land immediately west of the existing wetland to C2 Environmental Conservation. This provides a clear buffer between urban development and the wetland, allowing for ecological processes and future wetland retreat or expansion to occur unimpeded. The mapped C2 zone was deliberately extended beyond the current wetland boundary based on ecological advice to incorporate low-lying transitional areas with the potential to become future wetland habitat as hydrological conditions shift. No development is proposed within this zone, and the future use of this land will be limited to conservation purposes. This approach aligns with the objectives of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and supports climate-responsive land use planning by protecting future adaptation corridors for sensitive ecosystems. As such, the Planning Proposal is consistent with A.2d of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.

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A.2e Exclude land uses that affect the natural state of coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests or that will make it harder to rehabilitate these ecosystems in the future.	CWLRA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal seeks to rezone approximately 9.8ha of ecologically sensitive land on the eastern portion of Lot 52 DP 735066 to C2 Environmental Conservation, consistent with the location of mapped wetland and associated vegetation communities. This zoning will exclude any future urban development or land uses that would compromise the natural state of the wetland or restrict its future restoration potential. Land use permissibility under the C2 zone is restricted to low-impact conservation and environmental management activities. No urban development, earthworks, or land disturbance is proposed or permitted within the mapped C2 area, thereby protecting the integrity and function of the wetland. Furthermore, the proposal avoids the introduction of urban infrastructure (such as roads, services, or stormwater outlets) within or adjacent to the wetland edge, and a buffer area has been maintained to support ecological resilience and potential future rehabilitation. The land management framework for this area will support ongoing preservation and natural processes. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal ensures that incompatible or high-impact land uses are excluded from areas of mapped coastal wetland, in full alignment with the intent of A.2e of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.
Outcome A.3 Protect marine parks and aquatic reserves			
A.3a Avoid development and land uses that affect the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of marine parks and aquatic reserves.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
A.3b Protect the ecological health of marine parks and aquatic reserves, including providing for riparian vegetation and buffers in their catchments.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome B.1 Respond to and protect elements that make the place special			
B.1a Integrate development within the natural topography of the site and ensure land use, building scale and height respond sympathetically to coastal landforms.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been carefully structured to align new development with the site's existing landform and natural topography. The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zoning is concentrated on the

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			central and western portions of the site, where topography is generally level to gently undulating and suitable for low-scale residential subdivision without the need for substantial land reshaping or modification. The C2 Environmental Conservation zoning applies to the eastern portion of the site, which includes lower-lying land associated with mapped coastal wetlands and riparian corridors. This ensures that areas with natural depressions, sensitive vegetation, or drainage lines are protected from urban development and that the built form avoids visually intrusive or ecologically sensitive landscapes. Future development controls under the R2 zone will be consistent with low-rise residential built form, enabling building scale and height to reflect the coastal village character of Karuah and to integrate seamlessly with the topographic features of the site. The proposed layout will maintain the existing coastal landscape's character and visual integrity, in line with the objectives of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.
B.1b Ensure the intended form and footprint of development does not dominate coastal elements, including foreshores, public spaces and other areas of natural beauty	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been deliberately designed to concentrate development away from sensitive coastal elements, including the wetland systems and foreshore areas located on the eastern portion of the site. These areas are proposed to be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation, providing long-term protection for the natural landscape and ensuring that no residential development will encroach upon or dominate these ecologically and visually sensitive areas. The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zoning is limited to the western and central portions of the site, which are visually and physically separated from the wetland and foreshore areas. As such, the built form will remain low-scale and consistent with the existing coastal village character of Karuah, avoiding visual dominance over natural coastal elements. Public access to the wetland edge is expected to be limited and managed appropriately to protect ecological values, with no interference in foreshore or public open space areas. The structure and intent of the Planning Proposal uphold the principles of visual

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			sensitivity, natural beauty, and landscape protection outlined in the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.
B.1c Incorporate adaptive, water-sensitive urban design into the development footprint to reduce run-off and manage water quality within receiving environments.	CWLRA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal is supported by a Stormwater Management Report, which outlines how water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) principles will be incorporated into the future development of the site. The strategy includes detention basins, vegetated swales, and water quality treatment systems to manage run-off and improve the quality of stormwater discharge into the adjacent wetland environment. The proposal includes a dedicated stormwater corridor and integrates naturalised drainage features that reflect existing flow paths, while minimising disturbance to riparian and wetland areas. The post-development scenario is designed to ensure that stormwater discharge does not exceed pre-development volumes and meets water quality objectives for nutrient, sediment and pollutant reduction, especially in consideration of downstream Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas. This WSUD approach aligns with the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023, the Coastal Management Act 2016, and Ministerial Direction 9.3, ensuring that development does not compromise receiving coastal environments and that hydrological function is maintained or improved.
B.1d Ensure that lot sizes, building heights and density are appropriate for the coastal settlement, and complement the existing or desired local character, supported by place based strategies.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
B.1e Avoid development that would harm geological features and geoheritage.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome B.2 Ensure urban development complements coastal scenic values			
B.2a Limit ribbon development and urban sprawl wherever possible. In certain locations, place-based strategies may support increased development density and building heights as a better response to urban growth.	CEA, CUA	Y	The rezoning of part of the site to R2 Low Density Residential is within the limits of Karuah and does not fragment rural land. This approach aligns with the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.

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B.2b Use greenbelts to create, maintain and mark out separation between settlements.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
B.2c Consider effects on scenic values and maintain publicly accessible views to significant landmarks.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
B.2d Ensure that building heights consider the effect on views from different vantage points.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
B.2e Retain or create views from public spaces. Prioritise this over creating views from private property.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
B.2f Provide for active transport links along foreshores, including along estuaries and coastal lakes, and between settlements to increase public access and amenity.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal provides for future public access opportunities and walkable connections between the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone and the adjoining township of Karuah. The concept layout identifies the opportunity for shared pedestrian and cycle pathways that connect to the broader local network, supporting walkable neighbourhood outcomes consistent with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036. Although direct access along the wetland interface is limited to protect environmentally sensitive areas (as per biodiversity and bushfire protection requirements), the proposal makes provision for perimeter access and view corridors that enhance public amenity while avoiding ecological disturbance. This reflects the principle of balancing access with conservation as outlined in the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023, and supports active transport and recreational values in accordance with the strategic vision for the locality.
Outcome C.1 Protect and promote heritage values			
C.1a Ensure development does not harm heritage values or sites.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	There are no heritage items on the site.
C.1b Work collaboratively with local Aboriginal people before and throughout the planning proposal process.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment was undertaken by Umwelt Pty Ltd (May 2024) in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW. The assessment included consultation with the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council and site inspections to identify any cultural values or constraints. No Aboriginal objects or places

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			were recorded on the site, and no areas of cultural sensitivity were identified. While no formal Aboriginal Place or heritage item is mapped under Clause 5.10 of the Port Stephens LEP 2013, the site-specific investigations have ensured that Aboriginal cultural heritage has been adequately considered. Further engagement is expected to occur during the planning proposal exhibition phase in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and associated guidelines.
C.1c With permission and guidance from local Traditional Custodians, identify and emphasise significant features of coastal land and sea Country	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y As documented in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment, consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW. This process included liaison with the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council and relevant Traditional Custodians to ensure that the planning proposal did not impact known areas of cultural significance. The assessment did not identify any significant features of coastal land or sea Country within the subject site. However, the proposal respects the broader cultural landscape by conserving sensitive environmental areas, including wetland and riparian zones, through C2 Environmental Conservation zoning. These actions help maintain ecological values and cultural connections to land and water. Further opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal cultural values into future development stages, such as through interpretive signage, landscaping, or place naming, will be explored in ongoing consultation with Traditional Custodians, subject to their guidance and approval.
C.1d With permission and guidance from local Traditional Custodians, identify and protect sacred and significant areas through the appropriate siting of development.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	N	N/A
C.1e Ensure land use, building type, scale and height respond to heritage items and areas.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome C.2 Provide public access to significant coastal assets			
C.2a Protect and, where practical, improve, public amenity, access to and use of beaches, foreshores, rock platforms, geoheritage sites and headlands, unless you must restrict	CVA, CEA	N	N/A

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access for public safety or for environmental or cultural protection. In doing so, consider both current and projected future coastal hazards.			
C.2b Identify opportunities to maintain and improve existing public access to beaches, foreshores, coastal waters and coastal lakes that support active and passive recreation activities, where this does not interfere with existing coastal industries.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment confirms that appropriate consultation and assessment have been undertaken in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW. This included review of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) register and engagement with the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council and relevant Traditional Custodians. No Aboriginal sites, objects or areas of recognised cultural or spiritual significance have been identified within the land subject to the proposed rezoning. However, the proposed zoning has been carefully designed to avoid disturbance to environmentally sensitive areas and to provide for long-term conservation of wetlands and riparian land, aligning with cultural values associated with Country. Should any areas of significance be identified in future stages (e.g. detailed site planning or construction), further consultation and management in accordance with statutory requirements and Traditional Custodian guidance will be undertaken to ensure appropriate protection and siting of development.
C.2c Consolidate access points and consider alternative access to protect sacred and significant Aboriginal cultural areas.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal does not propose development within or near any known sacred or significant Aboriginal cultural areas. As confirmed in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment no Aboriginal sites, objects, or areas of cultural heritage significance were identified within the investigation area. Nevertheless, the proposal supports a development footprint that avoids sensitive areas such as wetlands and riparian corridors, which are to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation. This zoning provides a natural buffer to any culturally sensitive areas that may be identified in the future. Access arrangements to and within the site will be further refined at subdivision and DA stages. These future stages will also consider additional cultural heritage input,

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			and any access points in proximity to potential cultural values will be consolidated or redirected as needed in consultation with local Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure ongoing protection.
C.2d Maintain and improve foreshore access and connections to existing or proposed networks of public open spaces. This includes waterways, riparian areas, bushland and parks for active and passive recreation.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal includes land adjacent to ecologically sensitive foreshore and wetland areas, which are proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation to ensure long-term protection. While direct foreshore access will be limited to preserve biodiversity values, the proposal provides opportunities to maintain and enhance public access around these areas where appropriate. Future subdivision design will incorporate local open space and pedestrian connections that improve accessibility to public land and recreational areas in Karuah, consistent with the objectives of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023. Importantly, any interface between residential areas and conservation zones will be managed to balance public amenity and ecological protection, with public access routes to be confirmed through detailed design and consultation at the development application stage.
C.2e Consider opportunities to protect and improve habitat connectivity through settlements, such as those described in the Greener Places Design Guide.	CVA, CEA	N	N/A
C.2f Avoid development on coastal dunes and foreshore reserves unless it is for essential public purposes, such as surf life-saving club buildings. Any building or structure located on dunes must be of lightweight construction and relocatable.	CVA, CEA	N	N/A
C.2g Define the boundaries of development sites with a public edge – for example, a pedestrian pathway or public laneway.	CEA, CUA	Y	The indicative concept plans define the boundary of the proposed urban areas with the conservation areas with a road and APZ network to provide a buffer (of sorts) between the land uses. This approach aligns with the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023.
C.2h Prevent the privatisation of coastal open space by ensuring development next to foreshores is set back, maintains public access and accessibility, and provides links and connections to other public accessways.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A

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Outcome C.3 Protect public amenity			
C.3a Avoid development that will overshadow the beach, foreshore or public domain. Apply the standard that there must be no overshadowing before 4 pm (midwinter) and 7 pm (Eastern Daylight Saving Time).	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
C.3b Protect the amenity of public spaces from buildings, structures or land uses that may be visually and/or acoustically intrusive or create wind funnels.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome D.1 Support sustainable industries and recreational activities that depend on the coast			
D.1a Ensure that development will not harm sustainable coastal industries needing waterfront access, or recreational use of the coastal environment.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
D.1b Protect and improve essential facilities such as access ramps and jetties for sustainable coastal industries needing waterfront access.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
D.1c Ensure access ramps, jetties, pontoons, groynes and other structures do not impede navigation on the water or harm coastal landforms or impair processes such as surf breaks.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A The Planning Proposal does not include any works or rezoning that would permit the construction of water-based infrastructure such as jetties, pontoons, groynes, or access ramps. No foreshore structures are proposed within the C2 Environmental Conservation zone or adjacent waterways. As such, there is no risk of interference with navigation, coastal landforms, or natural coastal processes, including surf breaks. The intent of the rezoning is to conserve sensitive foreshore areas and maintain the ecological integrity of the wetland and riparian environment.
D.1d Ensure that the proposal considers how development in a waterway may affect the land.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome D.2 Promote green infrastructure			
D.2a Do not allow development that is likely to significantly reduce connectivity of existing green infrastructure.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
D.2b Provide for diverse green infrastructure that can support the changing needs of current and future communities, and provide tourism and recreational opportunities.	CEA, CUA	N	N/A
Outcome E.1 Respond to coastal processes			
E.1a Planning proposals that affect land within a coastal hazard and risk	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y

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area must not alter coastal processes in a way that harms the natural environment or other land.			The Planning Proposal does not propose any development within the mapped coastal vulnerability area under Chapter 2 of the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021. The proposed rezoning avoids intensification of land uses within the coastal environment area and instead applies a C2 Environmental Conservation zone over the flood-affected wetland area to ensure its long-term protection. No changes are proposed that would affect coastal geomorphic processes, and the rezoning has been carefully designed to maintain the integrity of the coastal system. The Planning Proposal therefore does not alter coastal processes in a manner that would adversely impact the natural environment or surrounding land.
E.1b Exclude development in areas affected by a current or projected future coastal hazard that is likely to increase the risk of coastal hazards on that land or other land.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal excludes urban zoning within areas mapped as flood-prone or within the coastal environment area under Chapter 2 of the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021. These areas are proposed to be rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation to avoid intensification of land use and to protect them from any future development pressure. The land identified as flood-prone is located within the wetland and riparian corridor, which will be retained and managed as protected environmental land. No development is proposed in any coastal vulnerability area, and the zoning pattern ensures future development will not exacerbate coastal hazard risks on the subject or adjoining lands.
E.1c Locate or consolidate development in areas with little or no exposure to current and projected future coastal hazards, to ensure public safety and prevent risks to life.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal applies the R2 Low Density Residential zone only to areas of the site that are free from current and projected future coastal hazards. Hazard-prone land—particularly flood-affected areas adjacent to the wetland and within the mapped Coastal Environment Area—is excluded from urban development and instead proposed for C2 Environmental Conservation zoning. This zoning approach consolidates development in safe and suitable parts of the site and ensures that urban expansion does not occur in areas at risk of flooding or other coastal hazards, thereby safeguarding public safety and reducing future exposure to risk.
E.1d Do not increase development potential or intensify land uses in a coastal hazard or risk area	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no identified coastal hazards affecting the development site.

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Outcome E.2 Account for natural hazard risks			
E.2a Identify areas on and near the proposal that are affected by current or projected future coastal hazards. Ensure that the proposal is compatible with any identified threat or risk.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no current or projected future coastal hazard areas in the vicinity of the site.
E.2b Account for potential interaction between coastal hazards and other current and future natural hazards. This includes flooding, bushfires, landslip, heatwaves, severe storms, east coast lows and cyclones. Refer to the Strategic Guide to Planning for Natural Hazards	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no current or projected future coastal hazard areas in the vicinity of the site.
E.2c Manage natural hazard risk within the development site. Avoid using public space or adjoining land to lessen risk.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no current or projected future coastal hazard areas in the vicinity of the site.
Outcome E.3 Account for climate change			
E.3a Demonstrate that the proposal applies a 100-year planning horizon for the full range of climate change projections for coastal hazards. This approach recognises that sea level is projected to continue to rise for centuries because of climate change.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no current or projected future coastal hazard areas in the vicinity of the site.
E.3b Consider how climate change could affect the risk profile of existing natural hazards and create new vulnerabilities and exposure for the proposal in the future.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been informed by site-specific technical assessments, including flood modelling and stormwater impact reporting, which apply long-term planning assumptions consistent with a 100-year planning horizon. These assessments consider projected impacts of sea level rise, flood behaviour and other relevant climate change scenarios consistent with NSW Government guidelines. In particular, the stormwater management strategy demonstrates that flood-affected areas are to be retained for environmental protection via C2 zoning, thereby limiting development exposure to future climate-related risks. This precautionary approach aligns with the long-term intent of the NSW Coastal Management Framework and relevant provisions of the Coastal Management Act 2016.
Outcome E.4 Provide sustainable defences to coastal hazards			
E.4a Reduce exposure to coastal hazards by protecting, restoring or improving natural defences. This includes coastal dunes, vegetation,	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no natural defences or identified coastal hazards affecting the development site.

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coastal floodplains and coastal wetlands, where suitable.			
E.4b If natural defences are not possible, reduce exposure to coastal hazards without significantly degrading: • biological diversity and ecosystem integrity • ecological, biophysical, geological and geomorphological coastal processes • beach and foreshore amenity, or the social and cultural value of these areas • public safety and access to, or use of, beaches or headlands.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. There are no natural defences or identified coastal hazards affecting the development site.
Outcome E.5 Protect essential infrastructure			
E.5a Locate and design essential infrastructure to reduce vulnerability to current and projected future coastal hazards. Consider the effects of climate change over at least a 100-year planning horizon.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y Essential infrastructure such as stormwater management systems and future water and sewer services have been planned and located outside areas of coastal vulnerability, flood hazard, or other mapped hazard zones. The Stormwater Management Report addresses long-term climate resilience by incorporating flood mitigation measures and ensuring water quality outcomes for downstream sensitive environments, including adjacent wetlands. The servicing strategy and planning layout have avoided vulnerable land and are based on future-proofed assumptions consistent with a 100-year planning horizon. This is consistent with the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023 and ensures resilience against the anticipated impacts of climate change.
E.5b Where exposure to coastal hazards cannot be avoided, prepare adaptation plans for essential service infrastructure. These plans should be consistent with any applicable coastal management program.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. The site is not identified as being subject to current or projected future coastal hazards.
E.5c Consult local Aboriginal land management experts and emergency management agencies on how to strategically locate access routes and other essential infrastructure.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	N/A. The site is not identified as being subject to current or projected future coastal hazards.
Outcome E.6 Change land uses to manage legacy issues and avoid creating new ones			
E.6a Ensure the proposal will not require coastal management interventions to remain viable over its expected lifespan.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal avoids rezoning or enabling development within areas mapped as coastal vulnerability or requiring future coastal intervention. The proposed R2 Low Density Residential and C2 Environmental Conservation zones have been strategically located outside of the mapped Coastal Environment Area under the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and do not

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			intersect with areas that would necessitate engineered coastal protection works. The C2 zoning provides a long-term buffer between future residential land and the adjacent wetland system, reducing the likelihood of development pressures triggering coastal hazard mitigation. Accordingly, the proposal ensures development viability over the long term without the need for coastal management interventions.
E.6b Consider the potential legacy effects of the proposal and if the proposed land uses or development will create a social, environmental, economic or cultural burden for future generations.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal has been developed with consideration of long-term sustainability, resilience, and community benefit. The rezoning includes permanent environmental protection of sensitive wetland areas through a C2 Environmental Conservation zone, avoiding development in high-risk or ecologically constrained land. Residential development is directed to land that is low-risk and already well-connected to existing infrastructure and services, minimising future servicing costs and environmental impacts. The proposed land use pattern facilitates a compact and walkable residential community with access to open space and environmental buffers, supporting healthy lifestyles and liveability. The proposal will deliver housing choice and support the economic vitality of the Karuah township without placing an undue burden on future generations.
E.6c Consider if the proposed change of land use could remove redundant legacy infrastructure or reduce existing legacy effects.	CWLRA, CVA, CEA, CUA	Y	Y The Planning Proposal does not introduce land uses that would create or perpetuate legacy infrastructure burdens. On the contrary, it enables a more sustainable land use outcome by consolidating development within a defined low-risk area, adjacent to existing infrastructure corridors. The rezoning from RU2 Rural Landscape to R2 Low Density Residential (and C2 Environmental Conservation) facilitates the formal retirement of underutilised rural land, while preserving environmentally constrained areas. The introduction of a structured urban layout will enable coordinated infrastructure planning, which may rationalise or eliminate inefficient rural servicing arrangements over time, thereby reducing legacy effects associated with dispersed rural development.

Q4: Is the Planning Proposal consistent with a Council's local strategic or other local strategic plan?

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6.3.2.5 Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020

The Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) 2020 sets out the 20-year vision for the LGA and identifies the planning priorities and actions to achieve a connected and prosperous economy, a protected and celebrated environment, a strong and sustainable community, and a collaborative and informed Council. The LSPS responds to the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and provides the local framework for growth and change within the LGA.

The LSPS specifically identifies Karuah as a location where future growth should be carefully managed to respect the town's environmental context, cultural significance, and infrastructure capacity. It recognises that growth in Karuah should align with the objectives of the Karuah Place Plan 2022 and balance environmental conservation with future housing opportunities.

Figure 24 details a portion of the land including Karuah within the PS LSPS is designated as a Local Centre with a Local Area Strategy (Karuah Place Plan):

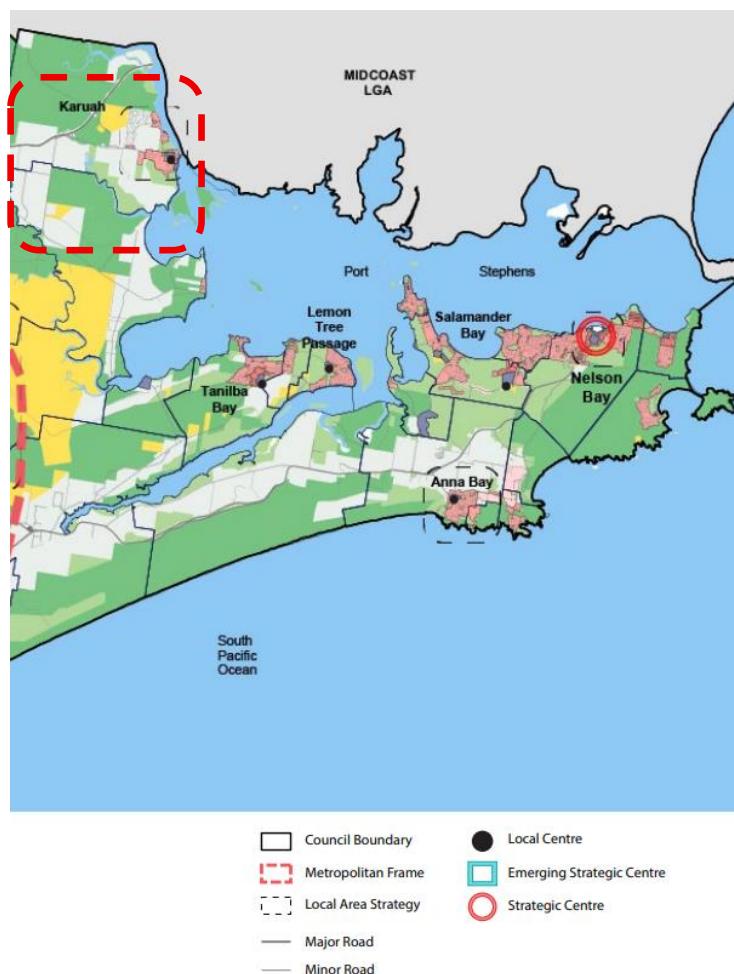


Figure 24 PS LSPS excerpt (Karuah edged in red dash)

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The Planning Proposal directly aligns with and supports the LSPS Planning Priorities as follows:

Table 9 LSPS Planning Priorities Alignment

Planning Priority 1 – Support the growth of strategic centres and major employment areas

The Planning Proposal supports Planning Priority 1 by reinforcing Karuah's role as a recognised local centre within the hierarchy of settlements in Port Stephens. While Karuah is not identified as a strategic centre of the scale of Raymond Terrace or Salamander Bay, it functions as an important local town centre providing essential services, employment opportunities, and community facilities to both Karuah residents and the surrounding rural hinterland.

The proposed rezoning to R2 Low Density Residential facilitates the logical and lineal extension of the town and supports the future growth of the Karuah local centre by increasing the residential population within close proximity to the town's services, shops and employment opportunities. This increase in population will help strengthen the viability and sustainability of the existing centre by supporting local businesses, schools, community infrastructure and services.

Furthermore, the Planning Proposal aligns with the LSPS direction to ensure that new housing growth in smaller centres like Karuah is sequenced, environmentally responsive, and aligned with infrastructure capacity, thus indirectly supporting the vitality of higher-order strategic centres in the LGA by ensuring appropriate growth occurs in the right locations.

The delivery of new housing in Karuah complements the LSPS broader objective of ensuring that future growth contributes positively to the local economy and maintains the viability of employment nodes across the LGA.

Planning Priority 2 | Make business growth easier

The Planning Proposal will indirectly support business growth in Karuah through the provision of additional residential land supply, contributing to population growth that will sustain and expand the demand for local businesses and services. Increased population is fundamental to the continued viability and future growth of Karuah's existing retail and service businesses, which rely on a strong local catchment to thrive.

The additional housing opportunities enabled by the rezoning will assist in creating a more robust and sustainable local economy, supporting small businesses through greater patronage and demand for services within the town. This aligns with the LSPS direction to make business growth easier by supporting centres like Karuah with appropriate, well-located and sequenced land supply for future growth.

Moreover, the proposal complements the strategic objective to leverage existing infrastructure and strengthen local centres without overextending Council's infrastructure responsibilities, aligning with the LSPS's aim to reduce barriers to sustainable business growth through coordinated planning and infrastructure delivery.

Planning Priority 3 | Support tourism development and attract events

The Planning Proposal will assist in supporting the ongoing viability of tourism within Karuah by contributing to the population growth necessary to sustain and enhance local tourism infrastructure, services and facilities. A stable and growing residential population helps to support the year-round operation of local businesses, many of which also cater to the tourism sector.

The provision of additional housing through this Planning Proposal will help underpin the viability of Karuah's role as a gateway to key tourist destinations in the Port Stephens LGA and the broader Hunter Region. A larger resident population can help attract and sustain more diverse services, hospitality offerings, and community infrastructure, all of which improve the attractiveness of Karuah for visitors.

Furthermore, the environmental conservation outcomes delivered by this Proposal, including the protection of Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully will enhance the environmental character of Karuah, aligning with eco-tourism objectives and the LSPS's focus on promoting tourism through the conservation of the natural environment.

The Planning Proposal is consistent with the LSPS direction to ensure that land use decisions support tourism development by improving the quality of local infrastructure and services that can serve both residents and visitors alike.

Table 9 LSPS Planning Priorities Alignment**Planning Priority 4 | Ensure suitable land supply**

The Planning Proposal directly supports this Planning Priority by providing a logical and orderly extension of the existing residential area of Karuah, delivering additional residential land supply in a location identified as suitable for future growth. As detailed in Figure 3, the existing mapped Urban Release Areas are almost fully redeveloped and there is a need for the provision of additional housing, especially within the designated town limits. The Proposal aligns with the LSPS's recognition that future housing growth should be concentrated in existing settlements such as Karuah, where urban expansion can be efficiently serviced and integrated with existing infrastructure.

The rezoning of approximately 15 hectares to R2 Low Density Residential will contribute to meeting the identified need for additional housing opportunities in Karuah, supporting population growth and addressing housing demand consistent with the LSPS Housing Priorities. The location of the site, adjacent to existing R2 zoned land and services, ensures that the expansion of land supply is both sustainable and efficient.

Importantly, the Planning Proposal also delivers environmental protection outcomes through the concurrent rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares to C2 Environmental Conservation, demonstrating a balanced approach to land supply and conservation. This reflects the LSPS's emphasis on managing land use changes to protect sensitive environments while ensuring that urban growth occurs in suitable locations.

Through this balance of urban growth and environmental protection, the Planning Proposal aligns with the LSPS objective to deliver a sustainable, well-located and serviced supply of land to support the housing needs of the Port Stephens LGA.

Planning Priority 5 | Increase diversity of housing choice

The Planning Proposal responds directly to this Planning Priority by facilitating the delivery of a diverse range of housing opportunities through the rezoning of land to R2 Low Density Residential whilst maintaining a pocket of RU2 land in the north-eastern corner. The R2 zone provides the flexibility to accommodate a variety of dwelling types, including detached houses, dual occupancies, and potentially manor houses or terraces (where permitted under future controls or the Housing SEPP). This diversity supports the changing needs of the Karuah community, including families, first-home buyers, downsizers, and ageing residents seeking to remain within their established community.

The Karuah Place Plan (2022) also reinforces the need for a more varied housing mix to support population growth and demographic changes. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this direction by unlocking land capable of providing different housing forms that are well-connected to the existing town centre and services.

Furthermore, by rezoning land that is adjacent to existing urban areas and serviced infrastructure, the Proposal provides opportunities for sensitive and staged housing delivery over time, aligned with market demand and infrastructure capacity. This will contribute to meeting the LSPS objective of increasing housing choice across the LGA, supporting the growth of a resilient and inclusive community in Karuah.

Planning Priority 6 | Plan infrastructure to support communities

The Planning Proposal demonstrates alignment with this Planning Priority through its careful consideration of infrastructure capacity and servicing requirements. Supporting technical studies prepared as part of the Planning Proposal, including the Rezoning Servicing Strategy, Stormwater Management Report, Bushfire Assessment, and Traffic Impact Assessment, confirm that the site can be feasibly and appropriately serviced by existing or planned infrastructure networks, with upgrades where necessary.

The proposed R2 Low Density Residential zoning represents a logical and efficient extension of the existing urban area of Karuah, enabling future development that can readily connect to established roads, utilities, and services. Importantly, this avoids unnecessary expansion of infrastructure corridors or premature land release that would otherwise increase the cost burden on Council or service providers.

Table 9 LSPS Planning Priorities Alignment

In addition, the Planning Proposal contributes to the sequencing of infrastructure investment in alignment with growth, as identified in the Karuah Place Plan (2022) and the LSPS. It helps to consolidate urban development within areas identified as appropriate for future housing, supporting more efficient and cost-effective delivery of community facilities, open space, water, sewer, and transport infrastructure.

The site's proximity to the existing Karuah town centre ensures that future residents will benefit from established services, while the environmental zoning (C2) proposed will maintain important ecological and flood management infrastructure in perpetuity.

In this way, the Planning Proposal aligns with and gives effect to Planning Priority 6 by facilitating sustainable, infrastructure-aligned growth

Planning Priority 7 | Conserve biodiversity values and corridors

The Planning Proposal strongly aligns with Planning Priority 7 through the protection and conservation of significant environmental values identified on the site. In particular, the Proposal delivers permanent environmental outcomes by rezoning approximately 9.8 hectares of the site to C2 Environmental Conservation. This directly secures the ongoing protection of native vegetation, biodiversity corridors, riparian lands associated with Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully, and important habitat areas identified through ecological assessment.

The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) prepared for the site confirms the ecological significance of these areas and supports the proposed zoning outcomes. The Proposal ensures that areas of high environmental value are excluded from future urban development and maintained in perpetuity for conservation purposes, consistent with the objectives of the LSPS to protect biodiversity corridors and strengthen ecological connectivity.

Furthermore, the proposed C2 zoning aligns with the LSPS direction to enhance the resilience and function of environmental lands and supports broader biodiversity conservation initiatives identified at both the local and regional scale, including those within the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and the Resilience and Hazards SEPP.

Planning Priority 8 | Improve resilience to hazards and climate change

The Planning Proposal supports this priority through a site-specific and evidence-based approach to hazard management, environmental protection, and climate resilience.

The Proposal is underpinned by a comprehensive suite of technical studies, including flood assessment, bushfire assessment, stormwater management and servicing strategies, which demonstrate that future residential development will be appropriately sited and designed to minimise exposure to natural hazards. These assessments confirm that:

- Flood-affected areas and wetlands associated with Mustons Gully are being excluded from urban development and rezoned to C2 Environmental Conservation.
- Appropriate stormwater management measures are identified to mitigate impacts of increased rainfall intensity and climate-related risks.
- Bushfire risk has been considered, with the proposed residential land capable of complying with bushfire protection measures and asset protection zones.

Through these measures, the Proposal avoids intensifying risk on sensitive floodplains, wetlands, and areas subject to bushfire hazard. This is consistent with the LSPS's focus on avoiding development in vulnerable locations, increasing resilience to hazards and adapting to future climate change impacts.

The Proposal also contributes to improved environmental resilience by protecting biodiversity corridors and riparian lands, which perform important natural hazard mitigation functions, including flood management and heat reduction. These protections align with the objectives of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP and the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.

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Table 9 LSPS Planning Priorities Alignment***Planning Priority 9 | Protect and preserve productive agricultural land***

The Planning Proposal aligns with this Planning Priority by facilitating the rezoning of land that is no longer identified for productive agricultural purposes and does not contribute meaningfully to the agricultural economy of the Port Stephens LGA.

The subject site at No. 339 Tarean Road, Karuah is currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape, however, it is directly adjacent to existing R2 Low Density Residential zoned land and is clearly identified in the Karuah Place Plan 2022, Port Stephens Housing Strategy 2020, and Port Stephens LSPS 2020 as suitable for urban purposes. These strategic documents explicitly recognise that Karuah's urban expansion will require transitioning some existing rural zoned land to residential purposes, where it does not conflict with broader agricultural objectives.

The site is not located within any identified Regionally Significant Agricultural Land or mapped priority agricultural lands, nor is it actively used for agricultural production. Rather, it represents a logical and strategic extension of the existing residential footprint of Karuah. Moreover, the Planning Proposal preserves approximately 5.4 hectares of RU2 Rural Landscape land in the north-eastern corner of the site along with 9.8 hectares of environmentally sensitive land within a proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zone which will form a buffer to the rural land retained in the north-eastern corner. Agriculture is prohibited in the C2 zoned land which reinforces the protection of natural values over any notional productive land uses.

The Planning Proposal ensures that Port Stephens' genuine agricultural lands remain protected, while enabling urban growth on land already identified as surplus to future rural or agricultural use. This is consistent with Planning Priority 9 and ensures the right balance between protecting agricultural land and delivering new housing in accordance with Council's adopted strategic direction.

Planning Priority 10 | Create people friendly spaces in our local centres where people can come together

The Planning Proposal supports Planning Priority 10 by facilitating the logical and lineal expansion of Karuah in a manner that will reinforce the role of the Karuah local centre as a focus for the community, and contribute to the creation of people-friendly, connected neighbourhoods.

The proposal delivers a structure for future residential subdivision which will create additional housing opportunities within walking distance of the existing Karuah local centre, encouraging greater use of the town's retail, commercial, recreational and community facilities. The increase in population facilitated by the Planning Proposal will help to support the ongoing viability and vibrancy of local services and amenities, contributing positively to the social fabric of Karuah.

Furthermore, the Planning Proposal responds to the Karuah Place Plan 2022 which identifies opportunities to strengthen local identity, improve connectivity, and create spaces where people can come together. By focusing residential development within an identified urban expansion area, and securing the protection of key environmental lands, the proposal ensures that future development will integrate with the town's existing pedestrian networks, open spaces, and community hubs.

This outcome is entirely consistent with Planning Priority 10, ensuring that new neighbourhoods are integrated with the town's established centre and contribute to the ongoing development of Karuah as a people-friendly, inclusive, and connected community.

Planning Priority 11 | Integrate land use and transport planning

The Planning Proposal supports Planning Priority 11 through its strategic location and careful consideration of transport connectivity in the expansion of the Karuah urban area.

The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing urban area of Karuah and in proximity to Tarean Road, which functions as the main access route through the town and connects to the Pacific Highway. The site's integration into the existing road network has been considered in the preparation of the Planning Proposal, including the capacity for future subdivision layouts to connect effectively to existing residential streets and to allow for convenient access to the Karuah town centre.

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Table 9 LSPS Planning Priorities Alignment

Supporting technical reports, including traffic and servicing assessments, demonstrate that the site can be developed with efficient road connections that promote accessibility, walkability, and support for active transport modes within the emerging residential neighbourhood. While Karuah itself has limited public transport options, the site's location supports private vehicle connections to key employment areas in Williamtown, Tomago and Raymond Terrace and beyond via the Pacific Highway.

By facilitating development in a location already identified for growth in both the Port Stephens LSPS 2020 and the Karuah Place Plan 2022, this Planning Proposal aligns with the principle of concentrating growth where infrastructure connections already exist or can be feasibly provided. This approach reinforces integrated land use and transport outcomes, avoids fragmented development, and ensures that new growth areas are well-connected to the established urban framework.

Planning Priority 12 | Enhance inter-regional connections

The Planning Proposal supports Planning Priority 12 through its alignment with the planned urban growth of Karuah, a settlement strategically located along the Pacific Highway corridor. Karuah serves as a key node within the Port Stephens LGA with strong connections to the broader Hunter Region and North Coast, providing important inter-regional links between Newcastle, Raymond Terrace, and northwards towards Taree and beyond.

The Planning Proposal facilitates logical and lineal residential expansion adjacent to the existing urban footprint, consolidating growth in a location that benefits from direct access to this established regional transport infrastructure. By concentrating new housing supply in Karuah, the Planning Proposal leverages these existing connections, supporting the role of Karuah as a contributor to the region's broader housing supply while maintaining efficient access to employment, services, and transport links across the Hunter and beyond.

The proposal complements Port Stephens Council's strategic planning objectives by strengthening Karuah's role as a connected and accessible town within the LGA, while contributing to the regional planning objectives of ensuring settlements are well-linked to key transport routes and regional centres.

6.3.2.6 Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy (2024)

The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy (2024) builds upon the directions of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 to guide housing growth and land use planning across the Port Stephens Local Government Area. It identifies priorities and actions to ensure a suitable supply of land for housing, improve housing affordability, increase housing diversity, and promote liveable and sustainable communities. The Strategy responds directly to the NSW Government's identified housing targets for the LGA, including the provision of 11,100 additional dwellings to accommodate an estimated population increase of 20,000 people by 2041.

The Local Housing Strategy establishes four key outcomes for future housing in Port Stephens:

- Ensure suitable land supply
- Improve housing affordability
- Increase diversity of housing choice
- Facilitate liveable communities

Each outcome is supported by specific priorities and actions to unlock housing supply, promote infill and greenfield development, respond to housing stress, and deliver more diverse and affordable housing near employment centres.

The Planning Proposal for Karuah is consistent with the Local Housing Strategy's objectives to deliver a greater diversity of housing types, support urban consolidation in areas with access to infrastructure and services, and facilitate

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additional housing supply in growth areas identified within the Strategy's Housing Supply Plan. Specifically, the Planning Proposal aligns with:

- **Outcome 1:** Ensuring suitable land supply by supporting rezoning requests in areas identified as suitable for growth. Specifically, Action 1.1 seeks to "**Support rezoning requests that are consistent with adopted planning strategies, the Housing Supply Plan and/or meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1 and 2 (emphasis added)**". That is, the Local Housing Strategy seeks to remove barriers to unlock housing supply.
- **Outcome 2:** The Planning Proposal will indirectly assist in improve housing affordability by providing additional residential allotments which will provide more affordable options in close proximity to existing services and facilities
- **Outcome 3:** Increasing diversity of housing choice through the provision of smaller lots and a range of dwelling types. The provision of R2 (15 hectares) and RU2 (5.4 hectares) of land will provide for increased housing diversity on the large site within the urban area limits.
- **Outcome 4:** Facilitating liveable communities with connected and sustainable housing opportunities. The future development application will deliver new and sustainable housing in accordance with SEPP (Sustainable Buildings) and other environmentally sustainable methods for construction and on-going use. The subject site is also located within the Karuah Place Plan which seeks to create well defined localities which specific requirements depended on their opportunities and constraints. This is discussed below.

The available residential land around Karuah is close to fully developed and requires planning proposals to be implemented to release additional areas to meet housing targets. Notably, the mapped Urban Release Areas around Karuah are almost fully developed as detailed in Figure 3 which demonstrates a demand for housing in the area.

The Planning Proposal also has regard to Appendix 1 – Greenfield Housing Criteria under the PSLHS which demonstrates the land is suitable for housing. Specifically, the subject site is not excluded from consideration given it is not located within Wallalong as part of a previous urban release area. However, the proposal satisfies the criteria for the following reasons:

- The land is identified within the Karuah Place Plan
- The land is currently zoned for non-residential purposes (RU2) and seeks to rezone to R2 – Low Density Residential
- The Planning Proposal considers the constraints on future development imposed by bushfire, flooding, biodiversity, aboriginal cultural heritage and infrastructure and services. Specialist reports have been provided with this Planning Proposal demonstrating additional housing can be delivered despite the constraints.

6.3.2.7 Karuah Place Plan (2022)

The Karuah Place Plan has been prepared by Port Stephens Council to provide a localised response to the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and broader regional planning frameworks. The Karuah Place Plan was formulated as a result of over 3,700 people across the LGA responding to a place census detailing what they value and how they rate their neighbourhood. The Karuah Place Plan (KPP) was the first Place Plan developed and was adopted by Council in March 2022.

The Place Plan identifies key actions, priorities, and strategic directions for Karuah to guide future land use planning, infrastructure investment, and community development initiatives. It also recognises the role of the Karuah community and the strong cultural, environmental and economic values underpinning the town.

The Place Plan aligns with the objectives of the Planning Proposal as it identifies the need to secure additional residential land, ensure appropriate servicing infrastructure, and preserve key environmental features including biodiversity corridors and riparian areas. The Place Plan specifically supports the concept of additional residential growth through staged land release in appropriate locations, consistent with this Planning Proposal.

The Karuah Place Plan is a key reference document to demonstrate the strategic merit of this Planning Proposal.



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Figure 25 Karuah Place Plan (approximate site edged in red)

As detailed in Figure 25 (above), part of the subject site is identified as “Stage 1 Residential Land Release” with a large portion of the land not mapped or mapped for Environmental conservation. The areas between the Environmental Conservation Areas and the “Stage 1 Residential Land Release Areas” are effectively “buffer zones” and the detailed analysis provided in the Bushfire, Flood and BDAR reports submitted with this Planning Proposal demonstrate that these “buffer zones” are capable of be repositioned as housing.

The keys aspects of the Karuah Place Plan are detailed below.

Housing Demand and Urban Growth

The Place Plan acknowledges the demand for additional housing in Karuah and supports investigation of opportunities for urban expansion, subject to environmental and servicing constraints. Specifically, the Place Plan identifies the need to confirm suitable areas for residential development and to ensure infrastructure and environmental outcomes are properly addressed.

This Planning Proposal directly responds to this priority by seeking to rezone approximately 15ha of land to R2 Low Density Residential to facilitate future residential subdivision. As discussed above, the mapped Urban Release Areas under PSLEP 2013 to the south of the site have largely been developed and occupied (refer to Figure 3) with little available additional housing opportunities remaining in Karuah. The Planning Proposal provides a vehicle to deliver a small portion of the “Stage 1 Residential Land Release Areas” by providing for approximately 157 new residential allotments that can be delivered in a staged process to minimise the impact on existing infrastructure and services whilst providing for more diverse and affordable housing.

The site is identified within the Place Plan as a suitable future growth area, subject to resolution of infrastructure and environmental matters it is clear the site is capable of delivering additional housing in an appropriate location within the existing urban area. This is detailed in the technical studies on biodiversity, stormwater, flooding, bushfire, and servicing accompanying this Planning Proposal.

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The proposal will contribute to meeting identified housing demand in Karuah and the Port Stephens LGA more broadly.

Infrastructure and Servicing

The Place Plan emphasises the importance of ensuring that infrastructure capacity is considered in planning for growth.

The Planning Proposal is supported by a comprehensive servicing strategy prepared by AT&L (July 2025), which confirms that the site can be serviced with water, sewer, electricity, and telecommunications infrastructure. Importantly, discussions have been ongoing with Hunter Water who have provided preliminary servicing advice for the delivery of key infrastructure.

This strategy aligns with the Place Plan's requirement to ensure that land is only rezoned where infrastructure provision can be adequately demonstrated.

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Corridors

The Place Plan identifies Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and the broader corridor network as significant environmental features requiring protection.

The Planning Proposal responds to these values by proposing to rezone approximately 9.8 hectares of land to C2 Environmental Conservation to ensure permanent protection of environmentally sensitive areas including riparian corridors and native vegetation.

The proposed zoning aligns with the Place Plan's direction to protect ecological values and enhance biodiversity corridors.

Community Character and Heritage

The Place Plan highlights the importance of retaining Karuah's unique natural and cultural heritage.

The Planning Proposal respects these objectives by retaining large areas of land for conservation and ensuring that future urban development will provide an appropriate transition to existing residential areas.

The proposal retains the rural landscape interface to the north-east through the continuation of the RU2 Rural Landscape zone.

Resilience and Natural Hazards

The Place Plan identifies the need to ensure that new development addresses risks associated with flooding, bushfire, and climate resilience.

The Planning Proposal is informed by up-to-date technical assessments including flood impact modelling, bushfire assessment, and stormwater management plans.

These studies confirm that the site is capable of supporting future development without unacceptable risks and with appropriate mitigation measures in place.

As such, the Planning Proposal is consistent with the Karuah Place Plan and is eminently capable of delivering a balance of residential housing (15 hectares), environmental conservation areas (9.8 hectares) and rural zones (5.4 hectares) on the subject site.

Q5: Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable state and regional studies or strategies?

There are no other specific State or regional studies or strategies to which this Planning Proposal is required to align beyond those identified above. The Planning Proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with all applicable strategic policy frameworks at both State and regional levels.



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Q6: Is the Planning Proposal consistent with the applicable State Environmental Planning Policies?

There are no State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) or draft Policies or Deemed SEPPs that would prohibit or restrict this Planning Proposal. A list of relevant SEPPs is included in **Table 10**.

Table 10 Relevant State Environmental Planning Policies

SEPP	Relevance	Y/N	Comments
SEPP Resilience and Hazards 2021	The Resilience and Hazards SEPP repealed and replace three former SEPPs related to coastal management, hazardous and offensive development and remediation of land.	Yes	The provisions of Chapter 2 – Coastal Management apply to the site and the site is mapped within the coastal wetlands area. The Planning Proposal details that the residential land will avoid the mapped areas and will zone this areas a C2 Environmental Conservation. This is discussed in Part 4.2 of this Report. The provisions of Chapter 4 – Remediation of Land also apply to the Proposal. A Preliminary Site Investigation for contamination have been undertaken by Douglas Partners who conclude that based on the investigation and previous experience with similar sites, contaminated land is not considered to be a major constraint to the rezoning of the land. The Planning Proposal does not change the zoning to allow any uses likely to create contamination risks. The SEPP will continue to apply to any future DA.
SEPP (Sustainable Buildings) 2022	This SEPP requires residential development to achieve minimum performance standards for thermal comfort and water efficiency with the intention of reducing demand for energy and potable water.	Yes	This application does not change the manner in which this SEPP will apply to any future development application for new residential accommodation.
SEPP (Housing) 2021	This SEPP aims to incentivise the supply and ensure the effective delivery of new affordable and diverse housing. The Housing SEPP consolidates five existing housing related policies, including: • State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 (ARHSEPP); • State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) 2004 (Seniors SEPP); • State Environmental Planning Policy No 70 - Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes) (SEPP 70); • State Environmental Planning Policy No 21 - Caravan Parks; and • State Environmental Planning Policy No 36 - Manufactured Home Estates.	Yes	The Planning Proposal seeks low-density residential zoning and does not alter the application of this SEPP. Any future DA will be subject to its provisions as relevant.

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Table 10 Relevant State Environmental Planning Policies

SEPP	Relevance	Y/N	Comments
SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008	This SEPP defines types of development for which development consent is not required.	Yes	This application for a Planning Proposal does not change the manner in which this SEPP applies to the site.
SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	This SEPP aims to facilitate the delivery of new infrastructure and protect the safe and efficient operation of existing infrastructure. This SEPP repeals and replaces four former SEPPs related to infrastructure, transport, education and childcare.	Yes	Tarean Road is not a classified state or regional road. This Planning Proposal does not alter the application of this SEPP. Future DAs will consider its provisions where relevant.
SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021	This SEPP repeals and replaces 11 previous SEPPs.	Yes	The Planning Proposal proposes C2 Environmental Conservation zoning for biodiversity protection, aligning with this SEPP. Future development will be subject to relevant biodiversity assessment as noted in the BDAR. The Planning Proposal does not change the way in which the SEPP would apply to the site or to future development upon the site.
SEPP (Industry and Employment) 2021	This SEPP repeals and replaces two former SEPPs related to employment lands in Western Sydney and advertising and signage.	Yes	The Planning Proposal does not change the way in which the SEPP would apply to the site or to future development upon the site.

The Planning Proposal has been reviewed against all applicable SEPPs, and it is confirmed that the Planning Proposal is consistent with their objectives and provisions. This Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 mapping in relation to zoning, minimum lot size, height of buildings and urban release areas. It does not change the operation or applicability of any SEPP to future development on the site.

Q7: Is the Planning Proposal consistent with the applicable Ministerial Directions?

The proposal is consistent with all applicable Ministerial Directions under Section 9.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* as outlined in the below table.

Table 11 Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions

Ministerial Direction	Relevance	Y/N	Comments
1. Planning Systems			
1.1 Implementation of Regional Plans	This direction applies to a relevant planning authority when preparing a planning proposal for land to which a Regional Plan has been released by the Minister for Planning. Direction 1.1 (1) Planning proposals must be consistent with a Regional Plan released by the Minister for Planning.	Yes	The Planning Proposal is consistent with the Hunter Regional Plans 2041 as discussed above. The Planning Proposal satisfies this Ministerial Direction.

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Table 11 Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions

1.3 Approval and Referral Requirements	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal. Direction 1.3 (1) A planning proposal to which this direction applies must: (a) minimise the inclusion of provisions that require the concurrence, consultation or referral of development applications to a Minister or public authority, and (b) not contain provisions requiring concurrence, consultation or referral of a Minister or public authority unless the relevant planning authority has obtained the approval of: i. the appropriate Minister or public authority, and ii. the Planning Secretary (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Secretary), prior to undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act, and (c) not identify development as designated development unless the relevant planning authority: i. can satisfy the Planning Secretary (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Secretary) that the class of development is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and ii. has obtained the approval of the Planning Secretary (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Secretary) prior to undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act.	Yes	The Planning Proposal seeks to alter the maps of PSLEP 2013 in relation to zoning, minimum lot size, height of buildings and urban release areas. The Planning Proposal does not introduce contain any additional provisions for concurrence, consultation or referral not already part of PSLEP 2013. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.
1.4 Site Specific Provisions	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will allow a particular development to be carried out. Direction 1.4 (1) A planning proposal that will amend another environmental planning instrument in order to allow particular development to be carried out must either: (a) allow that land use to be carried out in the zone the land is situated on, or (b) rezone the site to an existing zone already in the environmental planning instrument that allows that land use without imposing any development standards or requirements in addition to those already contained in that zone, or (c) allow that land use on the relevant land without imposing any development standards or requirements in addition to those already	Yes	The Planning Proposal seeks to alter the maps of PSLEP 2013 in relation to zoning, minimum lot size, height of buildings and urban release areas. The Planning Proposal does not introduce any new development standards or provisions not already part of PSLEP 2013. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.

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Table 11 Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions

	contained in the principal environmental planning instrument being amended. (2) A planning proposal must not contain or refer to drawings that show details of the proposed development.		
3. Biodiversity and Conservation			
3.1 Conservation Zones	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal. Direction 3.1 (1) A planning proposal must include provisions that facilitate the protection and conservation of environmentally sensitive areas. (2) A planning proposal that applies to land within a conservation zone or land otherwise identified for environment conservation/protection purposes in a LEP must not reduce the conservation standards that apply to the land (including by modifying development standards that apply to the land). This requirement does not apply to a change to a development standard for minimum lot size for a dwelling in accordance with Direction 9.2 (2) of "<i>Rural Lands</i>".	Yes	The Planning Proposal seeks to apply the C2 Environmental Conservation zone to portions of the site to protect wetlands, riparian corridors and biodiversity values consistent with this Direction. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.
3.2 Heritage Conservation	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal. Direction 3.2 (1) A planning proposal must contain provisions that facilitate the conservation of: (a) items, places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects or precincts of environmental heritage significance to an area, in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item, area, object or place, identified in a study of the environmental heritage of the area, (b) Aboriginal objects or Aboriginal places that are protected under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>, and (c) Aboriginal areas, Aboriginal objects, Aboriginal places or landscapes identified by an Aboriginal heritage survey prepared by or on behalf of an Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal body or public authority and provided to the relevant planning authority, which identifies the area, object, place or landscape as being of heritage significance to Aboriginal culture and people.	N/A	The site is not identified as a heritage item nor is it located within a Heritage Conservation Area. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.

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4. Resilience and Hazards

4.1 Flooding	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities that are responsible for flood prone land when preparing a planning proposal that creates, removes or alters a zone or a provision that affects flood prone land. A planning proposal must include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with: (a) the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy, (b) the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005, (c) the Considering flooding in land use planning guideline 2021, and (d) any adopted flood study and/or floodplain risk management plan prepared in accordance with the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005 and adopted by the relevant council. (2) A planning proposal must not rezone land within the flood planning area from Recreation, Rural, Special Purpose or Conservation Zones to a Residential, Employment, Mixed Use, W4 Working Waterfront or Special Purpose Zones. (3) A planning proposal must not contain provisions that apply to the flood planning area which: (a) permit development in floodway areas, (b) permit development that will result in significant flood impacts to other properties,	No	A Flood Impact Assessment has been prepared by Northrop. The report concludes that the site is suitable for rezoning in accordance with the Planning Proposal because the proposal: • <i>Is not expected to create a significant adverse impact to the existing flood behaviour on the subject site, in surrounding the subject site and downstream areas.</i> • <i>Will include appropriate measures to manage risk to property.</i> • <i>Will include appropriate measures to manage risk to life.</i> • <i>Will include appropriate measures to manage risk to the environment.</i> In relation to the Directions: The planning proposal is consistent with this policy through the consideration of items (1) (b) to (1) (d). The 2005 manual has been superseded by the 2023 Flood Risk Management Manual. The planning proposal is consistent with the principles of the new manual. The planning proposal considers this guideline and notes the ability of Council to determine flood-based controls across their LGA. The site is already within the flood planning area and planning controls apply to the site. Consideration has been given to the Karuah River Flood Study 2010) as part of this assessment. We believe that the outcomes of the study have been complied with. The Planning Proposal is inconsistent with this provision and this is discussed below this table. The Planning Proposal will not: a) Alter the existing floodway within the catchment which has been maintained. b) Result in any significant flood impact to neighbouring properties; c) Permit residential accommodation in a high hazard area
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	(c) permit development for the purposes of residential accommodation in high hazard areas, (d) permit a significant increase in the development and/or dwelling density of that land, (e) permit development for the purpose of centre-based childcare facilities, hostels, boarding houses, group homes, hospitals, residential care facilities, respite day care centres and seniors housing in areas where the occupants of the development cannot effectively evacuate, (f) permit development to be carried out without development consent except for the purposes of exempt development or agriculture. Dams, drainage canals, levees, still require development consent, (g) are likely to result in a significantly increased requirement for government spending on emergency management services, flood mitigation and emergency response measures, which can include but are not limited to the provision of road infrastructure, flood mitigation infrastructure and utilities, or (h) permit hazardous industries or hazardous storage establishments where hazardous materials cannot be effectively contained during the occurrence of a flood event. (4) A planning proposal must not contain provisions that apply to areas between the flood planning area and probable maximum flood to which Special Flood Considerations apply which: (a) permit development in floodway areas, (b) permit development that will result in significant flood impacts to other properties, (c) permit a significant increase in the dwelling density of that land, (d) permit the development of centre-based childcare facilities, hostels, boarding houses, group homes, hospitals, residential care facilities, respite day care centres and seniors housing in areas where the occupants of the development cannot effectively evacuate, (e) are likely to affect the safe occupation of and efficient evacuation of the lot, or (f) are likely to result in a significantly increased requirement for government spending on emergency management services, and flood mitigation and emergency response measures, which can include but not limited to road infrastructure, flood mitigation infrastructure and utilities.		The Planning Proposal is inconsistent with this provision and this is discussed below this table. Will not change permissibility on-site, with all future detailed applications being designed in accordance with the sites flood affectation. The Planning Proposal has no affect in this regard. The Planning Proposal will not result in any significantly increased requirement for government spending. Will not change permissibility on-site. No Special Flood Considerations apply.
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	(5) For the purposes of preparing a planning proposal, the flood planning area must be consistent with the principles of the Floodplain development Manual 2005 or as otherwise determined by a Floodplain Risk Management Study or Plan adopted by the relevant council.		As discussed above and within the Flood Report prepared by Northrop
4.2 Coastal Management	This direction applies when a planning proposal authority prepares a planning proposal that applies to land that is within the coastal zone, as defined under the <i>Coastal Management Act 2016</i> - comprising the coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area, coastal vulnerability area, coastal environment area and coastal use area - and as identified by chapter 2 of the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>. Direction 4.2 (1) A planning proposal must include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with: (a) the objects of the <i>Coastal Management Act 2016</i> and the objectives of the relevant coastal management areas; (b) the NSW Coastal Management Manual and associated Toolkit; (c) section 3.2 of the <i>NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023</i>; and (d) any relevant Coastal Management Program that has been certified by the Minister, or any Coastal Zone Management Plan under the <i>Coastal Protection Act 1979</i> that continues to have effect under clause 4 of Schedule 3 to the <i>Coastal Management Act 2016</i>, that applies to the land. (2) A planning proposal must not rezone land which would enable increased development or more intensive land-use on land: (a) within a coastal vulnerability area identified by chapter 2 of the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>; or (b) that has been identified as land affected by a current or future coastal hazard in a local environmental plan or development control plan, or a study or assessment undertaken: i. by or on behalf of the relevant planning authority and the planning proposal authority, or ii. by or on behalf of a public authority and provided to the relevant planning authority and the planning proposal authority. (3) A planning proposal must not rezone land which would enable increased development or more intensive land-use on land within a	No	Part of the subject site is mapped as Coastal Wetlands. This area will be set aside as C2 Environmental Conservation zone as discussed in Part 4.2 of this Report (above). The Planning Proposal does not affect the operation of the Coastal Management Act. The Planning Proposal does not affect the operation of the NSW Coastal Management Manual and Toolkit. Refer to Table 8 and Part 6.3.2.4 above. No site specific plan applies. The site is not mapped within a coastal vulnerability area. The site is not mapped within a coastal hazard area. The Planning Proposal is inconsistent with this provision and this is discussed below this table.

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	coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area identified by chapter 2 of the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>. (4) A planning proposal for a local environmental plan may propose to amend the following maps, including increasing or decreasing the land within these maps, under chapter 2 of the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i>: (a) Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area map; (b) Coastal vulnerability area map; (c) Coastal environment area map; and (d) Coastal use area map. Such a planning proposal must be supported by evidence in a relevant Coastal Management Program that has been certified by the Minister, or by a <i>Coastal Zone Management Plan</i> under the <i>Coastal Protection Act 1979</i> that continues to have effect under clause 4 of Schedule 3 to the <i>Coastal Management Act 2016</i>.		Noted.
4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection	This direction applies to all local government areas when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will affect, or is in proximity to, land mapped as bushfire prone land. This applies where the relevant planning authority is required to prepare a bush fire prone land map under section 10.3 of the EP&A Act, or, until such a map has been certified by the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, a map referred to in Schedule 6 of that Act. Direction 4.3 (1) In the preparation of a planning proposal the relevant planning authority must consult with the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service following receipt of a gateway determination under section 3.34 of the Act, and prior to undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of clause 4, Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act, and take into account any comments so made. (2) A planning proposal must: (a) have regard to <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019</i>, (b) introduce controls that avoid placing inappropriate developments in hazardous areas, and (c) ensure that bushfire hazard reduction is not prohibited within the Asset Protection Zone (APZ).	Yes	A Bush Fire Threat Report has been prepared by Tattersall Lander Pty Ltd which states as follows: <i>Whilst the rezone does not include any works, this report is intended to demonstrate that a development, using the identified footprint and as per the concept plan, is able to be undertaken so that full compliance with Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019 is achieved. A development is able to be undertaken which is fully compliant with PBP 2019, including, but not limited to, the creation of lots which will not exceed BAL-29.</i> Noted. Refer to Bush Fire Threat Report.

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	(3) A planning proposal must, where development is proposed, comply with the following provisions, as appropriate: (a) provide an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) incorporating at a minimum: i. an Inner Protection Area bounded by a perimeter road or reserve which circumscribes the hazard side of the land intended for development and has a building line consistent with the incorporation of an APZ, within the property, and ii. an Outer Protection Area managed for hazard reduction and located on the bushland side of the perimeter road, (b) for infill development (that is development within an already subdivided area), where an appropriate APZ cannot be achieved, provide for an appropriate performance standard, in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service. If the provisions of the planning proposal permit Special Fire Protection Purposes (as defined under section 100B of the <i>Rural Fires Act 1997</i>), the APZ provisions must be complied with, (c) contain provisions for two-way access roads which links to perimeter roads and/or to fire trail networks, (d) contain provisions for adequate water supply for firefighting purposes, (e) minimise the perimeter of the area of land interfacing the hazard which may be developed, (f) introduce controls on the placement of combustible materials in the Inner Protection Area.		Refer to Bush Fire Threat Report. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.
4.4 Remediation of Contaminated Land	This direction applies when a planning proposal authority prepares a planning proposal that applies to: (a) land that is within an investigation area within the meaning of the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997, (b) land on which development for a purpose referred to in Table 1 to the contaminated land planning guidelines is being, or is known to have been, carried out, (c) the extent to which it is proposed to carry out development on it for residential, educational, recreational or childcare purposes, or for the purposes of a hospital – land: i. in relation to which there is no knowledge (or incomplete knowledge) as to whether development for a purpose referred to in Table 1 to the contaminated land planning guidelines has been carried out, and ii. on which it would have been lawful to carry out such development during any period in	Yes	A Preliminary Site Investigation for contamination have been undertaken by Douglas Partners who conclude that based on the investigation and previous experience with similar sites, contaminated land is not considered to be a major constraint to the rezoning of the land. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.

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	respect of which there is no knowledge (or incomplete knowledge).		
4.5 Acid Sulfate Soils	Direction 4.5 (1) The relevant planning authority must consider the Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Guidelines adopted by the Planning Secretary when preparing a planning proposal that applies to any land identified on the Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Maps as having a probability of acid sulfate soils being present. (3) A relevant planning authority must not prepare a planning proposal that proposes an intensification of land uses on land identified as having a probability of containing acid sulfate soils on the Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Maps unless the relevant planning authority has considered an acid sulfate soils study assessing the appropriateness of the change of land use given the presence of acid sulfate soils. The relevant planning authority must provide a copy of any such study to the Planning Secretary prior to undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of clause 4 of Schedule 1 to the Act.	Yes	The site contains Class 2 and Class 5 Acid Sulfate Soils. Future development will address management of acid sulfate soils through the DA process, in accordance with standard practice and relevant guidelines. This is discussed below this table.
5. Transport and Infrastructure			
5.1 Integrating Land Use and Transport	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to urban land, including land zoned for residential, business, industrial, village or tourist purposes. (1) A planning proposal must locate zones for urban purposes and include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with the aims, objectives and principles of: (a) Improving Transport Choice – Guidelines for planning and development (DUAP 2001), and (b) The Right Place for Business and Services – Planning Policy (DUAP 2001)	Yes	The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Direction by focusing residential development within an existing serviced town (Karuah), allowing efficient use of existing transport, infrastructure and services. A Traffic Impact Statement has been prepared by SECA Solutions and concludes as follows: <i>The additional traffic movements generated by the development will have a minimal impact on the surrounding road network and site access can operate safely with minimal delay or congestion. The proposed development should see no change to the Level of Service on Tarean Road and the local road network shall continue to operate with minimal delays and minimal impact on road safety.</i> <i>It is concluded that the development is consistent with the requirements of the Port Stephens Development Control Plan in relation to traffic and access as well as the overall planning for the development site.</i> The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.
5.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal.	N/A	Not applicable to subject Planning Proposal.

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	(1) A planning proposal must not create, alter or reduce existing zonings or reservations of land for public purposes without the approval of the relevant public authority and the Planning Secretary (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Secretary).		
5.3 Development Near Regulated Airports and Defence Airfields	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to land near a regulated airport which includes a defence airfield.	N/A	Not applicable to subject Planning Proposal.
6. Housing			
6.1 Residential Zones	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will affect land within an existing or proposed residential zone (including the alteration of any existing residential zone boundary), or any other zone in which significant residential development is permitted or proposed to be permitted. (1) A planning proposal must include provisions that encourage the provision of housing that will: (a) broaden the choice of building types and locations available in the housing market, and (b) make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, and (c) reduce the consumption of land for housing and associated urban development on the urban fringe, and (d) be of good design. (2) A planning proposal must, in relation to land to which this direction applies: (a) contain a requirement that residential development is not permitted until land is adequately serviced (or arrangements satisfactory to the council, or other appropriate authority, have been made to service it), and (b) not contain provisions which will reduce the permissible residential density of land.	Yes	The Planning Proposal seeks to apply the R2 Low Density Residential zone to enable residential subdivision and housing, broadening housing choice and making efficient use of land and existing services. The site is adequately serviced and the proposal will deliver land for residential purposes in line with strategic planning directions. The proposal will offer the opportunity to increase housing diversity through low density building typologies in a strategic location. The Planning Proposal will increase the density permitted on-site and utilise the infrastructure and services. The Planning Proposal is utilises land set aside for residential development in the Karuah Place Plan. The indicative layout plan indicates the proposed subdivision is of a good and efficient design. The land can be adequately serviced, and residential accommodation is permitted under the proposed re-zoning. As above. The application for a Planning Proposal is therefore consistent with Direction 6.1.

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7. Industry and Employment			
7.1 Business and Industrial Zones	This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will affect land within an existing or proposed business or industrial zone (including the alteration of any existing business or industrial zone boundary). (1) A planning proposal must: (a) give effect to the objectives of this direction, (b) retain the areas and locations of existing business and industrial zones, (c) not reduce the total potential floor space area for employment uses and related public services in business zones, (d) not reduce the total potential floor space area for industrial uses in industrial zones, and (e) ensure that proposed new employment areas are in accordance with a strategy that is approved by the Planning Secretary.	N/A	Not applicable.
9. Primary Production			
9.2 Rural Lands	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal for land outside the local government areas of Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Wollongong and LGAs in the Greater Sydney Region (as defined in the <i>Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015</i>) other than Wollondilly and Hawkesbury, that: (a) will affect land within an existing or proposed rural or conservation zone (including the alteration of any existing rural or conservation zone boundary) or (b) changes the existing minimum lot size on land within a rural or conservation zone. Direction 9.2 (1) A planning proposal must: (a) be consistent with any applicable strategic plan, including regional and district plans endorsed by the Planning Secretary, and any applicable local strategic planning statement (b) consider the significance of agriculture and primary production to the State and rural communities (c) identify and protect environmental values, including but not limited to, maintaining biodiversity, the protection of native vegetation, cultural heritage, and the importance of water resources (d) consider the natural and physical constraints of the land, including but not	Yes	The existing site is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape and is located outside the designated LGA's. The Planning Proposal will alter the zoning of RU2 land and alter the minimum lot size. The Planning Proposal is consistent with the relevant strategic plans, namely the Karuah Place Plan which maps part of the site for R2 residential development. The rural land was not used for agricultural purposes and it not significant agricultural land. The Planning Proposal avoids impacts to environmentally sensitive land uses and zones them C2 Environmental Conservation. Biodiversity is considered in the BDAR. There are not natural or physical constraints other than identified throughout this report.

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	limited to, topography, size, location, water availability and ground and soil conditions (e) promote opportunities for investment in productive, diversified, innovative and sustainable rural economic activities (f) support farmers in exercising their right to farm (g) prioritise efforts and consider measures to minimise the fragmentation of rural land and reduce the risk of land use conflict, particularly between residential land uses and other rural land use (h) consider State significant agricultural land identified in chapter 2 of the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Primary Production) 2021</i> for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing viability of this land (i) consider the social, economic and environmental interests of the community. (2) A planning proposal that changes the existing minimum lot size on land within a rural or conservation zone must demonstrate that it: (a) is consistent with the priority of minimising rural land fragmentation and land use conflict, particularly between residential and other rural land uses (b) will not adversely affect the operation and viability of existing and future rural land uses and related enterprises, including supporting infrastructure and facilities that are essential to rural industries or supply chains (c) where it is for rural residential purposes: i. is appropriately located taking account of the availability of human services, utility infrastructure, transport and proximity to existing centres ii. is necessary taking account of existing and future demand and supply of rural residential land.		Part of the land of the site is to be retained as RU2 zone (5.4 hectares) to provide opportunities for rural economic activities. The Planning Proposal does not prejudice farming activities of surrounding properties. Land to the west is also mapped for future residential development. The Planning Proposal will not fragment rural lands with land to the west mapped for future residential development. The site is not significant agricultural land. The Planning Proposal does not seek to change the minimum lot size for the 5.4 hectares retained on the site for rural land. The Planning Proposal will rezone land to R2 Low Density Residential and maintain a 500sqm minimum lot size consistent with surrounding development. The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Ministerial Direction.
9.3 Oyster Aquaculture	Direction 9.3 (1) In the preparation of a planning proposal the relevant planning authority must: (a) identify any 'Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas' and oyster aquaculture leases outside such an area, as shown the maps to the Strategy, to which the planning proposal would apply, (b) identify any proposed land uses which could result in any adverse impact on a 'Priority Oyster Aquaculture Area' or oyster aquaculture leases outside such an area, (c) identify and take into consideration any issues likely to lead to an incompatible use of	Yes	A Stormwater Management Strategy has been prepared and submitted with the Planning Proposal. The strategy addresses the treatment and conveyance of stormwater runoff and confirms that the development can be appropriately managed to avoid adverse impacts on the adjoining Karuah Wetland and downstream receiving environments. No stormwater and sewage infrastructure is proposed within the C2 Environmental Conservation zone. The wetland will be protected through appropriate zoning and the implementation of water quality treatment measures prior to discharge.

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	land between oyster aquaculture and other land uses and identify and evaluate measures to avoid or minimise such land use in compatibility, (d) consult with the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) of the proposed changes in the preparation of the planning proposal, and (e) ensure the planning proposal is consistent with the Strategy. (2) Where a planning proposal proposes land uses that may result in adverse impacts identified under (1)(b) and (1)(c), relevant planning authority must: (a) provide the Secretary of DPI with a copy of the planning proposal and notification of the relevant provisions, (b) allow the Secretary of DPI a period of 40 days from the date of notification to provide in writing any objections to the terms of the planning proposal, and (c) include a copy of any objection and supporting information received from the Secretary of DPI with the statement to the Planning Secretary before undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act.		The proposal is consistent with the objectives of Ministerial Direction 9.3 (Oyster Aquaculture), as it ensures that stormwater runoff from urban areas will be treated to achieve the required water quality outcomes, and will not compromise the viability of downstream Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas. Noted.
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Direction 4.1 - Flooding

As discussed in the table above, the Planning Proposal is inconsistent with the ministerial direction 4.1. The ministerial Direction specifically states:

Consistency

A planning proposal may be inconsistent with this direction only if the planning proposal authority can satisfy the Planning Secretary (or their nominee) that:

(a) the planning proposal is in accordance with a floodplain risk management study or plan adopted by the relevant council in accordance with the principles and guidelines of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005, or

(b) where there is no council adopted floodplain risk management study or plan, the planning proposal is consistent with the flood study adopted by the council prepared in accordance with the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005 or

(c) the planning proposal is supported by a flood and risk impact assessment accepted by the relevant planning authority and is prepared in accordance with the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005 and consistent with the relevant planning authorities' requirements, or

(d) the provisions of the planning proposal that are inconsistent are of minor significance as determined by the relevant planning authority.

The Flood Impact and Risk Assessment Report prepared by Northrop specifically respond to the above provisions as follows who consider the inconsistency with the direction is justified because:

- (a) Not applicable. The Karuah River Flood Study does not refer to this site.*
- (b) Not applicable. The adopted flood study does not justify the inconsistency.*

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- (c) *This Flood Impact and Risk Assessment has been prepared to justify the inconsistency with the direction. The proposed site layout is sympathetic to the flood constraints. Impact mapping has determined the development is unlikely to significantly adversely impact other lots. On this basis, we believe the inconsistencies are of minor significance.*

For the reasons discussed above, the Planning Proposal can be inconsistent with Ministerial Direction 4.1.

Direction 4.2 – Coastal Management

As discussed in the table above, the Planning Proposal is inconsistent with the ministerial direction 4.2. The ministerial Direction specifically states:

Consistency

A planning proposal may be inconsistent with the terms of this direction only if the planning proposal authority can satisfy the Planning Secretary (or their nominee) that the provisions of the planning proposal that are inconsistent are:

- (a) *justified by a study or strategy prepared in support of the planning proposal which gives consideration to the objective of this direction, or*
- (b) *in accordance with any relevant Regional Strategic Plan or District Strategic Plan, prepared under Division 3.1 of the EP&A Act by the relevant strategic planning authority, which gives consideration to the objective of this direction, or*
- (c) *of minor significance.*

The subject site seeks to rezone land within the Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area for the purposes of residential accommodation. The R2 zoned land is not specifically within the land mapped as coastal wetlands, but rather is locality within a mapped proximity area to coastal wetlands. In accordance with Chapter 2 of SEPP Resilience and Hazards, proximity areas are included in the definition of Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area.

However, Cl2.8 of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP permits development with consent in this zone as follows:

(1) *Development consent must not be granted to development on land identified as “proximity area for coastal wetlands” or “proximity area for littoral rainforest” on the Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforests Area Map unless the consent authority is satisfied that the proposed development will not significantly impact on—*

- (a) *the biophysical, hydrological or ecological integrity of the adjacent coastal wetland or littoral rainforest, or*
- (b) *the quantity and quality of surface and ground water flows to and from the adjacent coastal wetland or littoral rainforest.*

This will be considered in a future development application, however the Stormwater Management Report prepared by Tattersall Lander demonstrates that the proposal is capable of compliance with the provisions of the SEPP. In addition, the future development application will provide opportunities to implement a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to enhance the coastal wetland areas which would not be realised if this Planning Proposal does not proceed.

The Planning Proposal can be inconsistent with the provisions of Direction 4.2 for a number of reasons outlined above. In this instance, it is considered that the inconsistency is of minor significance given the actual coastal wetlands will be protected and managed by the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zone. Appropriate buffers between the coastal wetlands will be established by the proposed road network and APZ as detailed in the indicative concept and additional fencing or the like can be installed as part of a future development application. This would satisfy the objective of Direction 4.2 to “*protect and manage coastal areas of NSW*”.

This Planning Proposal applies to land that is partially mapped within the *Coastal Environment Area* under Chapter 2 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* and is therefore subject to Ministerial Direction 4.2 – Coastal Management. The proposal has been assessed against the direction and responds as the Planning Proposal:

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- does not seek to rezone land that is mapped within a *Coastal Vulnerability Area* or *Coastal Wetlands and Littoral Rainforest Area* but rather accommodate additional development in the adjacent proximity area which acts as a buffer.
- seeks to protect land within the Coastal Environment Area, ensuring no intensification of use and facilitating conservation outcomes consistent with the Coastal Management Act 2016.
- is consistent with the objects of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and the objectives of the *Coastal Environment Area*, particularly by ensuring that ecological values and water quality of the adjacent wetland are protected and enhanced through appropriate land use zoning and stormwater management (refer Section 4.3 and the Stormwater Management Report).
- has considered the relevant guidance material, including the NSW Coastal Management Manual, the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023, and applicable provisions of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021.

A Coastal Management Program certified by the Minister does not currently apply to the site. However, the Planning Proposal does not seek to amend any of the mapped categories under the SEPP, and is therefore not subject to the supporting evidence requirements of Direction 4.2.

A completed Coastal Zone Assessment Checklist is provided with this Planning Proposal in accordance with the Department of Planning's guidance.

The Planning Proposal is consistent with the objects of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*, the NSW Coastal Management Manual and Toolkit, and the NSW *Coastal Design Guidelines 2023*, as demonstrated in the completed consistency checklist in this submission. No certified Coastal Management Program or Coastal Zone Management Plan applies to the site. The proposal ensures sensitive coastal ecosystems are identified, protected, and buffered, with clear separation between development and environmental land, and avoids intensification in areas subject to coastal hazard or environmental risk. Accordingly, the inconsistency with Direction 4.2 is minor, addressed by the proposed zoning pattern, and justified through the detailed assessment included in this report.

Direction 4.5 – Acid Sulfate Soils

As discussed in the table above, the Planning Proposal is inconsistent with the ministerial direction 4.3. The ministerial Direction specifically states:

Consistency

A planning proposal may be inconsistent with the terms of this direction only if the relevant planning authority can satisfy the Planning Secretary (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Secretary) that the provisions of the planning proposal that are inconsistent are:

- (a) justified by a study prepared in support of the planning proposal which gives consideration to the objective of this direction, or*
- (b) of minor significance.*

A portion of the land to be zoned for R2 Low Density Residential zoned land appears to encroach into the Class 2 mapped area for Acid Sulfate Soils. Typically Acid Sulfate Soils affectations follow watercourses and wetlands, but in this instance, the mapped Class 2 land does not follow the watercourse or wetland and may be inaccurate.

In the event the mapping is correct, the inconsistency with the directions is considered to be of minor significance and can easily be rectified during the development application process. It is unlikely that future development will require any significant excavation to expose potential acid sulfate soils. If required, a detailed PASS Report can be prepared upon request from Council. The proposed rezoning is capable of satisfying the objective of Direction 4.5 to *avoid significant adverse environmental impacts from the use of land that has a probability of containing acid sulfate soils.*

6.3.3 Section C - Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts

Q8: Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of the proposal?

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A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) has been prepared to support this Planning Proposal. The BDAR confirms that portions of the site contain vegetation and habitat values associated with wetland and riparian corridors, particularly along Mustons Gully and Karuah Wetlands. These areas have been identified as requiring protection under State planning policies.

The Planning Proposal responds directly to these findings through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone to approximately 9.8 hectares of the site. This ensures that land identified as containing ecological significance will be protected and managed appropriately in perpetuity.

The balance of the site, proposed for R2 Low Density Residential (15 hectares) and RU2 Rural Landscape (5.4 hectares), has been carefully identified through environmental studies and strategic site planning to avoid areas of high ecological sensitivity. Future development on the R2 land will be subject to the requirements of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and further detailed assessment through the development application process.

Accordingly:

- There is no likelihood of adverse impacts to critical habitat, threatened species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats as a result of this Planning Proposal.
- The Proposal delivers net positive environmental outcomes through formal conservation zoning, ensuring long-term protection of identified biodiversity values.
- The Proposal aligns with the objectives of relevant environmental legislation and strategic planning policies by protecting ecological corridors, wetlands, and riparian environments.

In conclusion, the Planning Proposal actively protects significant biodiversity values and enhances the ecological integrity of the site and its relationship to the surrounding locality.

Q9: Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the Planning Proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

This Planning Proposal provides for the rezoning of the subject site to enable future residential development on land identified as suitable for urban purposes and the protection of environmental land through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zone. Detailed environmental studies have been undertaken to inform the Planning Proposal and ensure environmental effects are appropriately avoided, mitigated, or managed.

Environmental Outcomes and Management

The Planning Proposal provides for the rezoning of approximately 9.8 hectares of the subject site to C2 Environmental Conservation, which will ensure the permanent protection of sensitive environmental lands associated with Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and its riparian corridor along the eastern boundary of the site. These areas are of high environmental value, comprising significant native vegetation, wetlands, riparian habitat and fauna corridors, and contribute to the broader ecological network of Karuah and the Port Stephens LGA. This ecological value has been confirmed through the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), which identifies these lands as supporting threatened ecological communities and functioning as an important biodiversity linkage within the catchment. The rezoning will safeguard these areas from future urban development and ensure their ongoing conservation and management in accordance with best practice environmental principles.

In contrast, the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone is carefully confined to approximately 15 hectares of the site that has been identified as suitable for urban purposes through technical assessments relating to flooding, bushfire, contamination, servicing and biodiversity. These investigations confirm that the R2 land avoids areas of environmental sensitivity and flood risk and is well suited for low density residential development that will contribute to the growth of Karuah in accordance with the strategic direction of the Karuah Place Plan 2022 and the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy 2024.

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The spatial extent of the proposed residential zone has been informed by the constraints of the site relating to flooding, biodiversity, coastal wetlands and bushfire. The Stormwater Management Report by Storm Consulting demonstrates that stormwater infrastructure can be designed to appropriately manage runoff and protect downstream environmental values, while the Bush Fire Assessment confirms the land (and future residential development) can meet asset protection and construction standards. Together, the proposed zoning outcome achieves a balanced approach to urban growth and environmental protection, aligning with both state and local planning objectives to protect biodiversity while facilitating sustainable housing supply in an identified growth area.

Biodiversity and Riparian Corridors

The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) prepared in support of this Planning Proposal has played a key role in informing the rezoning process by identifying the precise extent of environmentally sensitive land within the site that warrants conservation and protection. The BDAR, prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, identifies areas of the site that contain threatened ecological communities, riparian corridors, native vegetation, and habitat critical to the survival of threatened species. These findings have directly informed the boundaries of the proposed C2 Environmental Conservation zone, ensuring that the most sensitive areas of the site, particularly those associated with Mustons Gully and its connected Karuah Wetlands and riparian systems, are permanently protected from development.

The rezoning of these areas to C2 will provide statutory protection under the Port Stephens LEP 2013, ensuring that future development cannot occur on land that supports significant biodiversity values. This approach guarantees there will be no adverse impacts on threatened species, populations, or their habitats as a result of this Planning Proposal and aligns with the principles of ecological sustainability, conservation planning and the objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and the Port Stephens LSPS 2020. The conservation outcome will contribute to the broader network of biodiversity corridors within the locality and enhance the long-term resilience of the natural environment in Karuah.

Flooding and Stormwater

A Flood Assessment and Stormwater Management Strategy have been prepared to inform the Planning Proposal and confirm the suitability of the site for future development. These assessments confirm that all future urban development will be located outside of the identified flood-affected areas associated with the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event, thereby minimising flood risk to people, property, and infrastructure. The land proposed to be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation will retain its natural floodplain and stormwater management function, continuing to perform a critical role in managing local hydrology and supporting the health of the Mustons Gully riparian corridor and associated Karuah Wetlands. The areas identified for R2 Low Density Residential zoning will be developed with appropriate stormwater infrastructure, incorporating water quality treatment measures and hydrological controls to ensure post-development flows are managed effectively and in accordance with Port Stephens Council's stormwater and water quality requirements. These measures will safeguard the environmental function of the site while supporting resilient and sustainable urban development outcomes.

Acid Sulfate Soils

Parts of the site are mapped as Class 2 and Class 5 Acid Sulfate Soils. Future development applications will manage potential acid sulfate soil disturbance in accordance with relevant guidelines. It is unlikely that future development will require any significant excavation to expose potential acid sulfate soils. If required, a detailed PASS Report can be prepared upon request from Council.

Contamination

A Preliminary Site Investigation has been prepared by Douglas Partners confirming the suitability of the proposed residential land for its intended residential use. This aligns with Council's requirements and satisfies Direction 4.4 (Contaminated Land).

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Bushfire

A Bush Fire Assessment Report has been prepared in support of the Planning Proposal. The report confirms that future development within the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zone can comply with the requirements of the NSW Rural Fire Service's Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 (PBP 2019). Specifically, the assessment demonstrates that appropriate Asset Protection Zones (APZs) can be accommodated within the proposed urban footprint to achieve the necessary separation between future dwellings and the adjoining hazard. Furthermore, it confirms that future residential development will be capable of meeting the relevant Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) construction standards to mitigate risk to life and property. These measures will be refined and implemented at the development application stage, ensuring a consistent and staged approach to bushfire protection in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidelines.

Demands for infrastructure, utilities and services

The demand for infrastructure, utilities and services to support the day to day demands of future residential use is likely to be within the functional capacity of the established infrastructure, utilities and services currently available in the locality, and is therefore considered acceptable.

Infrastructure and Utilities

A Servicing Strategy has been prepared to support the Planning Proposal, confirming that essential infrastructure services, including water, sewer, electricity, and telecommunications, can be extended or augmented to accommodate the proposed urban development within the R2 Low Density Residential zone. The report confirms that these services can be delivered in a logical and efficient manner as part of future subdivision works, aligning with the requirements and capacities of the relevant service providers, including Hunter Water.

Importantly, the strategy confirms that the proposed urban development can be supported without placing undue strain on existing infrastructure networks and that the necessary upgrades or extensions can be readily accommodated within the surrounding service catchments. This ensures that future development can proceed with confidence that there is adequate infrastructure capacity to meet demand, without adversely impacting existing residents or requiring significant, unforeseen infrastructure investment.

The Planning Proposal incorporates a range of environmental management measures to ensure the protection of sensitive land and the sustainable delivery of urban development. Environmentally significant areas associated with Karuah Wetlands and Mustons Gully, including its riparian corridor are permanently protected through the application of the C2 Environmental Conservation zoning.

Flooding and stormwater considerations have been addressed through detailed technical assessments, with future development confined to land outside of identified flood-affected areas and incorporating appropriate stormwater infrastructure. Infrastructure servicing has been confirmed as capable of extension or augmentation to meet future demands without placing undue strain on existing systems. Collectively, these measures ensure that the Planning Proposal achieves a balanced outcome, delivering long-term environmental protection alongside the orderly and sustainable provision of urban land.

Q10: Has the Planning Proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

The Planning Proposal is not considered to have any negative social or economic effects as the intended use and density of the subject site will remain unchanged. With this being said, there are clear benefits associated with the flexibility delivered through allowing the rezoning of the site. A Social and Economic Impact Assessment has been prepared by Marcoplan and is submitted with this planning proposal. This report concludes the following:

When the Karuah Growth Strategy was published in 2011, expectations for growth in Karuah were not high as the local economy was at the time still feeling the effects of the 2004 opening of the Karuah by-pass. On that basis, supply of land for housing was not seen as an issue.

Fast forward to 2019 and preparation of the Karuah Place Plan and the story was very different, with Karuah showing strong growth and the adequacy of supply starting to emerge as a real issue. On the high growth

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scenario (uptake 32 lots per annum) which the Plan adopted, and based on an assessed supply of 360 lots, there was found to be only 11.2 years supply of lots, a clear shortfall on the accepted minimum benchmark of 15 years supply. The Karuah Place Plan recognised that this would require additional land to be added to the pipeline and cited the need for 340 lots to be added.

Over 2019-23, the uptake did achieve 32 lots per annum, and the supply is now down to 8.3 years. Whereas based on the 2019 position, the Karuah Place Plan concluded that an additional 340 lots were required, that number now rises to over 400 lots. It is reaching the point where, in the face of firm evidence of strong and sustained demand, the lack of adequate supply poses a major risk to housing affordability.

The rezoning (and subsequent site redevelopment) at 339 Tarean Road will provide 157 lots, which will represent about 5 years supply. It will make a meaningful contribution towards addressing the emerging housing supply shortfall in Karuah township and promote housing affordability. Housing affordability is presently one of the major issues facing governments at all levels in Australia, and addressing supply is recognised as crucial.

Over and above housing affordability, the additional housing which the Planning Proposal will provide will have significant economic and social benefits for the Port Stephens LGA and more particularly for the community and businesses in the Karuah Township:

- The long-term benefit of the increased population which the development will bring will support about 250 jobs and boost annual economic activity by about \$32 million in the broader region, with Port Stephens LGA capturing a large share. More specifically for Karuah township, it is estimated that the spending captured by local businesses – including new businesses – could support about 70 additional jobs. The value of the economic activity generated is estimated at about \$8.5 million.
- In addition, during the construction phase the development will generate close to 1300 jobs (full-year jobs). A material portion of the increased local expenditure/spending generated in the construction phase will be captured by businesses operating in Karuah town centre.
- A related benefit of the jobs generated in Karuah township is that it will increase the scope for people living in Karuah township to also work in Karuah township, with a benefit in terms of reduced travel. More local jobs also underpin better social and welfare outcomes.
- The overall economic boost to Karuah will stimulate investment in the town centre. That, in conjunction with the increased flow of people, will improve the overall vibrancy of the town centre as a place where the community can engage and connect.

This will be discussed below.

Social Impact

The Planning Proposal will facilitate the future delivery of low-density residential housing within a carefully planned urban area. The rezoning of approximately 15 hectares of land to R2 Low Density Residential will enable new housing opportunities to be provided in a manner that complements the existing urban form and character of Karuah. This will assist in addressing local housing needs, providing opportunities for a range of household types, including families, first home buyers, and retirees, consistent with the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy 2024 and Karuah Place Plan 2022. The proposed development footprint avoids areas of high environmental sensitivity, protecting the natural environment while enabling future residents to enjoy access to open space, natural features, and local services.

The Planning Proposal will support the continued growth of Karuah as a sustainable and resilient community by delivering housing in a location that benefits from existing social infrastructure, including schools, shops, recreational areas, and health services. The delivery of well-located, serviced housing lots will also support social cohesion through the provision of quality public domain and connections to surrounding neighbourhoods. The proposed land use pattern, incorporating environmental protection and housing in suitable locations, reflects a balanced and integrated planning outcome.

Economic Impact

The Planning Proposal will contribute positively to the local economy through the facilitation of future housing supply,

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which in turn will support the ongoing viability of local services, businesses, and employment opportunities within Karuah and the broader Port Stephens area as concluded above. By enabling the expansion of Karuah's residential base, the Planning Proposal will enhance the town's capacity to attract investment, support the local workforce, and deliver economic benefits associated with construction activity and population growth.

The rezoning provides a logical and efficient extension of Karuah's urban footprint, aligning with infrastructure capacity and supporting the efficient use of public resources. It is not expected to generate undue demand for infrastructure or services beyond what can be reasonably accommodated through future development applications. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal represents a sustainable and economically responsible approach to managing growth within the town.

6.3.4 Section D - State and Commonwealth Interests

Q11: Is there adequate public infrastructure for the Planning Proposal?

The subject site is located within the town of Karuah, which is acknowledged for future urban expansion in several key local strategies within the Port Stephens Local Government Area, where existing public infrastructure, utilities, and services are available to support future low-density residential development. The Planning Proposal is underpinned by a Servicing Strategy which confirms that existing infrastructure networks, including water, sewer, electricity, and telecommunications, can be feasibly extended or augmented to service the proposed R2 Low Density Residential zoned land without placing undue strain on existing systems.

The proposed development footprint has been carefully planned to avoid areas of environmental sensitivity and to align with existing infrastructure capacity, ensuring an orderly and efficient expansion of the town. The servicing strategy demonstrates that urban infrastructure can be extended logically from existing networks in accordance with Council and utility authority requirements.

Flooding and stormwater management have been addressed through technical reporting, confirming that future development will incorporate appropriate infrastructure to manage drainage and protect the function of natural floodplains. Furthermore, bushfire protection measures have been considered, and future development can comply with relevant NSW RFS Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 requirements.

The Planning Proposal does not trigger the need for significant regional-scale infrastructure upgrades. Instead, the proposal represents a logical and sustainable extension of Karuah's urban area, aligning with the capacity of local infrastructure networks. Appropriate Section 7.11 development contributions will be levied at the time of future development consents to ensure the provision of local infrastructure and services meets the needs of the growing community.

Accordingly, the Planning Proposal is considered to be adequately serviced by public infrastructure and consistent with the principles of orderly and efficient urban development.

Q12: What are the views of State and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in accordance with the Gateway determination?

The proposed LEP amendment does not trigger any changes to:

- Infrastructure and services provided by State agencies and public authorities;
- Resources managed by State agencies and public authorities.

The proposal does not trigger the referral criteria in Attachment B to the DPIE Guideline, however Council may refer the application to applicable departments for comment.

A future Gateway determination will specify the list of agencies and public authorities required to be consulted and the methods and timing of such consultation.

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6.4 STRATEGIC AND SITE SPECIFIC MERIT

6.4.1.1 Strategic Merit

In addressing Question 3, the DPIE Guideline requires an application for a Planning Proposal to address the assessment criteria for strategic merit. The DPIE Guideline provides assessment criteria to determine if a planning proposal has strategic and site-specific planning merit. Accordingly, the planning proposal is considered against the assessment criteria below.

Strategic Merit

The assessment criteria to determine if a Planning Proposal has strategic planning merit is addressed in **Table 12** below (known as the 'strategic merit test').

Table 12 Strategic Merit Test	
Assessment Criteria	Comment
Will the proposal "give effect to the relevant regional plan outside of the Greater Sydney Region, the relevant district plan within the Greater Sydney Region, or corridor/precinct plans applying to the site, including any draft regional, district or corridor/precinct plans released for public comment"	The applicable strategic plan is the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, prepared by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Alignment with the relevant Objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 has been demonstrated in Section 7.3.2.1. It has been demonstrated that the Planning Proposal gives effect to the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 by facilitating appropriately located residential development within an existing urban area, permanently protecting environmentally sensitive land, and supporting the sustainable growth of Karuah in accordance with the region's strategic planning priorities.
Will the proposal "give effect to a relevant local strategic planning statement or strategy that has been endorsed by the Department or required as part of a regional or district plan or local strategic planning statement"	The applicable local strategic planning statement is the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 (LSPS), endorsed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Alignment with the relevant Planning Priorities of the LSPS has been demonstrated in Section 7.3.2.5. The Planning Proposal gives effect to the LSPS by facilitating an extension to the existing urban area of Karuah to deliver additional housing supply, while ensuring the permanent protection of environmentally sensitive land. The proposal responds directly to the LSPS directions to provide housing choice, manage environmental values, and align growth with infrastructure capacity. In summary, the proposal will give effect to the LSPS by being aligned with the relevant themes and Planning Priorities and the potential public benefits that can be realised by facilitating flexible redevelopment options for the site.
Is the proposal "responding to a change in circumstances that have not been recognised by existing strategic plans"	No. The Planning Proposal is not seeking to respond to a change in circumstances that has not been recognised by existing strategic plans. Rather, the Planning Proposal is consistent with, and gives effect to, the existing strategic planning framework, including the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, the Port Stephens LSPS 2020, the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy 2024, and the Karuah Place Plan 2022. These strategic documents identify the need to accommodate housing growth in appropriate locations such as Karuah, balanced with the protection of environmental values. This Planning Proposal is a logical progression of these endorsed strategies.

6.4.1.2 Site-Specific Merit

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Site-Specific Merit

The planning proposal has site-specific merit given the following:

Scale of the site

The site comprises a large, strategically located landholding of approximately 30.2 hectares on the edge of the existing urban footprint of Karuah. It represents one of the largest contiguous land parcels available for coordinated urban release in the locality and provides a logical extension to the existing urban fabric. The site benefits from direct frontage to Tarean Road and its proximity to the Karuah town centre. The scale of the site allows for the orderly and staged delivery of new housing supply, balanced with permanent environmental conservation outcomes.

Land Use Transition and Strategic Planning History

The subject land was previously the subject of a Planning Proposal lodged with Council in 2019. Although that process progressed to Gateway Determination, the proposal was not finalised and effectively lapsed. This current Planning Proposal builds upon the previous strategic work and now responds to the adopted Port Stephens LSPS (2020), Karuah Place Plan (2022), Housing Strategy (2024), and Hunter Regional Plan 2041. These strategic documents all identify the subject land as suitable for future urban growth, subject to environmental and infrastructure considerations, which this Proposal satisfactorily addresses.

Environmental Outcomes and Conservation Interface

This Planning Proposal will set aside 9.8 hectares as C2 Environmental Conservation, providing permanent protection of wetlands, riparian corridors, and associated ecological values. This area aligns with the mapped high biodiversity values under the Resilience and Hazards SEPP and with the findings of the supporting Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). This ensures environmental constraints are fully recognised and managed through appropriate zoning.

Land Use

The proposal removes a prohibited land use on the site, replacing it with a mix of residential, conservation and rural zones that is compatible with the pattern of residential land use in the locality. The proposed indicative lot layout has been carefully considered and is compatible with the existing characteristics of the site and surrounding locality.

Residential Outcomes and Urban Integration

The Proposal designated that 15 hectares is proposed to be zoned R2 Low Density Residential and 5.4 hectares for RU2 Rural Landscape zoning to accommodate future housing supply in a form that reflects the existing character of Karuah and anticipated future growth. A minimum lot size of 500m² and height control of 9m is proposed to ensure consistency with adjacent land. The subdivision layout reflects logical urban design outcomes, integrating with the existing road network and facilitating future connection to services and community facilities.

Infrastructure Capacity

Comprehensive servicing strategies have been prepared, confirming that the site can be feasibly connected to existing infrastructure networks (water, sewer, stormwater, electricity). The Servicing Strategy confirms staged development can occur in alignment with infrastructure delivery, ensuring no adverse impacts on the existing network or surrounding development.

Amenity and Flood Management

The Flood and stormwater assessments confirm that residential development will be contained within flood-free portions of the site. Flood-prone areas will be incorporated within the C2 zoning to ensure protection of flood storage capacity and function. Stormwater will be appropriately managed via on-site detention and treatment consistent with Council's requirements.

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Bushfire Management

A Bushfire Assessment has been prepared confirming the site can achieve compliance with the relevant provisions of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019. Bushfire risk is predominantly associated with the environmental lands to the east and appropriate Asset Protection Zones (APZs) have been considered in the layout.

Suitability for Housing Delivery

The site aligns with identified housing delivery opportunities within the Port Stephens Housing Strategy 2024. The site is well placed to contribute to the housing diversity and supply needed in Karuah over the short-to-medium term, consistent with both local and regional housing priorities. The Planning Proposal will facilitate the delivery of additional housing choice in a town identified for urban growth.

Relationship to Surrounding Development

The Proposal provides a logical and lineal extension of the existing urban area without resulting in land use conflict. The retention of RU2 Rural Landscape zoned land along the north-eastern boundary ensures an appropriate interface with rural lands. Importantly, the RU2 land to the west is mapped in the Karuah Place Plan to also contain future residential development and the indicative concept plan will provide for a layout that will provide linkages to the neighbouring property upon redevelopment. The Proposal respects existing development patterns while providing for the future orderly growth of Karuah.

Land Use Compatibility and Sequencing

The site-specific merit is reinforced by its compatibility with the surrounding urban land uses and the strategic sequencing of growth identified in the Karuah Place Plan. The Proposal will provide the next logical stage of growth for the town, ensuring housing supply meets identified demand without compromising environmental, infrastructure, or social outcomes.

The assessment criteria outlined in the DPIE Guideline to determine if a planning proposal has site-specific planning merit is addressed in **Table 13**.

Table 13 Site-Specific Merit Test	
Site-Specific Merit Test	Comment
<i>Does the proposal have site-specific merit, with regards to the following:</i>	
<i>The natural environment (including known significant environmental values, resources or hazards)</i>	Environmental constraints identified and addressed through C2 zoning. No significant impacts on environmental values. Flooding managed within designated conservation lands.
<i>The existing uses, approved uses, and likely future uses of land in the vicinity of the proposal</i>	Residential development aligns with existing land use patterns. Compatible with future growth expectations for Karuah. Protects environmental areas from future encroachment.
<i>The services and infrastructure that are or will be available to meet the demands arising from the proposal and any proposed financial arrangements for infrastructure provision</i>	Infrastructure assessments confirm capacity to service the proposed development. Staged delivery aligned to infrastructure capacity. No additional public infrastructure burden.

As demonstrated in the above assessment, the planning proposal has both strategic and site-specific merit and is suitable to be progressed to a Gateway determination.

6.5 PART 4 - MAPPING

Should Council resolve to support the application for a Planning Proposal, proposed mapping amendments will be

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prepared by Council staff. Proposed amendments to LEP maps are indicated in Figures 18-21 (above).

6.6 PART 5 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Consistent with the requirements for a Standard LEP amendment and the DPIE Guidelines, it is anticipated that a draft Planning Proposal would be publicly exhibited for a period of 28 days. The exhibition material will include documents as specified in the Gateway determination and will include a copy of the Planning Proposal, an explanation of provisions, draft LEP maps and an indication of the timeframes for completion of the process as estimated by Council.

It is anticipated that the Community Consultation methods will include forwarding copies of relevant documents to appropriate State and Commonwealth agencies, notice of public exhibition in a local newspaper and on Port Stephens Council's website, providing copies of exhibition material in electronic and hard copy form at relevant local government premises and letters of notification to nearby and potentially affected land owners.

6.7 PART 6 - PROJECT TIMELINE

The estimation of the project timeline is provided below with the intention of optimising efficiency in the process:

Table 14 Project Timeline	
Phase	Timing
Gateway determination date	TBD (by Department of Planning & Environment)
Completion of required technical information	No additional supporting studies required unless directed by Council.
Government agency consultation (pre-exhibition)	TBD (by Department of Planning & Environment)
Government agency consultation (during exhibition)	Concurrent with public exhibition (28 days)
Commencement and completion dates for public exhibition period	TBD
Consideration of submissions	Two weeks from close of public exhibition
Post-exhibition consideration of the application	Four weeks from close of public exhibition
Date of submission to the Department to finalise the LEP / anticipated date RPA will make the plan (if delegated)	Six weeks from close of public exhibition

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7. Conclusion

This Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (PSLEP 2013) as follows:

- Amend the zoning maps to provide a part RU2 Rural Landscape (5.4 hectares), part R2 Low Density Residential (15 hectares) and part C2 Environmental Conservation (9.8 hectares) to enable the balanced delivery of future residential development whilst protecting sensitive environmental areas on the Site;
- Amend the minimum lot size map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land from 20Ha to 500sqm;
- Amend the minimum height of buildings map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to provide a 9m height limit; and
- Amend the Urban Release Area (URA) map for the proposed R2 Low Density Zoned land to ensure the relevant provisions under Part 6 of PSLEP 2013 are applicable to the site.

The proposed amendments aim to permanently protect environmentally sensitive land associated with Karuah Wetlands, Mustons Gully and its riparian corridors, while enabling appropriately located urban expansion on land identified as suitable for future residential development.

This Planning Proposal has been prepared in accordance with Divisions 3.4 and 3.5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) and aligns with the Department of Planning's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline (August 2023).

The Planning Proposal is underpinned by detailed technical investigations, including:

- A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) which has informed the extent of land to be conserved under the C2 zone.
- A Flood Assessment and Stormwater Management Strategy confirming future development will be located outside of the 1% AEP flood extent and will not adversely impact the function of flood-prone land.
- A Bushfire Assessment demonstrating compliance with Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 for future residential development.
- A Servicing Strategy confirming infrastructure can be extended or augmented to support future development.
- A Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) confirming contamination risks have been appropriately addressed.

The Planning Proposal demonstrates strategic and site-specific merit and is consistent with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020, the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy 2024, and the Karuah Place Plan 2022. The proposal aligns with the relevant State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and Ministerial Directions under Section 9.1 of the EP&A Act.

The rezoning achieves a balanced and considered outcome, delivering environmental conservation alongside urban land that will contribute to the sustainable growth of Karuah in accordance with its strategic role identified in local and regional planning frameworks. The Planning Proposal will:

- Provide a logical, lineal and sustainable extension of Karuah's urban footprint, supporting the town's growth and vitality;
- Secure permanent protection of sensitive environmental land, including wetlands, biodiversity corridors and riparian areas;
- Deliver a range of residential lot sizes that reflect the existing and desired character of Karuah's R2 zoned land;

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- Support local economic growth through increased population and employment opportunities generated during construction and occupation;
- Facilitate the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure capacity.

The environmental, social, and infrastructure considerations have been thoroughly addressed through the technical reporting accompanying this Planning Proposal. There are no anticipated adverse environmental impacts arising from the proposed amendments. Any future development will be subject to detailed environmental assessments and management measures through subsequent Development Applications.

The Planning Proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with State, regional and local strategic planning objectives, represents good planning for the site and the Karuah locality, and is worthy of Council's support to proceed to a Gateway Determination.

Communications and Engagement Report Medowie Town Centre Masterplan September 2025



ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Medowie Town Centre Masterplan

Engagement Snapshot

The masterplan planning process aims to provide a long-term vision and framework to guide future development and investment in the area. Early engagement aims to capture the character of the Medowie and to give voice to their residents. By giving ownership to the community of the roadmap for the future. Not only does it enhance their connection to place but also ensures that the priorities and actions within the masterplan are created by impacted.

What we've been up to



**Community
Drop Ins**
26 Visited



**Online
comments**
67 responses



**Webpages
visitors**
1,272 visitors



Direct emails
245 sent



**Social media
reach**
18,825
reached

Medowie and surrounds

Liveability Index care factors

*For liveability reporting, each neighbourhood includes one or more suburbs



65%
Elements
of natural
environment
(LGA 75%)



65%
General condition
of public open
space
(LGA 66%)



59%
Local businesses
that provide for
daily needs
(LGA 53%)



59%
Locally owned
and operated
businesses
(LGA 53%)



54%
Sense of personal
safety
(LGA 51%)

haveyoursay.portstephens.nsw.gov.au



ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Top things we've been hearing

Medowie is still a small country town and want to stay that way. I would love to keep the green space.

We need more cafes and restaurants.

There isn't a great place where people can congregate, it would be good to bring that community feel into this area

Top attributes

Medowie and surround

There are people like me

Welcoming to all people

Neighbourhood spirit/ resilience

Physical comfort

General condition of housing and other private buildings

Top priorities

Medowie and surrounds

General condition of public open space

Evidence of recent public investment

Quality of public space

Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport

Emerging themes

- Character
- Community
- Economy
- Environment
- Housing
- Movement
- Open Space

Most mentioned ideas

- A modern library with flexible spaces
- Strong support for a large central park area
- A space for markets and community events
- Wide accessible paths linking key sites
- More shops and local job opportunities

Project timeline



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Summary

The Medowie Town Centre Masterplan is a key outcome of the Medowie Place Plan (2023), which establishes a long-term vision and strategic framework for the growth, functionality, and identity of the Medowie Town Centre. Its purpose is to guide future development, improve liveability, and ensure the town centre meets the community's growing needs now and into the future.

The engagement process aims to understand the community's aspirations for the Medowie Town Centre and to give a voice to its residents. By involving the community in developing the roadmap, we not only strengthen their connection to place but also ensure that the priorities and actions within the masterplan reflect those most affected by it.

Through engaging with the local Medowie community, we are ensuring meaningful community input into the development of the draft masterplan for the Medowie Town Centre.

The introduction of a Medowie Town Centre Masterplan to the community will work through a phased three phased engagement approach:

- Phase 1 – Early engagement: targeted to help inform the draft masterplan
- Phase 2 – Public Exhibition of the draft plan
- Phase 3 – Revised plan reported to Council with changes and adopted

Earlier engagement from the Medowie Place Plan and Liveability surveys in 2024 and 2020 were also considered.

The key objectives of the communication and engagement plan for this phase were:

- Ensure community input into the development of the draft masterplan for Medowie Town Centre.
- Educate the community on the planning process including key milestones and opportunities for input

Phase 1 of the engagement has been completed, and this report provides the engagement finding.

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Phase 1 Early Engagement

Phase 1 provided three levels of engagement – inform, consult and involve – using a range of methods to encourage meaningful community participation and engagement.

Engagement Level	Phase 1 Early Engagement	Phase 2 Public Exhibition	Phase 3 Adoption
Level 1 – Inform Provide stakeholders with information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.			
Level 2 – Consult Obtain stakeholder feedback on the project to aid decision making.			
Level 3 – Involve Work with stakeholders throughout the project, ensuring issues and concerns are understood and incorporated in decision making.			
Level 4 – Collaborate Partner with stakeholders throughout the project to develop alternatives and identify the preferred solution.			

*Please note that each successive level incorporates the engagement requirements of all preceding levels.

The Phase 1 engagement was guided by themes drawn from previous place plans and the 2020 and 2024 Liveability Survey results from the Medowie and the surrounding area. These themes included Character, Community, Economy, Environment, Housing, Movement, and Open Space.

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Communication methods – Phase 1

COMMUNICATION METHODS		
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
Website	Medowie Town Centre Masterplan https://haveyoursay.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/medowie-town-centre-masterplan Used to host information and supporting documents	1,272
Social media	Port Stephens Council Facebook 1 paid post – 21 August 2025	18,825 reach (217 -clicks)
Poster with QR code	Promotional posters and leaflets at Medowie Shopping Precinct 19 August 2025 Promotional leaflets provided to Medowie Community Centre for additional circulation	Unknown
Direct emails	Direct email to identified known stakeholders, interest groups for Medowie via haveyoursay@portstephens.nsw.gov.au dated 11 August 2025	245 emails
Direct emails	To three Medowie schools requesting to share information and social tile in their school newsletters	3 Medowie Schools
Media release	Media release 'Have your say on the future of Medowie Town Centre Masterplan' distributed to Council's media distribution list dated 21 August 2025	109
News item	News item are included on the Council's home page here 21 August 2025	115 views
Print advert	News of the Area, "Port Stephens Council seeks community input on Medowie town centre masterplan", 27 August 2025 Port Stephens Examiner, "Have your say: community encouraged to help shape the future of Medowie", 25 August 2025	10,000 22,231

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Engagement methods – Phase 1

ENGAGEMENT METHODS		
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
Liveability Survey	Medowie and Surrounds	
	Liveability Survey 2024	246 responses
	Liveability Survey 2020	345 responses
CEAG	Communication and Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) agenda item 2 July 2025. Advice was provided regarding the proposed approach to stakeholders.	1 group 12 committee members
DIAAG	Disability, Inclusion and Access Advisory Group 4 September 2025 To provide advice based on lived experience, address barriers to access and ensure Councils project align with principles of inclusion and universal design	1 group 8 committee members
Online Engagement	Online engagement tools open from 11 August 2025 to 5 September 2025	
	Have your say mapping tool	30 comments
	Join the conversation tool	37 responses
	Written submissions (emails and letters)	4 submissions
Community Drop In #1	Medowie Mobile Library Drop In Tuesday 19 August 2025, 3:00pm to 5:45pm	7 visited
Workshop #1	Medowie Community Centre 25 August 2025, 12:00pm to 2:00pm	13 participants
Workshop #2	Online workshop 28 August 2025 – 5:30pm to 7:30pm	6 participants
Doorstep discussions and mail box drop	Initial letterbox drop	100 flyers
	Doorstep discussion with local businesses	42 in person
Key Stakeholder Meetings	Meeting with representatives from key local businesses	6 meetings
Youth Summit	Port Stephens Council	40 participants
	24 September 2025	12 suggestions
	Representatives from 5 local schools	

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Key engagement findings – Phase 1

Council undertook early engagement to understand the community's priorities and wants for the Medowie Town Centre. Feedback was compiled through a wide range of sources including a dedicated online have your say website page which featured two online engagement tools, 'Join the conversation; and 'Have your Say Mapping tool'. Other engagement opportunities included a community drop in, workshops, submissions, Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory Groups, stakeholder meetings, and a Youth Summit.

Key themes emerging:

Character

- A desire to preserve Medowie's "Place of Tall Trees" identity and semi-rural charm.
- Concerns about overdevelopment and preference for development that fits the town's scale and landscape.
- Interest in design elements that reflect local heritage and identity, including public art, memorials (e.g. war memorial, Geoff Dingle recognition).

Community

- A library was heavily supported. Suggestions include:
 - Study and digital learning area
 - Children's area
 - Bookable rooms for craft groups and workshops
 - Community services
- General support to move the war memorial
- Desire for community multipurpose area for gatherings such as markets, Carols by Candlelight, kids parties
- Agreement that Medowie lacks a Town Centre that brings people together

Economy

- Strong support for more diverse retail including:
 - Bespoke cafes
 - Boutique clothing and book shops
 - Desire for local jobs to reduce commutes and provide work for young people
- Ideas for options of outdoor cinema, eco-tourism or motel for visitors
- Mixed opinions about if retail or housing should be prioritised.

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- Strong focus on protecting native flora, koala habitats, and wildlife corridors.
- Preference for sustainable landscaping and planting of local native species.
- Support for community-led green initiatives such as Landcare, gardening clubs, and educational signage about native plants.

Housing

- Division on housing with some stating they do not want housing in this area due to town size, traffic and environmental concerns. With others supporting medium density housing particularly for young people, single parents and people wishing to downsize.
- Preference for building heights with general feedback 3 storeys to avoid overshadowing trees while maintaining town character.
- Preference for eco-friendly housing to include sustainable design and green roofs.

Movement

- A major concern is traffic and congestion.
- Would like safer pedestrian crossings.
- Desire for shared walking and cycling paths, disability and pram friendly access.
- Connected pathways to schools, shops and community facilities.

Open Space

- Strong support for green, accessible, and inclusive public spaces including disability friendly playground and accessible picnic tables.
- Support for a fenced playground, BBQ and shaded areas.
- Mixed views on the a skatepark with some preferring it to be central while others preferring to upgrade skatepark at Boyd oval.
- Interest in educational elements such as signage on native plants and local animals.

These tools were used to collate not only online feedback but also the feedback received from conversations undertaken at the Medowie Workshops, stakeholder meetings, and the Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory group.

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Have Your Say Webpage – see Appendix B for full details

Have Your Say Mapping Tool – 37 responses

Join the Conversation - 30 responses

Categories	Social Map	Join the conversation	Other	Total
Character	1	2	0	3
Community	8	13	16	37
Economy	6	7	14	27
Environment	1	5	1	7
Housing	1	3	3	7
Movement	8	11	17	36
Open Space	9	14	14	37

**PLEASE
NOTE**

These key findings were drawn from the engagements using data collected from the Medowie Town Centre workshops, community drop, emails, along with direct contributions from the webpage through Join the Conversation comments and the Have Your Say mapping tool.

Workshops – see Appendix C for full details

As part of early engagement for the Medowie Town Centre Masterplan, Council hosted two community workshops to explore the town centre's values, challenges, and opportunities.

The objectives for both workshops were to:

- Share background and vision for the Masterplan
- Present Liveability Index findings and mapping results
- Identify shared values and concerns across all themes
- Co-develop ideas and actions to inform the draft Masterplan

Workshop 1 – In-Person Monday 25 August 2025

Held at the Medowie Community Centre, this structured session was attended by 13 participants, including local residents, business operators, and town centre users.

Format:

1. Introduction to the Masterplan; purpose, scope, and timeline
2. Immersion in local context; review of the Medowie Place Plan and Liveability data

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3. World Café discussions; group conversations on key themes, refining ideas and testing support for different directions (library, skatepark, war memorial, housing)

Workshop 2 – Online Thursday 28 August 2025

To provide an after-hours engagement opportunity, Council delivered a second workshop online. Six participants attended.

While the objectives mirrored workshop 1, the smaller group size allowed for more conversational format. Participants responded to prompts based on key themes rather than moving through structured activities.

Summary of Main Points from Workshops**Community**

- Strong support for a library with:
 - Study areas, bookable rooms, and an indoor space for children and families
 - Preference for a large dedicated site, not in the community centre
 - Accessible with ramps and disability inclusion
- There was a desire to keep the community hall active and consider multipurpose uses. Some suggestions included; dance, basketball, art spaces, craft groups
- Support for a disability inclusive playground which is sensory friendly and fenced for safety.
- Support for markets, community events and an outdoor cinema to build vibrancy and a sense of place.
- Mixed views on the skatepark. Some want it integrated in a central location along with the playground, while others did not see the need when there is one that exists in a nearby location.
- Overall support on the war memorial to be relocated to a more central area. Although some did oppose citing costs and disruption.
- Suggestion to have recognition of First Nations Culture through educational signage.
- Concern from one member about moving the Geoff Dingle Park memorial and feels it is wasting community effort and dishonouring previous work.

Environment

- Strong desire to retain Medowie's 'country town' feel.
- Strong emphasis on green space, native plantings, and koala corridors.
- Requests for street trees and landscaping that reflect local character, 'Place of tall trees'.

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- Request for more bins to reduce littering
- Support for eco-friendly and sustainable approaches to buildings and better landcare involvement

Economy

- Desire for more bespoke cafes and restaurants to improve vibrancy
- Desire for more diverse shopping options including boutique shops and bookstore, however concern may not survive without increased visitation.
- Suggestion for eco-accommodation to support local visitors.
- Concerns Medowie has no banks.
- General support for new commercial land expansion

Housing

- There were mixed views on housing
 - Some residents were concerned Medowie is too small for more housing in this area and there was a concern for overdevelopment
 - Others called for more affordable housing options with higher density and height limits
 - There was suggestion for accessible housing for people with disabilities, singles parents, students and young workers
 - General preference for medium density housing (2-3 storeys)

Movement

- Traffic was seen as the biggest concern for Medowie. Congestion, safety and intersection designs all big issues. There was strong support for a traffic study.
- Mixed views on speed humps with some supporting and others opposing.
- Accessibility concerns with current pathways disjointed and not disability-friendly.
- Would like better pedestrian and cycling links including shared pathways and safe crossings.
- Concerns about on-street parking and poor parking layouts.
- Suggestion to expand roads, example Medowie road into a four lane.

Open Space

- General support for new open spaces with BBQ areas and undercover areas
- Requests for walking tracks and educational features (signage/QR codes)
- Wish to have the local Park Run in this area if it allows
- Trees that don't drop sticks.

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We received 4 separate emails and letters.

These are included in full in Appendix D.

Submission 1: Email received 12 August 2025

- Suggestion of arts hub, gardens and focused on community

Submission 2: Email received 29 August 2025

- Focussed on library, fenced playground and shelters with examples

Submission 3: Letter received 25 August 2025

- Focussed Geoff Dingle Reserve and inclusive playground

Submission 4: Letter from RSL

- Focussed War memorial

Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory Group (DIAAG) see Appendix E for full details

Feedback was collected from members of the DIAAG at their 4 September 2025 meeting. Discussions centred on ways to enhance safety, accessibility, and inclusion across the town centre. Participants emphasised the need for sheltered and conveniently located bus stops, wider and well-connected pathways, flush thresholds at crossings, and reduced road crossings to support safe movement for all users. Accessible parking close to key facilities, including provision for rear-loading vehicles, was strongly supported. The group also identified priorities for the community centre and recreational spaces, such as accessible ramps, inclusive furniture, adequate seating, and amenities with change facilities and hoists. Accessible design for events and markets, with hard surfaces and wide circulation spaces, was also highlighted as essential for inclusion.

Stakeholder Meeting Summary see Appendix F for full details

The project manager met with 6 local business stakeholders who provided detailed feedback on the draft masterplan. There was a focus on commercial balance, connectivity, and safety. Key themes included concern about excessive retail space and support for affordable housing and mixed-use development that fits market demand. Participants emphasised the importance of traffic and pedestrian safety, particularly improvements to the Peppertree and Ferodale Road intersection,

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additional parking, and better walkability across the town centre. They also called for stronger connections between the existing shops and the new development to avoid creating a “new versus old” divide. They encouraged Council to actively communicate about planning processes, promote good news stories like the traffic study, and continue engaging local businesses in future planning stages.

Youth Summit

Port Stephens Council hosted a Youth Summit on Wednesday 24 September, attended by over 40 students from 5 local high schools. The Youth Summit provided young people with the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns, generating valuable insights that informed the Council's planning and decision-making.

During the summit, the students provided input on the Medowie Masterplan, offering 12 suggestions for the future of Medowie Town Centre (**see Appendix E**).

- Nature Trails
- Arcade games
- Hobby Shop
- Shaded outdoor seating and BBQs
- Cultural/ Indigenous murals
- Clothing shops
- Keep the small time feel/ heritage
- Kmart
- Services like chemist
- Library and skatepark
- Public Pool
- Legal dirt bike track
- A basketball court instead of a skatepark

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APPENDIX A

Liveability Survey - 2024

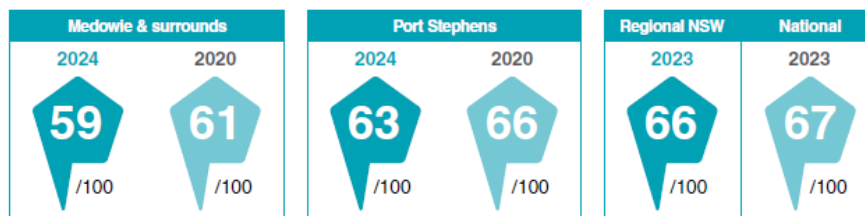


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MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Liveability score

In 2024 Medowie and surrounds liveability score decreased to 59 which is consistent with trends across Australia in the post COVID environment.



Liveability Recommendations



Nurture

These are the things you care about most and say are performing well. We must continue to celebrate and protect these.

- Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery shops, pharmacy, banks etc)
- Sense of belonging in the community



Manage

These are things you care about that need improvement but aren't urgent. We must address them to prevent future challenges.

- Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)
- Locally owned and operated businesses
- Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)
- Access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.)
- Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity (shops, parks etc.)
- Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)
- Ease of driving and parking



Prioritise

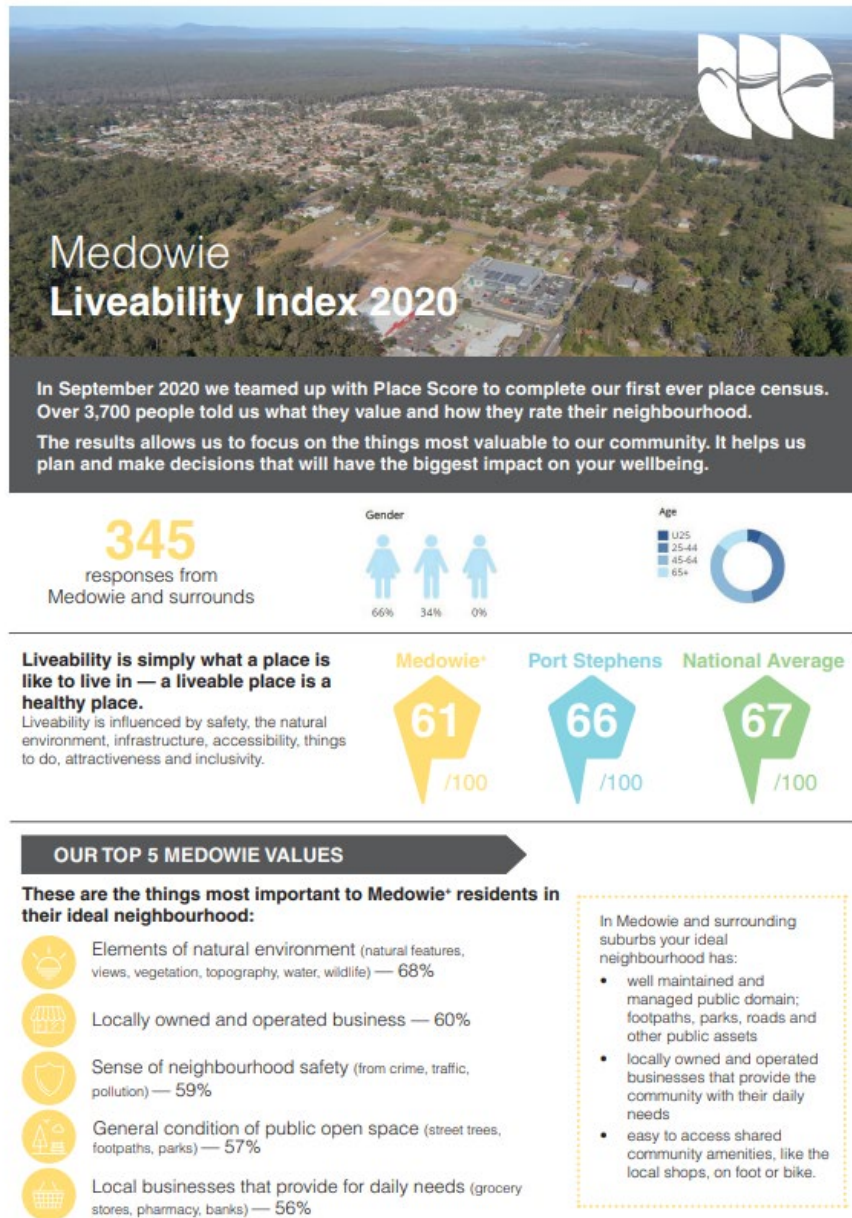
These are the things most important to you and are areas for us to focus on improving. We must prioritise these.

- General condition of public open space (streets, trees, footpaths, parks etc.)
- Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools etc.)
- Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)
- Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting etc.)

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Liveability Survey - 2020



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OUR STRENGTHS

These are the things you care about most and say are performing well. We must continue to celebrate and protect these.



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



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



Locally owned and operated businesses

OUR LIVEABILITY PRIORITIES

These are the things most important to you and are underperforming. We must work to improve these.



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



Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)



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



General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks)



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



Protection of the natural environment



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



Things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, live music)



Evidence of Council/government management (signage, street cleaners)



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



Spaces suitable for play (from toddlers to teens)



Local education opportunities (from elementary to adult education)



Spaces suitable for specific activities or special interests (entertainment, exercise, dog park, BBQs)



Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, building design, density)



Amount of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)



Landmarks, special features or meeting places



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APPENDIX B – Online Engagement

Engagement Activity – Community Mapping

Share your thoughts on the Medowie Town Centre Masterplan

Social Map Markers – 11 August to 5 September 2025



Social Map Contributions – 30

Note: some spelling and grammar changes have been made to ensure clarity of comment only

#	Social Map Marker Comment	Category
1	Retention ponds, street gardens, purple rooves to reduce runoff	Character; Open Space
2	Library / community space. Access for allied health and community services. Study space for high school students. Library to include modern offerings incl. digital services, community education, workshops and events	Community
3	Library, tech centre and area for families	Community

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#	Social Map Marker Comment	Category
4	Community pool	Community
5	Move the War memorial from out the front of Medowie Social to a large space to allow for more visitors and giving a pride of place in the Medowie Town Centre	Community
6	A place for the community markets, events such as Carol's by Candlelight, and other outdoor community gatherings could make good use of this area.	Community
7	This area is poorly utilised. Bike shed could be a good use of this dead space	Community
8	Extra large active transport paths that connect the site. They need to be wide enough to accommodate for the space taken when families stop with prams and scooters etc. to ensure the path is still open for other users	Community; Movement
9	Wheelchair accessible picnic tables. Plenty of them and large enough hardstands to encourage circulation space.	Community; Open Space
10	Accessible bathroom incl. adult change facilities incl. hoist	Community; Open Space
11	Short term accommodation - ECO Friendly	Economy
12	Council should retain revenue from this land so that ongoing costs can be better covered	Economy
13	Kmart	Economy
14	There does not seem to be a plan to create more local jobs in Medowie and currently the majority of working people that live in Medowie have to travel elsewhere for income so they can live in Medowie. There needs to be a commitment by PSC to designate (if not this land then land nearby) to the current shopping precinct that will create both full time jobs and more jobs for young people. Note PSC stating 15,000 residents by 2040 and it has no bank, no clothing store, no 2 dollar shop, no mall, etc that would attract people to stay in Medowie to shop. Medowie needs local jobs as the highest priority. There is already green space in Medowie that could be improved at Boyd Oval. There is already a designated skatepark location that should be replaced to make it a space kids want to use which currently it is not. The current skatepark is too close to the takeaway shops and petrol station that is generating the littering, which evolves into bad behaviour (I have witnessed it many times at the skatepark) so I do not understand why PSC would consider a skatepark that should be realised it will always attract littering. Keep skateparks away from shops. My vote is for retail, retail, retail. We have already missed the boat by allowing housing in prime retail/commercial land in Medowie. We don't need more houses- we need more jobs and shops. As for library - it will end up like Medowie Social. Whoever makes that call better put their name on the front of the building so we know who to blame when it flops like Medowie Social.	Economy

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#	Social Map Marker Comment	Category
15	Aldi - competition among the local retail sector.	Economy
16	Young people, singles, downsizers, and the disadvantaged need more housing options that are not just 3-5 bedroom houses.	Housing
17	Transport interchange	Movement
18	No sure if this map shows a widened road (as mentioned traffic lights proposed as part of the council plan), but Ferodale Road needs widening in the village precinct, for safety, pedestrian separation and any bike paths.	Movement
19	Improved connection to Boyd oval utilising facilities already there	Movement
20	On-demand Bus connections direct to Newcastle, and the Bay	Movement
21	Safer links to sports complex, medowie social, and local schools is required. Separated cycling paths from roads, and walking	Movement
22	Left-turning slip lane	Movement
23	Pathways linking the community center up to Ferodale Sports Complex to try and tie some of these isolated sites together	Movement
24	Flying Fox through the trees	Open Space
25	Basketball court	Open Space; Community
26	Leave the park. Don't destroy our park	Open Space
27	A large park/public area with picnic huts and open areas similar to Speers Point Park - they have set the standard. Could put an area so food trucks could lease a spot to help contribute back to council finances to maintain the park. Done properly it would be a major draw card to bring families to visit the area.	Open Space
28	Unique park for kids, Medowie has great smaller parks dotted around the area a large park with sense of uniqueness would be fantastic. examples Include: 1. Miniature Road/ Town Centre Like at Maitland Park 2. Netball/Basketball courts 3. Gated Large Park to bring people in from out of area like at Spears Point Park	Open Space
29	A massive playground would benefit both the community and be a draw card for tourists, with visitors hopefully grabbing a bite to eat from the nearby shops as well. It could be on the perimeter of an open community space such as this and could replace the playground near the community centre.	Open Space; Community
30	Council Doesn't own this land so I'm not sure why you have included it – (Comment responded to)	

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Join the Conversation Responses – 37

Note: some spelling and grammar changes have been made to ensure clarity of comment only

Join the Conversation Response	Categories
1 The wooden seating situated towards the curbs are not used, no one really wants to sit and breath in exhaust fumes or watch cars and buses. The lay down feature is also impracticable, OK for the beach or a resort. Moving them to a green space/community space may make them more fit for purpose.	Open Space
2 (reply to comment No.1) not true. I see many residents using them while out walking including teenagers and older people. I've used them myself.	Open Space
3 (reply to comment No.1) I believe that this space would be beneficial to everyone if there was a inclusive playground that caters for all kids including those with disabilities this may include ramps wheelchair swing covered seating area a fence that can be locked and some musical play equipment	Open Space, Community
4 Why on earth would you put a skate park in the middle of the town centre? It will end up as an eyesore and a rubbish tip. Build a new one at one of the existing parks such as down on the sports field side of the SocialYou need to be practical and use the land for shops and businesses. Keep the centre of town for shops otherwise as the town grows you will end up with shops scattered everywhere.By all means put in some gardens and park areas but stay away from silly projects like the ones recently done in the main street of Raymond Terrace. I agree with Paul - get rid of the bench seats on the grass areas around the town centre. Also get rid of the ugly sandstone blocks littering the town with the leaf things that look more like penguins. They are a bit of an eyesore.	Open Space, Community
5 (reply to comment No.4) I agree. Skate parks cater to a tiny sliver of our demographic. This land is our last chance to build a community hub.	Open Space, Community
6 (reply to comment No.4)	Open Space, Community

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Join the Conversation Response	Categories
I agree, we don't need another skate park. There is an established skate park at Boyd oval. Maybe invest in refreshing that area.	
7 Before worrying about these small details, you need to seriously consider your road situation as a priority. Medowie Road is now clogged and woefully inadequate (Ferodale Road not much better) thanks to the massive influx over the last few years, and should be dual carriage if you are to insist on the population targets mentioned. Stop neglecting these details at the expense of your residents.	Movement
8 (Council comment to No. 7) We agree and this is a priority for Council and we currently have a ePetition to advocate to NSW Parliament to secure funding for Medowie Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road. You can support the ePetition at pscouncil.info/roadsepetition	Movement
9 (reply to comment No.8) What data is PSC going to provide to prove that Medowie Rd and Lemon Tree Passage Rd are worthy of Stage Gov funding so ratepayers can see there is sufficient evidence to support what PSC are saying - rather than PSC using platforms like this to say "please sign my petition so you MIGHT get a better road that you drive on out of it". Saying you don't have enough \$ to fund it might be factual but it is not a reason to pass the problem to someone else. Given PSC have 600 staff costing ratepayers \$60M per year and then there is still another \$90M per year that seems to be insufficient to manage 732km of local gov roads (which is in fact one of the lowest coastal regional council km of roads in NSW) seems like PSC have enough \$ (plus don't forget the 3 years of 9% rate increases that were recently approved). So what is PSC doing to reign in the expenses - job cuts - i doubt it, ridiculous projects - i doubt it. So nothing - other than making it someone elses problem. Providing fact based information such as traffic counts, future growth areas, future plans that are based on real potential scenarios should be advertised with the petition. Not like the ridiculous plan to join Brockelsby Rd to Lisadell Rd in the "Medowie Place Plan" that will never happen because PSC missed the boat to put a building envelop caveat on the future corridor and then allowed a house to get built smack bang in the middle of the future road. Well done PSC - so there goes that logical plan that PSC should be more focusing on given the reoccurring crashes at Richardson Rd / Grahamstown Rd that are pushing state road traffic all the way through Medowie when a car crash occurs at the intersection - like a	Movement

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	Join the Conversation Response	Categories
	few days ago. Show ratepayers the information you have justifying that Medowie Rd and LTPR are worthy of state road funding so that ratepayers you want to sign the petition can make an informed choice. But the advice I received from PSC engineer a few years back was that the traffic counts were nowhere near the minimum required for Medowie Road to be a state road - and if Medowie isn't enough hen LTPR certainly is not either. GOOD LUCK PSC.	
10	there needs to be significant land zoned for medium density housing (2-4 storeys) for town houses/unit complexes and ensure developers set aside a percentage of available residences for low income housing	Housing
11	Great to engage with the team at the drop-in session and discuss the future plans. My thought on the layout of the project, to promote connectivity, public safety and a "Connected", 'whole' town centre feel would be: 1. Pedestrianise the Peppertree Road and Ferodale Road intersection. Roughly a 'T' shape (looking from Peppertree Road towards the Ferodale Road development site). 1.1 Close Peppertree Road from approximately the rear access point of Domino's Pizza to Ferodale Road. 1.2 Close Ferodale Road up to the resident's access / community centre access point on Ferodale Road. 1.3 Close Ferodale Road down to the access point to the Australia Post / MOD Thai shopping precinct. This would provide a large safe pedestrian zone and significant access to and from the new development to the existing commercial / shopping precinct. There would be sufficient space to cater for seating, pop up coffee vans etc. or even the relocation of the War Memorial? 2: Close / Restrict access to Ferodale Road from Medowie Road and only allow access for the residents of 47A (41 Ferodale Road) and visitors to the Community centre (as per above). 2.1: Current traffic users that would normally access the existing commercial / shopping precinct (Woolies / Coles / AusPost etc.) from Medowie Road, would still have full vehicular access to these facilities via the Muir Street intersection. 2.2: Current traffic users that would normally access the existing commercial / shopping precinct (Woolies / Coles / AusPost etc.) from the Ferodale Road direction, would still have access to the ample carparking within the existing shopping areas in and around the 'Bull and Bush', 'Noahs Ark' and 'Australia Post' access points (x3). 3. To ensure vehicles from the 'Ferodale Road' direction still had access to Medowie Road, as per your planning proposal, construct the new road between the intersection of Lisadell Road and Abundance Road to the Southwest of Medowie and connect it to Medowie Road at the intersection of Medowie Road and Brocklesby Road to the Southeast of	Movement

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Join the Conversation Response		Categories
	Medowie. This new road would ensure vehicles were still able to access both sides of Medowie and still provide safe and quick options for connecting to the Pacific Highway / Raymond Terrace / Port Stephens. The options above would significantly reduce the number of instances of Pedestrian v Vehicle interactions at the currently proposed crossing points, reduce tail backs onto the arterial Medowie Road, keeping that route flowing and would provide a solution to the 'connectedness' of Medowie town centre.	
12	(reply to comment No.11) oh yes, more walkable infrastructure would be lovely and beneficial to our community as a whole!	Movement
13	We agree and this is a priority for Council and we currently have a ePetition to advocate to NSW Parliament to secure funding for Medowie Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road. You can support the ePetition at pscouncil.info/roadsepetition	Movement
14	We don't need more housing, stop destroying our local ecosystems. The more you displace our wildlife the closer they will come to society and the more they will die. Its just awful to see the beautiful lands we have here be stripped bare and degraded to Suburbia	Housing, Environment
15	(reply to comment No.14) Medowie is meant to be 'place of tall trees' there won't be any left. Look at the 'Gardens' and the estate going in behind Coles, not a single tree in the whole estate. Houses are so close you could reach over and clean your neighbour's gutter	Environment
16	(reply to comment No.14) Tallowood is a type of Eucalypt that is a preferred koala food, it is a joke that these developments are named after local fauna which then destroys them. Medowie is the Place of Tall Trees and our landscape needs to be preserved as much as possible	Environment
17	since early history people need a meeting place to trade, converse and celebrate. Medowie is no different. It needs a plaza, town square. An expansion of the strip just makes it a place to pass through. Medowie has a huge opportunity to set the place up for years to come and needs to be developed with care and sensitivity.	Community
18	I appreciate Council's initiative in preparing a masterplan for Medowie Town Centre. However, I am concerned that the current draft does not fully address the critical role of a true village centre in fostering social interaction, identity, and	Community, Open Space, Movement

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community cohesion. I've been in Medowie for 18 months now. I find it soulless and isolating and feel the masterplan offered will not change that. Successful communities are not defined solely by supermarkets or fast food outlets. Places thrive when the heart of the town becomes a genuine hub of activity - with cafes, restaurants, diverse retail, and welcoming public spaces that encourage people to gather, interact, and participate in community life. I do not feel this plan offers this. I strongly recommend Council engage an experienced urban planner to critically review and refine the draft. Case studies of other thriving communities across NSW and beyond clearly demonstrate that well-designed village centres provide not only for commercial needs but also a sense of place - the cultural and social anchor for the community. The Medowie Town Centre masterplan should aspire to this higher benchmark. By focusing on creating a vibrant, walkable, and people-centred village core, Council will ensure that Medowie grows as a resilient, connected, and attractive community	
19 (reply to comment No.18) Well said RK. You nailed it. This kind of approach and "higher benchmark" is vitally important for physical and mental well being - for the whole community. The choices we make here actually add to or subtract value from people's lives. I love the way you expressed this. This is our home. Make Medowie a "blue zone".	Community, Open Space, Movement
20 (reply to comment No.18) The original plan was good I believe it was done around 2015-16 But it was changed as the big wigs entered the area and developers schemed changes Wilga street should have always been connected to Peppertree Rd and this master plan been adhered to I remember going into council offices and talking face to face with the planning department representative of the time and he assured me this was the plan and it was going ahead	Movement
21 (reply to comment No.18) Well said, I couldn't agree more	Community, Open Space, Movement
22 Medowie road needs to be weight limited from the highway end to stop the ever increasing number of semi trailers using Medowie as a short cut to Newcastle. Medowie road will never regain condition while they speed through the centre of town. Only locally required semitrailers should be allowed.	Movement
23 retail spaces or a library would be great. housing isn't thinking ahead, by placing housing here you're cutting off	Economy

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	Join the Conversation Response	Categories
	the ability to expand the town centre and thus limiting future commercial expansion. invest in some sort of quality strip or plaza that prioritises local businesses. we don't need more large chains we need an opportunity for small businesses to thrive and to forge ourselves an identity as a town, other than that of big corporate chain	
24	While not strictly part of this area, what about the empty block of land on the corner of Medowie & Ferodale roads, opposite the community centre. Since the town is growing and your looking at future planning, could council build an 'emergency services hub' on that land. Move our fireies across the road into a more modern facility t give them room to grown with the town and a police station, maybe SES combine them into one building (separate wings or areas with a shared central facilities like bathrooms, training/meeting rooms, recreation room, etc.	Community
25	(Council replied to comment No. 24) Hi there, we can confirm that this parcel of land is not owned by Council.	
26	Dual lane road's needed	Movement
27	Where in all this is there going to be a position for the Veterans War Memorial, which I believe has to be moved due to the Social being sold. Where in Medowie is there now a place for the community to hold services such as ANZAC Day, given the large amount numbers that attend these services?If its community land why is council looking at retail and housing?	Community
28	(Council's reply to comment No. 26) Hi there, the option of relocating the war memorial to this site is something we would appreciate your thoughts on, and whether you are supportive of such a move. Also, we can confirm the classification of this site is operational land - we've added a FAQ about the difference between community and operational land below.	
29	We need a pool, better transportation links (and safe cycling) across Ferodale, and better connections through on-demand transportation! I would love to see the Council have the vision of retaining ownership of some of the development to generate revenue.	Movement
30	silverwattle drive needs a pathway to connect one of the busiest streets to get to cbd still is the only spot without a path(people literally walk on the road)Antisocial behaviour and the club open till 3am is a disgrace also having car park speakers in the same venue should be not allowed South	Movement

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Join the Conversation Response	Categories
side of Ferodale Rd needs to be carefully designed to offer retail and community spaces with adequate parking and traffic measures taken into serious consideration Unfortunately a plan like this was needed before development not after but let's see what council comes up with my expectations are not high	
31 I do not agree that an additional skatepark is needed as there is an existing skatepark at Boyd Oval. It would be better to upgrade those existing facilities and this space utilised for something the town is currently lacking. There was also a lot of work done by the Medowie Place Planning group to create a town center of which the existing Lions Park is an integral part of and many community members are proud of their contributions, only for this to potentially be demolished for a car	Community, Open Space
32 Firstly, I thank and congratulate the Port Stephens Council for having the foresight of purchasing the land and giving careful consideration to the future of Medowie.As for the use of the land, I respectfully request NOT a skate park and I strongly support the suggestion of a retail area.Ideally with outlets that don't currently exist in Medowie. At the moment residents have to travel elsewhere to shop for shoes, clothes and so on.	Community, Open Space, Economy
33 No Skatepark Use the money you have for a skatepark on the existing skatepark at the Boyd Sports Complex.This land should be an inclusive place and skateparks don't fit.Playground yes, skatepark no.Geoff Dingle/Lions ParkPlease do not destroy the Geoff Dingle/Lions Park that generations of Medowians have developed. It's our park please don't turn it into a carpark. Our town has a great history with many interesting stories and is known as the Place of Tall Trees, this park holds alot of those stories.We are not just a suburb with no heart.AmenitiesWe also need the existing amenities in the Lions Park to stay. Council allowed all the shopping areas to be developed without amenities. If you have a little one that needs to go to the bathroom you don't have time to run to the bottom part of the park.A wooden path through the conservation area that connects to the schools as a shared pathway for bikes and pedestrians. It would be great to do the fun run through the tall trees.Height RestrictionsNo building in this sector should be more that 2 levels. I hear you want to go to 4 - 5 levels. We want to see our trees and not concrete.WildlifeWe need to ensure whatever is done doesn't affect the wildlife in the area. There are koala corridors and native corridors that need to be respected. We came to Medowie for the rural lifestyle. We all enjoy seeing the kangaroos and	Community Open Space, Movement, Environment, Economy

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	Join the Conversation Response	Categories
	koalas.Jobs/ActivitiesPerhaps we can have eco accommodation as there are lots of Mountain Bikers that come from far and wide that bike in our forest, they stay in Nelson Bay as they have nowhere local to stay except the pub. Flying Fox Business through the conservation AreaMore retail and professional services offices such as a 24 hour Medical Centre with the ability to assist with sporting injuries. Librarian/Indoor Family SpaceThe building marked near the purple plaza would be great for a Library/IT Set Up/ Family Area/cafes. This would be great for school holiday activities near the park.	
34	I think a library with area for kid & Adults to sit and use laptop for their studies.skate park with a playground would be a place where kids could be while parents are shopping or libraryA youth hub (Jupiter) would be a place where they can get supportAGreen space for activities e.g. yoga	Community, Movement, Open Space, Economy
35	I have been in Medowie for 23 years, and I do not know of any other town so poorly planned. I am glad that the council has decided to collaborate with the community this time around, but this discussion is only limited to one small section of land compared to the frustrating issues already plaguing Medowie. If council were to address some of the following issues, it would give me much more confidence that the future-looking Medowie is in good hands. Please see attached a google maps shot of Medowie for the number references: 1. There is a great footpath installed a few years ago that stretches from the Dunes to the Bower, but there is NO LIGHTING!! Between Silver Wattle and Kindlebark, and between Ferodale and the Gardens, there are places where you end up off the path because it is pitch black if the moon isn't out. It's terrifying! 2. An improvement to the community park was carried out to make it look and feel welcoming, which I think was successful, it looks significantly better than it did and can be nice in the summer under a tree. How do you get there? They put in kerb ramps leading from Woolworths to the park, but no pedestrian crossing or even a pedestrian island, and worse still, over a turning lane. I have seen so many close calls of parents trying to drag their kids across that part of the road. (note, without trying to sound too facetious, the only thing saving them is that the cars need to slow down due to the potholes). There is not one pedestrian crossing in the town centre...it gives me the impression this is a town centre for cars!	

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3 and 4. A new commercial centre was developed that included a GP, a chemist, daycare, dentist and some foodaries, but how does it link in with the other commercial centres? If I was at Woolies or Coles, how do I get there? I have to drive. If I walk, I can't go directly to the stairs, because there is a 500mm step to get up on to the landing at the bottom of the stairs. If I can't climb stairs, I have to walk all the way around to KFC to get access to the footpath. BUT, once I get there, I still have to manoeuvre myself through a couple of metres of mud because someone didn't connect the two footpaths!! Ridiculous! 5 and 5a. While we're on walking around, if I am down at the old shops, or the bullo, to get to the newsagency or to Coles, I have two options: 1. the longest ramp I've seen that ends up at the car park so then I need to dodge cars to get to somewhere safe; 2. use the road to walk around towards the Jasmin Thai, then I can go through a tunnel that again leads me to a car park where again I have to dodge cars before I find safety. If I am at the vet and need to get Peppertree GP, I have to take the car all of 100m or risk being run over or suffer an injury. 6. The new commercial centre has some sought after facilities. At the same time the new 7-11 was installed, which was good for Medowie, because at least it gave us some after hours access to fuel. However, why were they not linked. A new pedestrian island was installed directly outside the servo, but instead of making pedestrian access through the back of the servo to the rest of the commercial centre, a big wooden fence was built to isolate it. So, people have to walk around. It's not that far, but it could've been much more convenient, it feels like each of these developments were planned in isolation. 7. People who like to walk to the town centre, typically live to the east. But, there are limited footpaths to get there. On Silver Wattle, there is a footpath that just ends at Bottlebrush. Why? On Grey Gum, the footpath doesn't even get to Bottle Brush, it stops about 50m short. Why? And there are plenty more examples of this as we get further way from town; for example, there is a footpath on Kindiebark that starts on Medowie road, and goes all the way to Flametree Link, then stops for what seems to no reason. Walkers are then forced to walk on the road trying to dodge cars who are trying to dodge pot holes. I really like Medowie and it has so much potential, but everytime something gets developed, it seems there is little planning for the bigger picture. As I said above, I get the	

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impression that each building has been developed and planned in isolation. As you can tell from above, I'm all about getting people to the town centre, not the cars. At the moment it is impossible. If I live on Silver Wattle today, only a few hundred metres away and what should be an easy stroll, it is much safer (and easier) for me to drive to the chemist, then drive to coles, then drive to the newsagency, then drive to the bullo for lunch. This Medowie Town Centre project is the last opportunity we have to create something that attracts the people. Some thoughts: 1. If you go to any regional town centre, the roads are widened, the cars are parked front to kerb angle parking, the speed is slowed down to 40 in a shared zone. Why can't we do the same with Ferodale? We can make Richardson road or Kirrang the town bypass. You can then leave your car there and do your shopping or anything else on either side of the road. 2. A park is a good idea if there are other things to do. We have heaps of parks around Medowie, that are underutilised because people only go there if they want to go a park, not for any other reason. If the park is in the town centre and accessible, it's a great place to have lunch, meet up, let the kids play after you go shopping etc. 3. Make this area accessible from the other side of the road, or even from Medowie road as well so people from the gardens or tallwood can access this area easily. Planners should be asking themselves, how are people going to meet in Medowie? How are they going to move around by foot from one side of the town centre to the other? How can we limit the need to drive?	
36 I think that this masterplan is a really good opportunity to address aspects to the public space that are lacking currently. From my perspective as a parent of two small children, these are my chief is a lack of accessible public space in all weather conditions. This could be addressed by:LibraryPresently there is a lack of free public space in Medowie that is available during adverse weather conditions, such as the middle of summer or rainy days. As well as the benefits to literacy and community events, a library would provide a safe space for kids and adolescents to visit during school holiday and weekends. Given that there are 4 primary schools and soon to be 2 highschoools, I think that it would be excellent to incorporate a library into the development.It would also benefit the local shops, as	Community, Open Space, Economy

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presently I often go to Salamander Bay or Raymond Terrace for grocery shopping if I have the toddler with me, because I can take her to the library to break the day up for her. Fenced Playground It's excellent to see that a new playground is earmarked to be part of the development. I think that some playgrounds that hit to gold standard are Speers Point Playground, Maitland Park Playground, Richley Reserve and Stockton Active Hub. I can attest that if the playground is decent enough that people will travel from other suburbs to use it on the weekend too (since I travel to the playgrounds listed), which will bring extra business to existing businesses/cafes and those proposed in the development. An example of how many people are willing to travel out here for a daytrip is amount of people that the Little Tin Shed receives when they host a sunflower picking event. It would be excellent to see a Medowie playground listed on websites such as Hunter Hunter or Newy with Kids. A key aspect of the playground though is that it needs to be fenced. Currently we only have one fenced playground in Port Stephens (in Shoal Bay). When children are very young and a solo carer is looking after them, it is a risk to take multiple children to playgrounds that don't have fences. This will also reduce little kids running into the skate park. Shelters It would be great if we could incorporate shelters into the design. This links back in with providing public space during rainy days or the hottest part of the year. For example, the Railway Carriage Sheds in the Newcastle Foreshore Park or the undercover areas for hire at Blackbutt Reserve in Newcastle definitely hit the mark.	
37	

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Join the Conversation – Attachments

Comment 29 attachment.

To Port Stephens Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the future development of Medowie's town centre. I am very supportive of Council's vision for growth, but I believe there are some key areas that need to be addressed for the project to truly serve our community well.

As a new resident of Medowie, I am very eager to see the town centre development succeed. I bring experience working in Sydney Water and State Government, and my wife is employed at a local school. I now serve in a local church that connects weekly with hundreds of people across our services and programs, and I also hold office as a Justice of the Peace in NSW. Having grown up in Ryde, Strathfield and Wentworthville—areas that experienced rapid growth and renewal—I have seen first-hand both the opportunities and challenges of town centre development.

We see the real need for this project, we are eager to support it, and I personally would love to be able to rent facilities in the proposed development for community use. I also hear regularly from families, young people, and older residents in Medowie who want the town centre to be a place they can be proud of and rely on. With that in mind, I would like to highlight some key areas that I believe will strengthen the town centre and set it up for long-term success.

1. Housing diversity

Medowie's housing is quite limited, with very little available for singles, young adults or downsizers. A stronger mix of "missing middle" housing such as apartments and townhouses would allow young couples, smaller families and older residents to stay in Medowie rather than moving elsewhere. Integrating these homes around the town centre would also make the area more lively and walkable.

I personally know 5 individuals struggling with cost of living because there are not suitable accommodation options in town...

Developments such as *Ermington Royal Shores* and *West Ryde Central Square (15 Chatham Rd)* show how a blend of densities can look attractive and function well. A similar model in Medowie would provide long-term diversity.

2. Transport links

Direct transport connections to Newcastle and Nelson Bay would be a game changer for commuters, families and youth. I also suggest Council work with Transport for NSW to trial an **"on demand" bus service** for Medowie. This would reduce car-dependence and open up opportunities for many residents who currently feel isolated. And make the town centre more accessible.

3. Roads and cycleways

The Ferodale Road roundabout could be improved with slip lanes for left turns to ease congestion. More importantly, safe bicycle access is urgently needed across Ferodale Road from the roundabout to Medowie Public School and the High School. At present this is

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unsafe for children and families. A separated or elevated cycleway would make a huge difference.

4. Town centre design

Chatswood Place should be seen as the **gold standard** of a destination-style development. A mix of retail, medical, preschool, and food outlets with high-quality public space makes it a true community hub. Medowie deserves something of that calibre.

An **ALDI in the town centre** would also be incredible for families, providing competition and relief on cost of living pressures.

Sustainability features should also be built in from the start:

- Capturing rainwater for irrigation and reuse.
- Green or purple roofs to reduce heat.
- Street gardens and plantings to reduce stormwater runoff and improve amenity.

5. Community and recreation

Rather than duplicating playgrounds, Council could better utilise and enhance Boyd Oval with upgraded play facilities and amenities. What Medowie truly lacks is a **public pool**. Placing a pool within the town centre would create a destination for children, families and seniors and provide year-round community benefit.

6. Pedestrian focus

The design of the town centre should prioritise safe and accessible pedestrian movement. This means wider shaded footpaths, traffic calming, and much safer crossing points around Ferodale Road and into the town centre itself. Creating a place where people feel safe to walk is just as important as road upgrades.

7. Long-term financial planning

I suggest Council consider retaining ownership of some units or commercial spaces in the development. This would provide an ongoing revenue stream to help fund transport upgrades and other infrastructure while reducing the long-term reliance on rates alone.

Conclusion

Medowie has a once-in-a-generation chance to build a town centre that is vibrant, sustainable, and useful. If Council can address housing diversity, transport, sustainability, and community spaces with the ambition shown in successful places like Chatswood Place, it will create a town centre that residents can be proud of for decades to come.

Thank you for considering these points.

Sincerely,

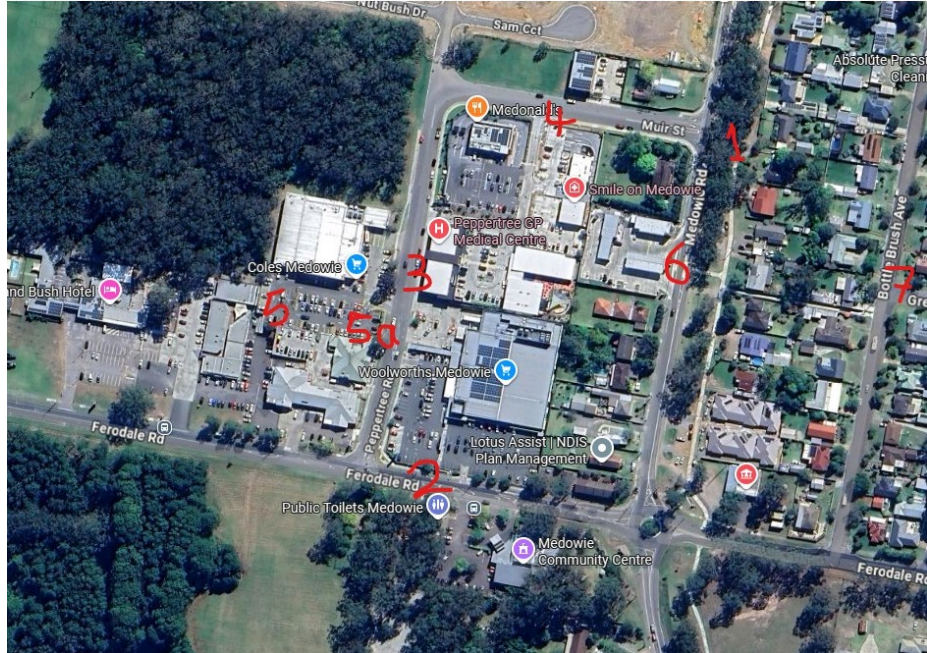
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MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Comment 35.



Comment 36.

Links attached playgrounds:

[Speers Point Playground](#)

[Maitland Park Playground](#)

[Richley Reserve](#)

[Stockton Active Hub](#)

Links attached websites:

[Hunter Hunter](#)

[Newy with Kids](#)

APPENDIX C

Workshop Feedback 25 August 2025

Feedback	Categories
Vibe - character - street trees	Character, Movement, Open Space
Signage	Character
Library – extend the existing building	Community
Library supportive. Uses street library	Community
Library - include study areas	Community
Library - include playground (childrens area)	Community
Yes to library, mobile library not accessible	Community
Library - bookable rooms for craft groups etc	Community
Library - Utilise Lion's Park for Library build	Community
community area needed	Community
Keep community hall site active	Community
Art spaces - local gallery	Community
Young community - need parks	Community
Disability inclusive playground, sensory friendly (e.g. Boomerang Park)	Community
Medowie does not have events have to go to Raymond Terrace or Nelson Bay	Community
War memorial - incorporate into	Community
Move war memorial to main park area	Community
Concern about Medowie Social what is happening and moving the war memorial (council wasting money)	Community, Economy
Hall - heating and cooling	Community

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Feedback	Categories
Pool / gym facility	Community
Skatepark incorporate with playgroun e.g. stockton	Community
Skatepark - I think that we don't need a skatepark we have one down the road that is being upgraded I believe.	Community
Plaque or memorial for Geoff Dingle	Community
Dogs - a fenced off lead area in Medowie	Community
First Nations area local Wormi educational signage etc	Community
We should have a disability inclusive playground	Community
Incorporate ramps to be all inclusive	Community
Cinema would be great or outdoor cinema nights	Community
Playground should be fenced	Community; Open Space
Medowie has no banks	Economy
Need more bespoke café options	Economy
Commercial land needed	Economy
Plenty of take away options already	Economy
Proximity to airport - potential for airport stop off /meet up etc	Economy, Open Space, Movement
Removal of flora that is not native	Environment
Landcare group for Medowie	Environment
Koala space	Environment
Drainage issues	Environment
more green spaces less building footprint	Environment
Right landscaping - gum trees bring them back	Environment, Open Space
Town is too small for more housing	Housing

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Feedback	Categories
More affordable housing options	Housing
Need to have higher limits for housing	Housing
We don't need more housing	Housing
Existing area (maccas + KFC) is very tight	Movement
Biggest problem is traffic	Movement
Intersection improvement, no roundabout	Movement
Parking on road not good but parking at the rear of plan not good either	Movement
Parking area on road to be drive in and out like Birubu/Robinson reserve	Movement
Medowie Road - four lanes	Movement
Traffic issues are huge	Movement
Left turn only in off Medowie Road	Movement
Use fall of land to overcome land/ build more carparks	Movement
Paths that flow	Movement
We need footpaths	Movement
Road off Medowie Road linking through past 10 on map (along Tallowood boundary)	Movement
Walking track / pathways	Movement
Very disjointed, poor disbaility and children access	Movement
Walking track / pathways	Movement
Very disjointed, poor disbaility and children access	Movement, Community
New open space areas	Open Space
BBQ facilities	Open Space
Street tree plantings are supported	Open Space, Movement

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Workshop Feedback 28 August 2025

Feedback	Categories
Making the area attractive so people want to hang out. Eco accommodation like a motel, maybe accommodation near the trees. Nowhere for family to stay when visiting.	Character, Economy
Medowie is still a country town and want to stay that way. I would love to keep the green space.	Character, Environment
Would like it to be an Eco-friendly vibe and feel, don't want a suburban feel.	Character, Environment
Continue lush feel and choice of plants are going to matter. Not necessary gum trees as at GD park a lot of sticks fall down.	Character, Environment
Pro library - I have two kids and there is a lack of indoor space to be in with the kids so if you have bad weather there is currently nowhere to go and where kids are allowed. Also where you don't have to spend money. I think would be a benefit for the community.	Community
Need a good big place for the library where kids can be indoors.	Community
Also on hot days don't have spaces to take kids	Community
War memorial - if the social club has been sold yes to moving it.	Community
I think brining the war memorial down is a great idea, more room.	Community
If the library was to go into the number 3 area, I think the skatepark be no 8 and the kids playground be no 7.	Community
I wouldn't want the library in the community Centre in the green space (on the corner). I think the community centre would be fantastic for dance classes and basketball. The space near No 3 would be the best place for the library, with a big outdoor area and overlooking the park and green space.	Community, Environment

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There isn't a great place where people can congregate, it would be good to bring that community feel into this area	Community
Markets will need to be moved and good place to put them	Community, Open Space
I think it would be a good idea to make the skatepark central	Community, Open Space
Markets will need to be moved and good place to put them	Community, Open Space
I think it would be a good idea to make the skatepark central	Community, Open Space
I think we can't go wrong either way if the skatepark gets upgraded in the current location or if we get a new one in this area.	Community, Open Space
Get rid of the skatepark and put a basketball court	Community, Open Space
I do agree that we already have a skatepark and don't need to have another one but if we do get one, I think that it needs to be put in no 8.	Community, Open Space
Can the playground be fenced for safety of young children	Community, Open Space
Geocaching is a popular activity that can draw tourist in, inline with scavenger hunt suggestion	Community, Open Space
I would really like an Aldi	Economy
More cafes and restaurants	Economy
Small eatery's and cafes	Economy
Not really a reason to come to Medowie at the moment except to do grocery shopping so more little bookshops etc to draw people in. EG Blue Mountains bookshop which you can stop and have a coffee and shop	Economy
Boutique shops are good but unless people are coming in they will go out of business. People are staying in Nelson Bay and they are getting all the business	Economy
We need more cafes/restaurants.	Economy
Homeware stores is a great idea	Economy

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

Maturin Pear tree	Environment
Medowie gardening club list of all native plants to Medowie, should refer back to them	Environment
The area 11 should be planted out with local native species and education boards to inform them what the local plants are	Environment
Don't want to cut out trees with development	Environment, Housing, Economy
I think we need 2-3 stories above to accommodate this and consider high density housing	Housing
I think 3 levels but trying not to block out the trees.	Housing
Housing - talking about disability side of things this area would work well for them to build houses or villas all accessible. Single mothers, students, young workers need an area so small to medium housing	Housing
Medium density is a great use of space	Housing
Why is there no parking near along Petertree Rd extension (Map No.2)	Movement
Timber boardwalk path through conservation area and loop around in some way.	Movement
I would not put parking at location 4, I feel it would be a conflict spot as too close to road.	Movement
Confused about the road at the bottom, is it a road to nowhere? Could it be used for parking area	Movement
Slowing down Ferodale road would be good	Movement
Speed humps along the road to slow people down	Movement
No speed humps, they are the worst thing ever.	Movement
If I was a kid I would ride along a timber conservation park in area 11 to get to the shops, park etc	Movement
Anyway to link pathways and get kids off the road is great	Movement
Excellent if there was a shared pathway	Movement

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

Boardwalk through the area would be great for environmental , pathway and tourist attraction	Movement
I think the addition of the lisadell rd. bypass further south shouldl reduce the level of congestion and stop the use of the "shortcut"	Movement
Great idea with potential 4 lane rd. to the north	Movement
QR code to include the walk paths and include the natives. We are trying to create a track so people can walk around	Movement, Character
I would like to see the local park run moved to this space if we have enough paths to get into the city centre.	Open Space
Good example in Maitland Park near the pool which has a lot of midlevel trees kids can climb on that don't drop sticks.	Open Space
Lots of bins. Ever since Maccas has gone in there is a lot more litter around	Open Space
I don't think this area should have a dog park in this area.	Open Space
People like to take their dogs to cafes	Open Space
Dogs must be on leads	Open Space
Outdoor spaces that are undercover, like in Newcastle. People can use for exercise boot camps for example.	Open Space
Vibrant places - Geoff Dingle Park school maps approved by Council not happy that it will be getting moved. Feels wasted a year and a half of work with schools and artists. Spoke to Clint and it took 6 months to get location and it is about honouring Geoff. I am devastated by this.	Open Space
Suggestion that certain items from Geoff Dingle park remain in new area	Open Space
I don't like the skatepark idea for this site.	Open Space
Don't understand why a skatepark will be going near a conservation area, it is a corridor for Koalas.	Open Space, Community
Outdoor cinema	Open Space, Community

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.**

Council could have a small business where you can rent furniture like beanbags to support activity in the park	Open Space, Community
Relocating items with Port Stephens does not go well; you just rebuild.	Open Space, Community
How about a basketball court in this space? and upgrade the boyd park location	Open Space, Community
We need to keep in mind that we are not going to make everyone happy	

APPENDIX D – Letters and Emails

Email 12 August 2025

Good morning,

I will unfortunately be away for the upcoming workshops, but thought it would be worth emailing to have my say. It would be great if you could please consider my ideas and, as a Medowie local, let me know if I can get involved or assist. I may have used Chat GPT to help me with my original email 😊, but I think it sounds like a pretty good proposal:

A Creative Vision for 38 Ferodale Road: Medowie Community Arts Hub

Proposal: Transform 38 Ferodale Road into a vibrant, multi-use community arts space that celebrates creativity, fosters connection, and enhances the cultural identity of Medowie.

Why an Arts Hub?

Medowie is home to a growing population of families and retirees, yet there are limited opportunities for community engagement and creative expression. An arts hub would:

- Provide **inclusive workshops** for all ages—painting, sewing, patchwork, sculpture, weaving, floral art, and more
- Offer **school holiday programs** for children, led by local artists and educators
- Host **art shows, exhibitions, and opening nights** to showcase local talent
- Include a **shopfront** selling handmade art, crafts, and unique gifts
- Serve as a **community meeting space** for clubs, groups, and events

A Space That Serves Everyone

The site's generous size allows for a thoughtful layout:

- **Shopfronts facing Ferodale Road** could house local businesses or the art retail space
- **Rear section** could include gallery rooms, workshop studios, a small library, and flexible meeting rooms
- **Outdoor areas** could be landscaped with flowering gardens, echoing the charm of Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay

Safety & Accessibility

While some have suggested a skatepark, this location is not ideal due to traffic concerns. The current skatepark, though in need of an upgrade, is better situated with

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.**

safer access. The arts hub would be a safer, quieter, and more inclusive alternative that appeals to a broader demographic.

✿ Community Impact

- Encourages **volunteerism** and local pride
- Attracts **visitors** to the town centre, boosting local business
- Creates a **cultural landmark** that reflects Medowie's identity
- Offers **ongoing enrichment** for residents of all ages

Thank you,

Email 29 August 2025

Hi Lillian, Louise and Elizabeth,

Thank you for hosting the community engagement session. Being able to provide feedback was excellent.

I just wanted to summarise some of the points that I brought up in respect to the masterplan.

I think that this masterplan is a really good opportunity to address aspects to the public space that are lacking currently. From my perspective as a parent of two small children, these are my chief is a lack of accessible public space in all weather conditions. This could be addressed by:

- **Library**

Presently there is a lack of free public space in Medowie that is available during adverse weather conditions, such as the middle of summer or rainy days. As well as the benefits to literacy and community events, a library would provide a safe space for kids and adolescents to visit during school holiday and weekends. Given that there are 4 primary schools and soon to be 2 highschoools, I think that it would be excellent to incorporate a library into the development.

It would also benefit the local shops, as presently I often go to Salamander Bay or Raymond Terrace for grocery shopping if I have the toddler with me, because I can take her to the library to break the day up for her.

- **Fenced Playground**

It's excellent to see that a new playground is earmarked to be part of the development. I think that some playgrounds that hit to gold standard are Speers

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

Point Playground, Maitland Park Playground, Richley Reserve and Stockton Active Hub.

I can attest that if the playground is decent enough that people will travel from other suburbs to use it on the weekend too (since I travel to the playgrounds listed), which will bring extra business to existing businesses/cafes and those proposed in the development. An example of how many people are willing to travel out here for a daytrip is amount of people that the Little Tin Shed receives when they host a sunflower picking event. It would be excellent to see a Medowie playground listed on websites such as Hunter Hunter or Newy with Kids.

A key aspect of the playground though is that it ***needs to be fenced***. Currently we only have one fenced playground in Port Stephens (in Shoal Bay). When children are very young and a solo carer is looking after them, it is a risk to take multiple children to playgrounds that don't have fences.

- **Shelters**

It would be great if we could incorporate shelters into the design. This links back in with providing public space during rainy days or the hottest part of the year. An example of this that I mentioned are the Railway Carriage Sheds in the Newcastle Foreshore Park, but I do think that Reece's suggestion of the undercover areas for hire at Blackbutt Reserve in Newcastle definitely hit the mark closer.

Please feel free to share this with the other meeting attendees (Julie, Reece or Lisa), if you see fit.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.****Submission 25 August 2025**

Dear Leah Anderson & Fellow Councillors

I would like to draw your attention to some conversation that I have been hearing in our community around the Geoff Dingle Reserve. But before I start I would like to share some information about Geoff Dingle Reserve and Cr Dingle himself. Mr Dingle was both a friend and mentor to the people of Medowie, who dedicated a huge amount of his time to our local community. Along with representing the residents of Central Ward for fourteen years, Mr Dingle was an active member of Scouts, a board member with the Hunter Regional Botanic Gardens, member of the Hunter New England Health Advisory Panel, Chair of the Koala Plan of Management Committee and member of Medowie Sports Council.

The Geoff Dingle Reserve, which is located at 38 Ferodale Road Medowie, was purchased by Council for mixed residential and recreational use. The purchase of this land by Council is a key driver of the Medowie Place Plan and will be a place for new development and growth in Medowie, by connecting our residents to new recreation facilities and expand our town center to cater for the growth of our community.

Geoff Dingle Reserve, nestled in the heart of Medowie, serves as a vital green space for the local community, providing both recreational opportunities and a sanctuary for local wildlife. Enhancing this space with a well-designed playground will not only promote physical activity among children but also foster social interaction and family engagement. This paper outlines the importance of developing a playground in Geoff Dingle Reserve.

I am reaching out to discuss an exciting initiative that I believe could greatly benefit our community. The development of a Neurodiversity/Disability Inclusive Playground. As you know, inclusive play spaces are crucial for ensuring that all children, regardless of their abilities or sensory needs, have the opportunity to engage in meaningful and enjoyable play. The goal I'm hoping to reach is to create a playground that caters to a diverse range of sensory and physical needs. This inclusive playground will not only be accessible to children with disabilities but will also be thoughtfully designed to accommodate neurodiverse individuals, including those with autism, ADHD, and other cognitive differences.

I believe it's central for each child to belong in their own community whether they have or don't have a disability. This Neurodiversity/Disability playground will give the kids who suffer from disabilities a sense of inclusion in where they feel welcome, supported and heard in their community and to have the same experience as all the other children in the community.

Kind Regards

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

Proposal for a Neurodiversity/Disability Inclusive Playground at Geoff Dingle Reserve

Dear Mayor Leah Anderson

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to propose the development of a Neurodiversity/Disability Inclusive Playground at the Geoff Dingle Reserve in Medowie. This reserve, located at 38 Ferodale Road, was purchased by Port Stephens Council for mixed residential and recreational use and is a key component of the Medowie Place Plan .

The reserve is named in honor of the late Geoff Dingle, a long-term Medowie resident who served on Port Stephens Council for 14 years. Mr. Dingle was deeply committed to the community, contributing to various organizations such as the Scouts, the Hunter Regional Botanic Gardens, and the Medowie Sports Council . His legacy continues through the reserve, which serves as a vital green space for the local community, providing both recreational opportunities and a sanctuary for local wildlife .

In line with the goals of the Medowie Place Plan and in recognition of Mr. Dingle's dedication to community service, I propose the development of a Neurodiversity/Disability Inclusive Playground within the reserve. This inclusive play space would ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities or sensory needs, have the opportunity to engage in meaningful and enjoyable play.

To support this initiative, I suggest the following steps:

1. **Community Engagement:** Organize meetings or surveys to gather input from local families, schools, and organizations supporting children with disabilities.
2. **Collaboration with Experts:** Partner with organizations specializing in inclusive playground design to ensure the space meets the diverse needs of children.
3. **Advocacy:** Present the proposal to the Port Stephens Council, highlighting the benefits of an inclusive playground and its alignment with the Medowie Place Plan.
4. **Fundraising and Grants:** Explore funding opportunities through government grants, community fundraising, and partnerships with local businesses.

I believe this inclusive playground would not only honor Geoff Dingle's legacy but also create a welcoming and supportive environment for all children in Medowie. I look forward to discussing this proposal further and exploring ways to bring this vision to fruition.

Kind regards,

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.**



Flame Tree Park

- 1) Has one undercover setting area
- 2) No parking area
- 3) No bathrooms
- 4) No disability inclusive equipment

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MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



The Bower Reserve

- 1) No disability inclusive equipment
- 2) Full bins



The Garden

- 1) No seating area at all
- 2) No bathrooms
- 3) No parking areas
- 4) No disability inclusive equipment

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MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



The Dunes

- 1) No bathroom
- 2) One undercover seating area
- 3) No disability inclusion equipment



The Park Off Creighton Drive

- 1) No bathrooms
- 2) No covered seating areas
- 3) No bins
- 4) No disability inclusion equipment

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ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Kindlebark Oval

- 1) No undercover seating area
- 2) No bathrooms
- 3) No disability inclusion equipment



Community Hall

- 1) No undercover seating areas
- 2) Low seating area
- 3) No disability inclusive equipment

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ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Boyd Oval

- 1) No seating areas
- 2) No bathrooms
- 3) No playground
- 4) No bins
- 5) No disability inclusive equipment

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.



DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

A submission was presented to Port Stephens Council (Town Planners) for consideration in developing the Medowie Town centre Master Plan in 2015. This submission identified the pro's and con's for future planning of relocating the memorial to the sport and community club (Medowie Social).

Now with the sale of the Medowie Social to Private Ownership, I have been informed by the new owner that the memorial site can remain short term, not long term and the facility will not be accessible to the public, (private business operations).

Medowie RSL sub-Branch will need to source a new location that could accommodate a gathering of approximately 1500 – 2000 people for a commemorative service (ANZAC Day).

For considering the relocation Medowie RSL sub-Branch would require the following to conduct a SAFE service.

- Memorial, Flag poles, Eternal Flame, War Animal Memorial.
- Space for approximately 1500 to 2000 people in accordance with our risk assessment.
- Power Supply.
- Lighting.
- Hard Surface.
- Toilet Facilities.
- Parking.
- Security for the Memorial.
- Disability Parking.
- Walkways (hard Surface).

All the above will be required to satisfy a safe operational service risk assessment.

Kind Regards

Bernie Edmonds President Medowie RSL sub-Branch

Medowie RSL sub-Branch 36A Ferodale Road Medowie 2318
Phone 0436 317 167 Email medowiesb@rslnsw.org.au

President: Bernie Edmonds 0455 728 298
Secretary: Lyn Edmonds 0498 107 873

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

APPENDIX E

DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ACCESS
ADVISORY GROUP – MEETING

Comment	Category
Community centre to provide multi-purpose spaces	Community
Hireable meeting spaces	Community
The existing contours near the entry are quite steep - improve with an accessible ramp	Community
Maintain the accessible parking spaces near the entry	Community
Library service – great service to be able to order a book and pick up at local library, access to programs, collocate library with Services NSW. Libraries provide access to professionals, IT help - important service for older demographic	Community
Markets – park markets tricky, hard surface good, best located near plaza for hard surface. Or smaller markets in plaza area.	Community
Markets/events on carpark are okay but then it takes up the parking spaces and impacts accessibility	Community
Don't place mats as this create obstacles	Community
Sheltered bus stops, centrally located. Like the existing location near the community facility	Movement
Bus routes – link all the city centres in PS via an express route. On call bus service	Movement
Reduce the amount of road crossings for pedestrian's to navigate	Movement
Support for upgrade to signalised intersection at Peppertree & Ferodale	Movement
Wider pathways / ramps etc that allow a person to walk beside a wheelchair	Movement
Flush thresholds at pedestrian crossings / kerbs in plaza area	Movement

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

Lots of pathways connecting all the different areas/zones	Movement
Plenty of accessible parking spots, located near key activities/areas	Movement
Accessible parking that allows for rear loaded of vehicles	Movement
Ensure parking is safe along Ferodale Road	Movement
Need wide circulation space	Open Space
Change facilities, hoist, shower, (Little Beach example)	Open Space
Lots of toilets	Open Space
Make sure chairs have a back rest	Open Space
Picnic tables to accommodate wheelchairs spaces	Open Space
Large circulation area around picnic table and shelters. Shelters connected with pathway, not a floating island surrounded by grass with slab edge	Open Space
Water features in plaza or playground	Open Space
Lots of seating	Open Space
Seating in the playground area for parents to sit and watch from	Open Space

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

APPENDIX F

Feedback from local businesses

#	Comment	Category
1	Concerned about the amount of commercial/retail space. Happy with the one lot on corner of Peppertree & Ferodale Rd intersection but thinks the rest should be housing or library relocated to the west side of Peppertree	Economy, Housing
2	Strongly believes the boundary of the masterplan should extend north to include the entire CBD area	Economy
3	Encourages PSC to reach out to business owners who may be interested in joint ventures, sale of land etc	Economy
4	Wants additional parking located north of the Bull & Bush for shop users, as well as people using Yulong Oval, with a new access road along Campvale Drain	Movement
5	Believes the residential houses with good frontage to Medowie Rd, north of the Ferodale Rd roundabout should be rezoned to commercial	Economy
6	Thinks a food truck trial along the Peppertree Rd extension is a good way to activate the site before the development occurs and test the market for additional permanent food retailers	Economy
7	Prefers the playground located closer to the development lots	Community
8	Provide more parking	Movement
9	Thinks PSC should promote the Traffic Study underway as a good news story via targeting social media/ rates notice/community pages etc	Movement
10	PSC should provide information sessions to community about how the planning / development process actually works so we get more informed and realistic feedback	Community
11	Thinks the road extension needs to continue through to link with Medowie Rd	Movement
12	Number one concern is safety	Community
13	Want to improve the walkability and connection across Ferodale Rd	Movement
14	Supportive of traffic lights at Peppertree intersection	Movement
15	No concerned about a skatepark going in town centre as long as it has good surveillance	Community
16	Concerned about the amount of retail/commercial space. Doesn't think the demand is there	Economy
17	Supportive of traffic lights at Peppertree intersection	Movement
18	Affordable housing options are supported	Housing

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

#	Comment	Category
19	Concerned that the masterplan site will not connect with the existing shops which will create a new verse old divide	Economy
20	Suggested the businesses in the existing shop area remove boundary fences to the CBD is more connected and allows for pedestrian connectivity	Economy
21	Armidale and Tamworth town centre malls are good examples of regional centres with active town centres	Economy
22	Generally supportive of the concept plan	
23	Concerned the additional development lots will saturate the retail market and Medowie will have vacant shops as a result	Economy
24	Very supportive of providing more affordable housing options on the site – townhouses/units etc – with good walkability to shops and services	Housing
25	Thinks we need more services and shops (clothing, homewares etc) and not more food/hospitality retailers	Economy
26	Concerned the existing shop owners might consider relocating to the new master planned site, however cost to relocate is high (approx.. \$300k relocation costs for a typical subway branch)	Economy
27	Peppertree Rd intersection is currently dangerous – difficult to cross as a pedestrian, traffic travels through at high speeds etc	Movement
28	Believes Medowie has enough retail space	Economy
29	Wants to see more public toilets and parking for the town centre	Open Space
30	Lessons to learn from Tanilba Bay shops – inactive, eyesore and many vacant shops	Economy

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

APPENDIX G – Youth Summit

Help shape the future of Medowie Town Centre!

1. What features would make a skatepark fun and exciting for you (e.g. ramps, rails, bowls etc)?
2. Should the skatepark include spaces for beginners, as well as advanced riders? ✓
3. What would make the Medowie town centre a good place to hang out with friends?
4. Would you like to see artwork, murals or elements designed by school kids in the town centre?
5. What shops, services or places would encourage you to spend more time in the Medowie town centre?
6. What would make you visit a conservation area more often (trails, picnics, wildlife watching, cycling)?
7. Imagine Medowie in 10 years - what would you like the town centre to look and feel like?

Nature Trail

3. Arcade games

Hobby Shop

Shaded outdoor seating / bbq

4) Cultural / indigenous Murals

Clothing shops

7) Keep the small town feels / heritage.

Kmart

Services like chemist

- Library → Skate Park.

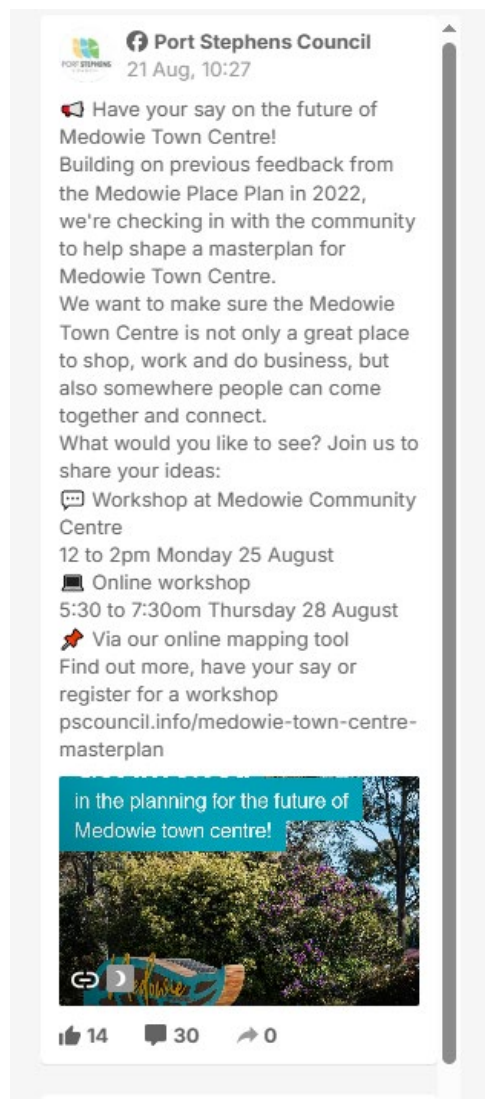
3) Public pool !!

- legal dirt bike track.

is a third skatepark necessary? maybe a basketball court?

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

APPENDIX H – Collateral



ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1
ENGAGEMENT REPORT.

MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

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Stage 3: Final Masterplan

Medowie Town Centre Masterplan

For the Client
On behalf of Moir Studio

Issue:
04

Submitted:
12.11.2025

Revision	Date	Author	Checked	Comment
01	26.08.25	CD	VH/YZ	Stage 1: Preliminary Masterplan for Review
02	26.09.25	CD	VH/EB/YZ	Stage 2: Developed Masterplan
03	29.10.25	CD/EB	VH	Stage 3: Final Masterplan
04	12.11.25	CD/EB	VH	Stage 4: Revised Masterplan

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We at Moir Studio acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Australia - most notably the Awabakal Nation in which our office resides and the Worimi Nation, on whose traditional land this Project resides. As a practice, we recognise First Nations' ongoing contribution to Country and deep spiritual connection to Place. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

Executive Summary

Project Background and Planning Vision

The Medowie Town Centre Masterplan presents a significant opportunity to set a bold and pragmatic vision for the future of Medowie – a growing regional community within the Port Stephens Local Government Area. Responding to the aspirations of local residents, the direction set out in the Medowie Place Plan 2023, and the strategic guidance of state and local policies, the plan outlines a clear, staged roadmap for developing a better quality of life, accessibility, and a culturally vibrant town centre.

Core Objectives and Key Recommendations

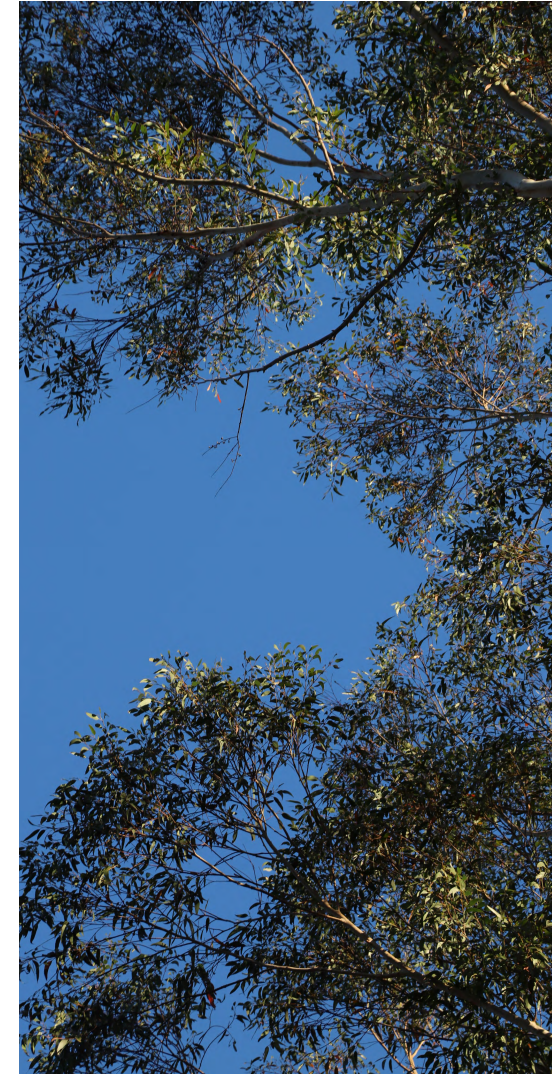
- Guide the sustainable development of Medowie's town centre over the next 20 years.
- Support and develop vitality, providing a framework for mixed-use development.
- Improve walkability, green infrastructure, and access to services for residents of all ages.
- Celebrate Medowie's local character, landscape assets, and Worimi cultural heritage.

Key Recommendations

- Transform Peppertree Road's main street, prioritising pedestrian safety, enhancing tree canopy cover, and activating the street.
- Create a new town square and community hub, integrating civic, recreational and retail activities.
- Promote diverse land uses, including mixed-use infill development and future zoning flexibility.
- Establish a connected open space network and ecological corridor linked to Campvale Drain, existing sports grounds and future school facilities.
- Improve transport accessibility, including safer footpaths, shared paths, and future-ready mobility options.
- Provide built form and public domain guidelines that reflect Medowie's distinctive character.

Expected Outcomes and Benefits

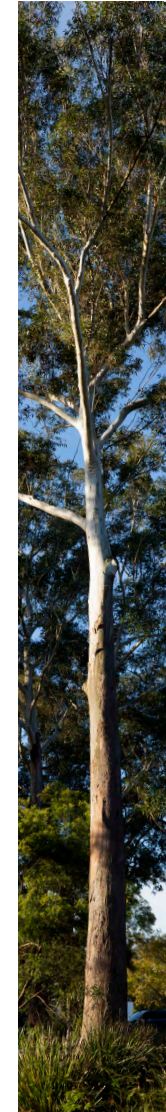
The masterplan sets out the potential for a staged implementation framework aligned with Council priorities and potential funding sources. This ensures that future development enhances community well-being, strengthens ecological resilience, and supports a vibrant and growing local economy. Medowie will evolve not only as a service centre for its growing population, but also as a place that reflects and reinforces its unique identity.





Contents

- 01 Project Context & Engagement
- 02 The Site
- 03 Vision & Guiding Principles
- 04 Gap Analysis
- 05 Vision and Design Moves
- 06 The Masterplan
- 07 Design Options



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01 Project Context & Engagement



Medowie, located in the southwest of the Port Stephens Local Government Area is approximately 35 km (40 minutes' drive) from Newcastle CBD. The town centre is situated at the intersection of Ferodale Road and Medowie Road. It is a typical "family-oriented residential town" with strong potential to grow into a regional service hub:

- Proximity to major employment zones of Williamstown Air Base (RAAF) and Tomago.
- A 10 minute drive to the Newcastle International Airport.
- Connectivity to surrounding towns, including Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay, and Heatherbrae.
- A strategic position between the Pacific Highway and Nelson Bay Road transport corridors.



ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN.

1.2 Alignment with Relevant Local Planning and Policy

This masterplan directly aligns with and builds upon:

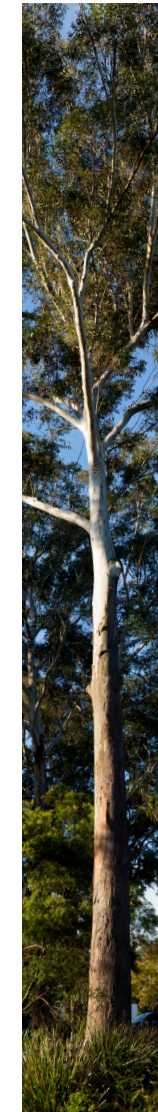
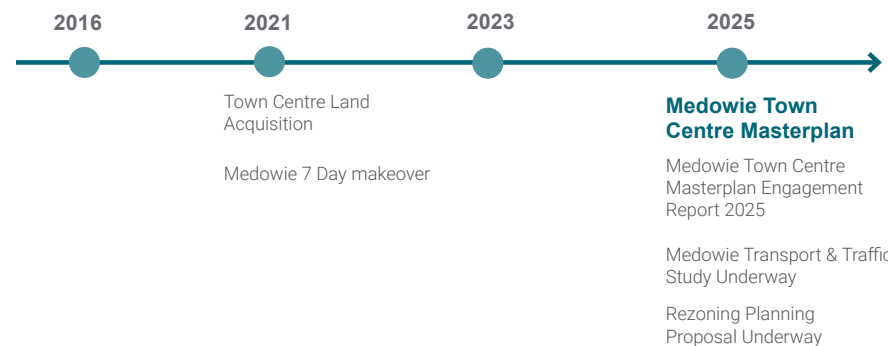
- *Medowie Place Plan 2023* (Action 30: Town Centre Expansion Planning).
- *Medowie Planning Strategy 2016*.
- *Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020* (emphasising liveability and green infrastructure).
- *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* (supporting the development of local services in small to medium towns).
- LEP & DCP (requiring updates to certain zoning and control parameters to match the future vision).
- *Medowie Town Centre Masterplan Engagement Report 2025* (Reports the findings from the Phase 1 Early Engagement process and will be a supplementary document to the Medowie Town Centre Masterplan).

Medowie Planning Strategy



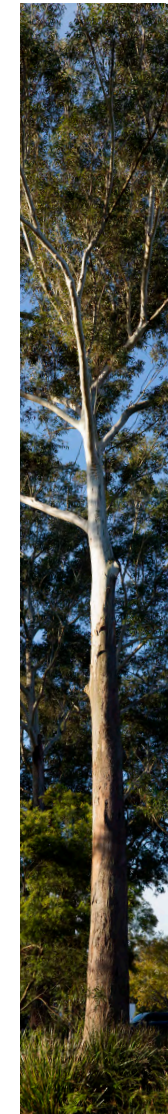
Hunter Regional Plan 2036

Medowie Place Plan



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1.3 Aligning Relevant Planning Policies & Best Practice Principles



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1.4 Future Trends

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS



HOUSING

+ 2,349 houses between 2021-> 2041
= 8,068 houses.



POPULATION GROWTH

+ 5,694 Population in Medowie expected to grow to 20,741 by 2041.



RETAIL

Additional 4,585sqm of retail/commercial floor space required by 2041.



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

International Airport 10 minutes away from Medowie town centre to open 2025.

Source: Hunter Regional Plan 2036

CLIMATE TRENDS



INCREASED AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

Average temperatures, both maximum and minimum, are projected to increase across the Hunter Region, including Medowie.



HEAVIER RAINFALL EVENTS

The intensity of rainfall events is expected to increase.



MORE HOT DAYS

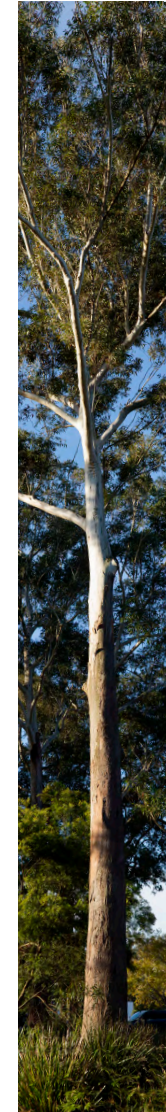
Number of days exceeding 35°C is expected to increase.



INCREASE IN EXTREME WEATHER

Increased risk of both drought, flood and bushfire.

Source: <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/my-region/hunter>



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1.5 Medowie Community Priorities

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

1. PROTECTION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- "Medowie" means *place of tall trees* — this identity should be preserved and celebrated.
- Strong community expectation that future development retains natural bushland and delivers high-quality green spaces.

2. QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE

- Broader range of park equipment options to suit various users, i.e., young children or those who would like exercise and relaxation.
- Seating and outdoor gym equipment along Medowie Road to create a continuous, connected linear park experience.
- Well-maintained public spaces with seating, bins, and shade.

3. CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY (via Pathways)

- Safer pedestrian crossings, particularly across Ferodale Road. Desired links include Medowie–RAAF Base, Medowie–Raymond Terrace (via Richardson Road), and Medowie–Fern Bay/Stockton.
- Support for activation initiatives such as *Park Run* and community events.

4. ACCESS AND SAFE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

- Safer pedestrian crossings, particularly across Ferodale Road.
- Improved lighting and pathway connectivity to enhance visibility and safety at night.

5. THINGS TO DO IN EVENING

- Demand for family-friendly evening activities and events to support a more active town centre after dark.

6. SPACES SUITABLE FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

- Need for flexible, well-designed public spaces that cater to a variety of uses such as markets and events.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

1. LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT PROVIDE FOR DAILY NEEDS

- Core shopping and grocery needs are met, but there is demand for more local retail and service options.

2. LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESSES

- Strong community support for unique, locally owned businesses — particularly those celebrating Medowie's food culture and local production.

3. SENSE OF PERSONAL SAFETY

- General comfort with personal safety, but calls for improved street lighting and connected pedestrian routes.

KEY COMMUNITY IDEAS

1. EXTEND 7 DAY MAKEOVER FEATURES

- Extend 7 Day Makeover main features throughout town i.e. 'Gum leaves' along new shared path together with seating.

2. LIGHTS IN TREES

- Feature lighting around the Community Centre to create atmosphere and encourage evening use.

3. TOWN CENTRE MAP

- Collaboration with residents and school students underway to install a new town centre map which identifies various artworks around Medowie. The 2x2.5m sign shall be considered in the masterplan.

4. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ACROSS FERODALE ROAD

- Improved crossing points to safely connect both sides of the town centre.

5. MORE WALKING/BIKE TRAILS

- Expansion of mountain bike and walking trails to support youth and family recreation.

Source: Medowie Place Plan 2023

1.6 Community Priorities for Medowie Town Centre

PROTECTION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Preserve Medowie's character as the place of tall trees - green, and distinctly rural.
- Support for native flora and removal of non-native species.
- Maintain and protect existing Koala corridors and habitat areas.
- Strong support for additional street tree planting and canopy cover.
- Preference for more green spaces and reduced building footprints.

QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE

- Desire for flexible spaces that encourage local events and reduce the need to travel to Raymond Terrace.
- Request for disability-inclusive and sensory-friendly playgrounds.
- Fenced play areas for safety and family comfort.
- BBQ facilities and shaded seating to promote community gathering.

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY (via Pathways)

- Extra-wide shared paths to support active transport and connection between key destinations.
- Improved access, clear wayfinding, and shaded walking routes.
- Centrally located, sheltered bus stops for comfort and accessibility.
- Continuous pathways linking parks, schools, and town centre areas.
- Support for relocating the local Park Run into the town centre if path networks allow.

Source: Medowie Community Engagement Report 11/8/25 - 5/9/25

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

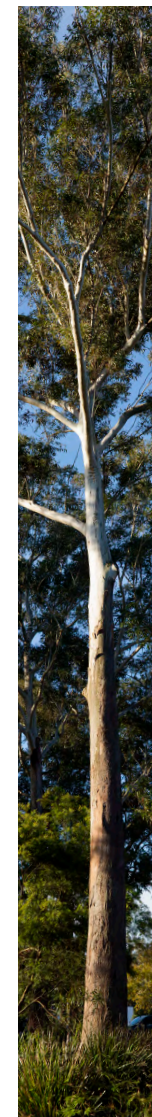
- Demand for more cafés, restaurants, and bespoke local businesses.
- Greater housing diversity - affordable, smaller dwellings to support young people, singles, downsizers, and disadvantaged residents.
- Support for eco-friendly short-term accommodation options.
- Desire for more boutique retail (e.g. bookshops, artisan stores) to create a reason to visit Medowie beyond grocery shopping.

DISABILITY INCLUSIVE SPACES

- Repeated community emphasis on a disability-inclusive, sensory-friendly playground.
- Wider pathways and ramps to enable mobility aids and side-by-side walking.
- Ample accessible parking located near key destinations.

ENHANCING COMMUNITY FACILITIES/SPACES

- Keep the Community Centre active.
- Preserve Geoff Dingle Park and existing community installations.
- Support for relocating the War Memorial into the town centre.
- Desire for multi-use community spaces for markets, outdoor cinemas, and local events.



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1.7 Core Design Goals for Community

1. CONNECTION TO NATURE

- Protect and enhance Medowie's established natural character and *place of tall trees* identity.
- Develop connections to the surrounding forests and biodiverse landscapes.
- Work with natural waterways to support ecological health and resilience.

2. QUALITY OPEN SPACE

- Create engaging play facilities and spaces that invite people to stay and socialise.
- Reinststate a village square typology as the civic heart of the town.

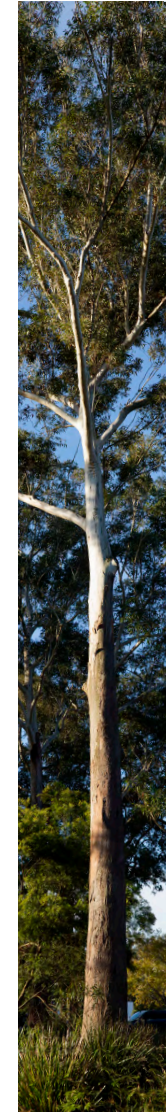
3. CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

- Develop safe, accessible active transport corridors to reduce reliance on vehicles.
- Improve pedestrian connections to the existing commercial hub.
- Enhance visibility and natural surveillance through clear sightlines and lighting.

4. ACTIVATION

- Provide active spaces that are free and encourage communities to gather and connect.
- Design circulation and open space networks that promotes civic and commercial activity.

'Rethink this whole commercial area... Start with a centre, incorporate pedestrian areas and green space. Radiate connectivity from here so people can access without driving. Green space trails to avoid roads and link the N/S/W/E of Medowie'



02 The Site



Site Analysis

2.1 Local - Movements and Connections

Strategic Context

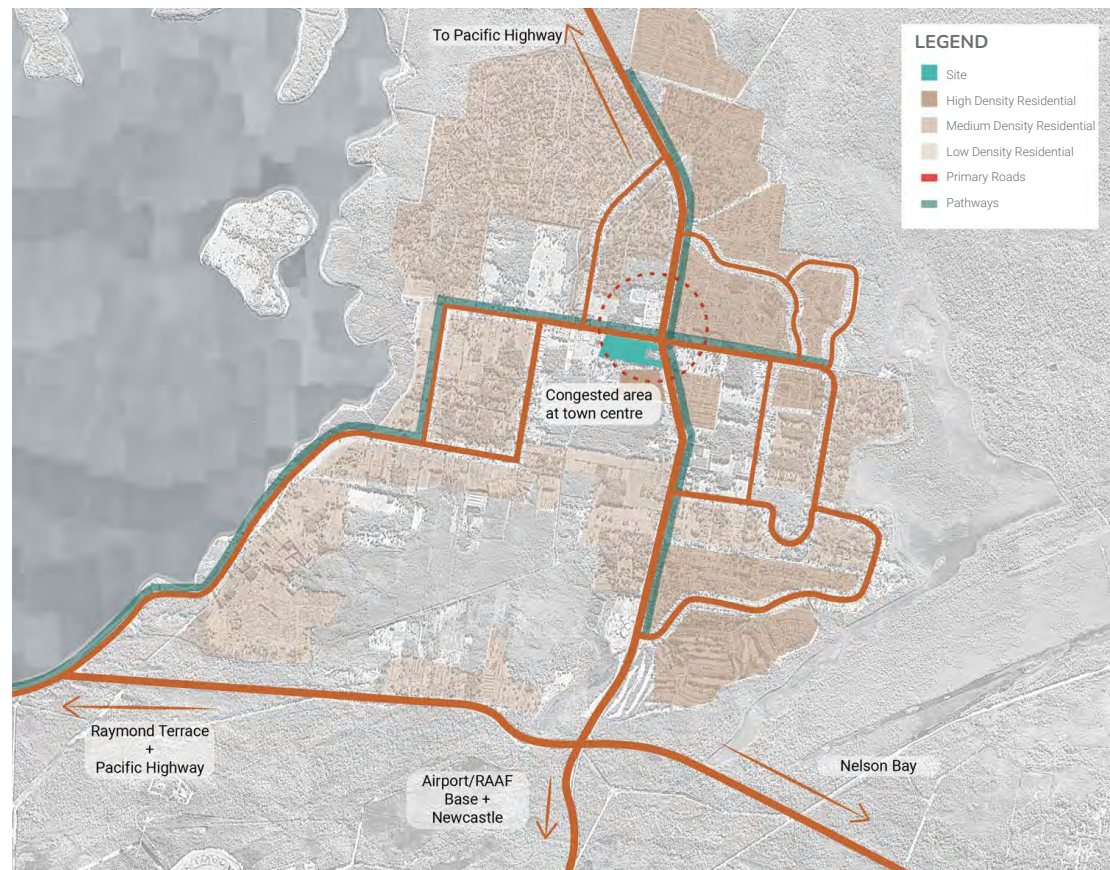
- Located in the heart of the central growth corridor.
- Only ten minutes from Newcastle Airport, offering strong connectivity and gateway potential.
- Proximity to the airport currently underutilised as a connectivity and identity asset.
- Opportunity to leverage airport access to strengthen Medowie's role as a gateway township.
- Potential to attract both local residents and visitors through improved connections and place identity.

Traffic

- Commuter flows along Medowie Road overlap with retail traffic, creating congestion.
- Peak-hour congestion reduces accessibility and undermines the retail experience.
- Redirecting commuter traffic away from the centre would improve access, safety, and vibrancy.
- Enhanced retail experience possible by prioritising local traffic and town centre access.

Pedestrian Movement

- Pathway network is fragmented and disconnected.
- Incomplete pedestrian links restrict safe, accessible travel between destinations.
- Limited safe crossings and poor accessibility undermine walkability.
- Strengthening the network with new and upgraded pedestrian routes is a priority.
- Integration of green links can improve walkability, safety, and overall liveability.



Site Analysis

2.2 Local - Open Space

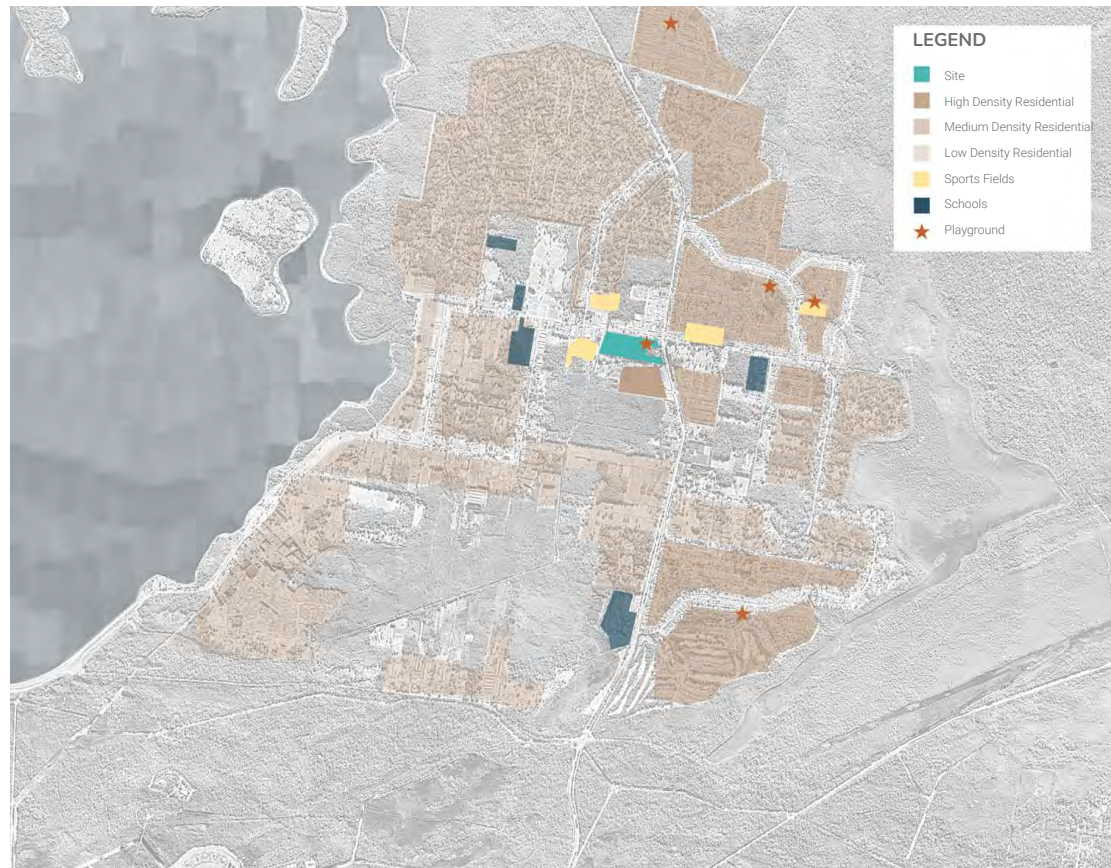
Open Space Context

Medowie's existing open space network is made up of scattered sports fields and playgrounds, but lacks a central, designated gathering space within the town centre. This limits opportunities for residents to come together for social interaction, cultural activities, and community events. Medowie has a strong sporting culture and the frequent use of sports fields further highlights the need for accessible, multi-purpose open space.

Needs and Gaps

- Absence of a central civic open space for community gathering and events.
- Open space network is fragmented and disconnected from residential areas.
- Limited accessibility between existing parks, sports fields, and neighbourhoods.
- High reliance on sporting grounds restricts their availability for passive recreation or informal community use.

There is a clear opportunity to strengthen Medowie's open space network by creating a centrally located, multifunctional gathering space that complements existing sports facilities. Improved connectivity between residential areas and open spaces will be critical to ensuring equitable access and supporting Medowie's growing community.



Site Analysis

2.3 Local - Hydrology and Ecology

Ecological Context

Medowie is defined by extensive conservation areas and established wildlife corridors, with ecological protection recognised as a core value of the town. The site is strategically positioned along a strong ecological edge and within a key koala corridor. Strengthening these connections will be central to the masterplan, reinforcing Medowie's identity as the "town of tall trees" while balancing ecological integrity with community access to open space.

The vegetated areas identified in the plan consist predominantly of the following vegetation communities:

- Northern Paperbark-Swamp Mahogany Saw-sedge Forest
- Hunter Coast Paperbark-Swamp Mahogany Forest
- Hunter Coast Sandy Creekflat Low Paperbark Scrub
- Coastal Creekflat Layered Grass-Sedge Swamp Forest

Hydrology and Topography

A portion of the site lies within a flood-prone area influenced by local topography and the Campervale Drain. These natural systems will be key design drivers within the masterplan. Future strategies should address flood and drainage constraints while celebrating the site's hydrology, integrating water-sensitive design and landscape features to create a resilient and ecologically responsive framework.



Site Analysis

2.4 Local - Commercial Activity

Economic hub

Medowie is a growing economic hub with a linear town centre along Medowie Road, anchored by retail, services, hospitality, and specialty shops. Integrated schools, health, and childcare facilities reinforce its role as a self-sufficient, locally focused township.

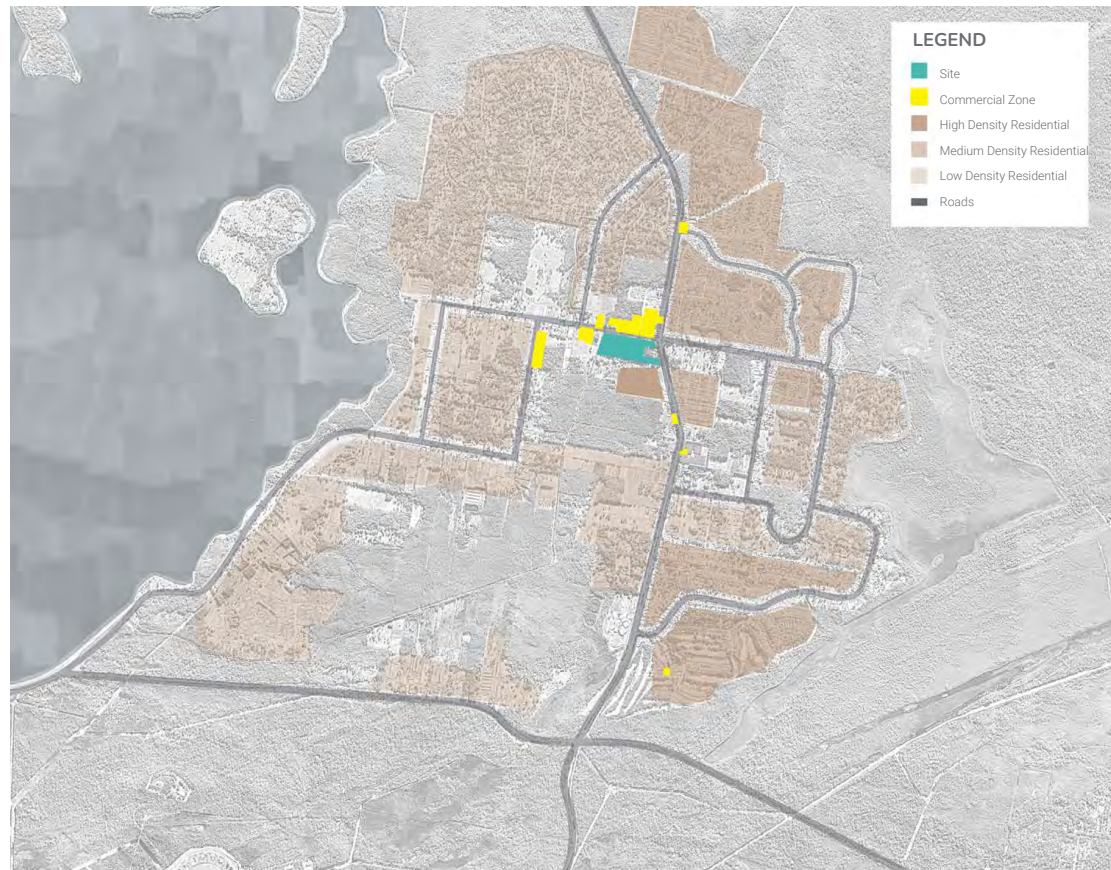
Emerging Strategic Centre

Medowie is the fastest-growing centre in Port Stephens, accommodating 20% of new housing in recent years and projected to grow by 41% to over 15,000 residents by 2041. The town centre serves primarily local needs with retail, commercial, and service uses, while larger centres provide higher-order functions. Strong demand for retail and service floorspace is forecast, with growth guided by the Medowie Place Plan and a forthcoming DCP to consolidate the town centre as the focus for community and commercial activity.

Connection to airport -> retail opportunity

Medowie's proximity to the Newcastle Airport gives it a unique opportunity to strengthen both its commercial role and its place identity.

- Position Medowie as a gateway community for visitors travelling between Newcastle and Port Stephens.
- Attract Airport linked industries.
- Introduce travellers to Port Stephens' ecological and cultural identity through opportunities for local produce markets and cultural showcase.

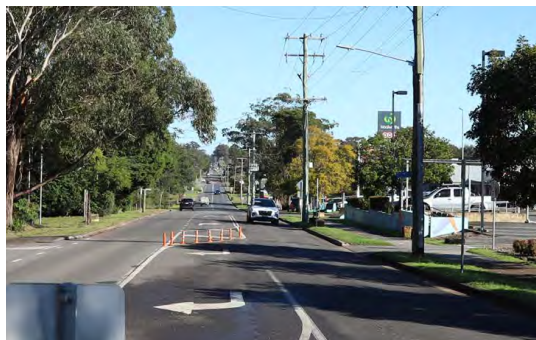


Site Analysis

2.5 Site - Movements and Connections

Existing Movement and Connection Conditions

- Conflicting road usage between commuter traffic and local retail traffic.
- Ferodale Road acts as a physical and visual barrier between key precincts.
- 'Bottle neck' at intersection of Ferodale and Peppertree Road.
- Limited pedestrian connectivity and poor walkability across the site.
- Need for safe pedestrian crossing over Ferodale Road.
- Consolidate the number of vehicle entry and exit points to improve safety, reduce conflicts and streamline circulation.



Ferodale Road, Medowie Town Centre
Photos taken by Moir Studio, August 2025



Site Analysis

2.6 Site - Open Space

Existing Open Space Conditions

- Need of high-quality civic open space in the town centre.
- The existing Community Centre and adjoining park are well-used and highly valued by the community but currently feel disconnected and in decline. The masterplan should build on their strengths to unlock their full potential as central gathering places.
- Leverage the site's central location to strengthen pedestrian and visual connections.
- Relocate and integrate the skate park to diversify activity and attract younger users.
- Create a flexible, inclusive, and high-quality open space that serves everyday use and community events.



38 Ferdale Road Medowie, Medowie Town Centre Site
Drone photography taken by Moir Studio, August 2025



Site Analysis

2.7 Site - Hydrology and Ecology

Flood Zone Land

Flooding is a key concern for residents, particularly the potential for new development to exacerbate existing conditions. The site presents an opportunity to demonstrate a sustainable response by integrating water-sensitive urban design (WSUD). Approaches such as swales and rain gardens could mitigate risk while also enhancing amenity.

Established Vegetation

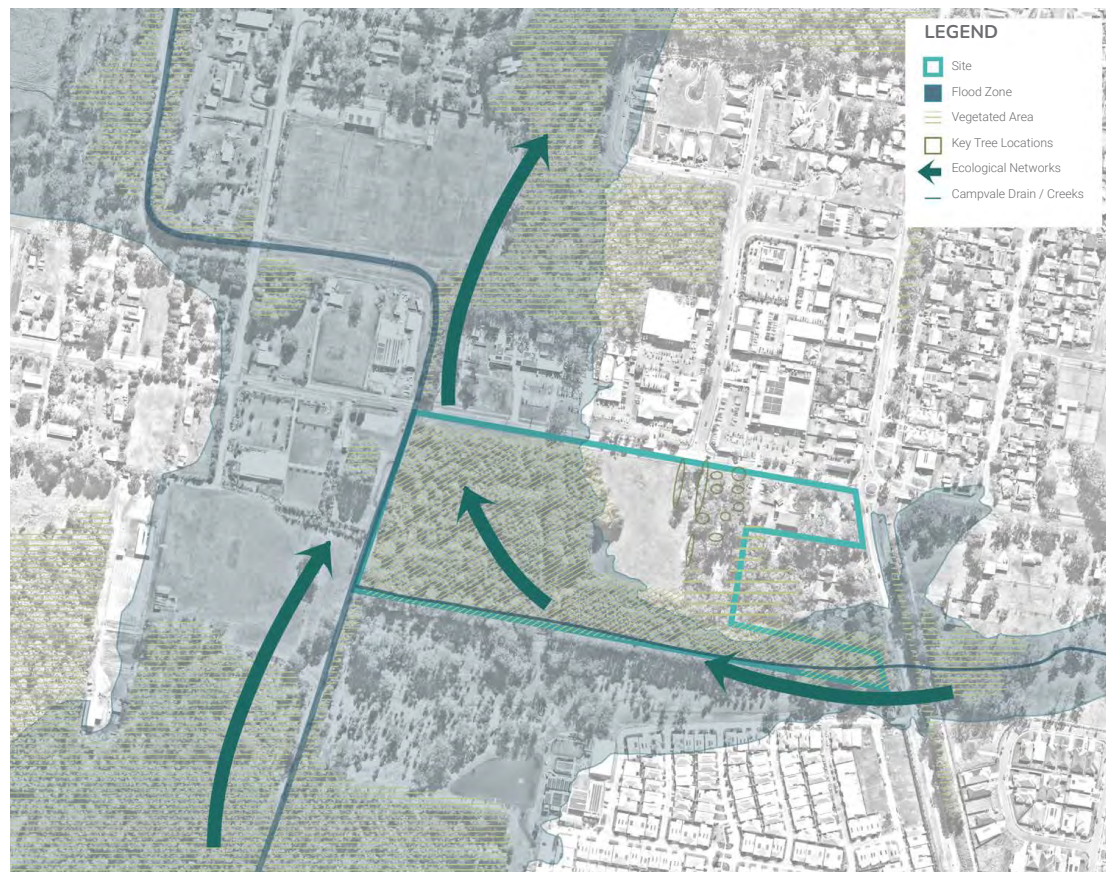
Retain and integrate mature trees, creating a greener, more liveable example of urban open space that reflects Medowie's identity as the "town of tall trees." Dense 'wall' of pine vegetation creates a strong visual 'wall' along part of the site, contributing to its character

Reinforce Ecological Character

Nearby recent residential developments, vegetation 'razed to ground'. Seek to create alternative model of sustainable living that balances ecology, community, and growth.



Medowie Lions Park and Carpark, Medowie Town Centre Site
Drone photography taken by Moir Studio, August 2025



Site Analysis

2.8 Site - Commercial Activity

Fragmented Retail

Retail spaces lack cohesion, creating a disjointed and weak town centre identity.

No Place to Linger

Absence of quality public realm, seating, and activation discourages social interaction.

Car Park Dominance

Expanses of surface parking prioritise vehicles over people, limiting pedestrian usability.

Ferodale Road Barrier

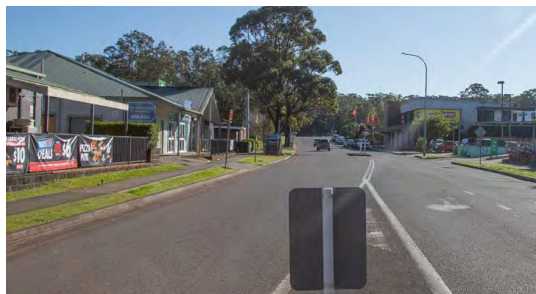
Heavy traffic divides the centre and restricts safe pedestrian movement.

Inactive Frontages

Shops face car parks instead of streets, reducing vibrancy and sense of place.

Disconnected Uses

Poor integration of residential, open space, and retail results in lost business opportunities.

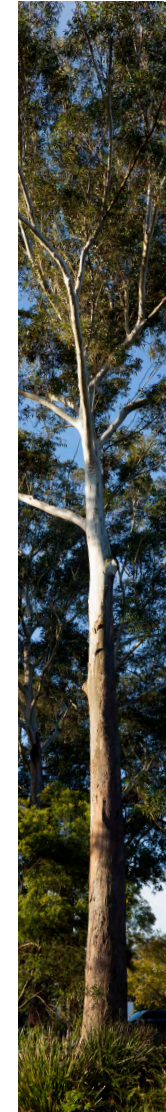


Peppertree Road, facing north
Photos taken by Moir Studio, August 2025



2.9 Key Issues and Opportunities

Category	Challenges	Opportunities
Spatial Structure	Lack of clear urban centre and spine Lack of a defined core and clear urban axis	Create a town square and main street framework
Transport and Accessibility	Pedestrian - vehicle conflict (Disconnected pedestrian routes; high vehicle speeds)	Establish a slow-movement priority network; improve school travel paths
Commercial Vitality	Dispersed shops; weak street frontage	Activate main street; provide flexible commercial spaces
Public Space	Lack of focal points; limited activity spaces; fragmented public spaces	Activate vacant lots; build an interconnected open space network
Natural Ecology	Flood risk; fragmented green spaces	Integrate ecological design; introduce water-sensitive infrastructure
Community Identity	Insufficient landmarks; weak cultural expression	Enhance tall tree character and embed local cultural narratives



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'Tall Trees' core identity of Town

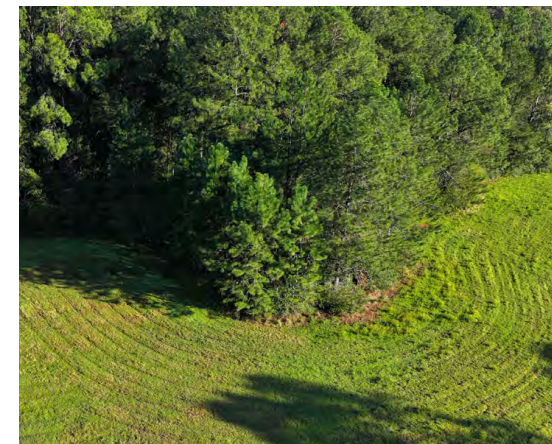
24 Medowie Town Centre Masterplan



Established gum trees



Chaotic intersection of Ferodale Road / Peppertree Road



Existing 'wall' of vegetation

Moir Studio

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN.



Ferodale Road - Barrier



Eucalyptus mixed with pine plantation



'Dead end' character to current site



Community Hall with surrounding tall trees



7 Day town makeover results, Medowie 'brand/identity

25 Medowie Town Centre Masterplan



Drone Imagery: facing north towards shops

Moir Studio

03 Vision & Guiding Principles



An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. The trees are thick and cover the entire area. In the center, there is a semi-transparent white rectangular box containing text. The text is in a teal color. The overall tone is natural and green.

VISION STATEMENT

A green and welcoming heart for a growing community — a place to meet,
to connect, to belong.

3.1 Core Planning Principles

People First



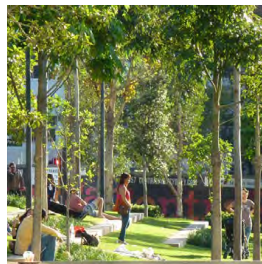
Prioritising pedestrians, children, seniors, and people with limited mobility.



Tall Tree Town



Retaining mature trees and natural landscapes to reinforce ecological and visual identity.



Main Street Experience



Activating Ferodale Road with diverse businesses and open, street-based public spaces.



Mixed use & Compact Form



Improving land-use efficiency while maintaining a small-town scale.



Ecological and Water Sensitive Design



Respecting the natural form of Campvale Drain and integrating rain gardens and ecological restoration



Cultural and Community Expression



Emphasising unique characteristics of place by reflecting the Worimi and European heritage of Medowie and the strong established community



04 Gap Analysis



4.1 Conceptual Masterplan: Council Rev_1



GAP ANALYSIS:

Is the design achieving the Goals for the Community?

CONNECTION TO NATURE

- Allow maximum amount of established native trees to be retained. Building locations to be "landscape led" to retain the 'Tall Tree' character of the site (6).

QUALITY OPEN SPACE

- Explore building typologies and usage in relation to street frontage and existing facilities. (5)
- Building footprints very deep, limited "shop frontage" and solar access. Little connection to site and civic space (7).
- Allow for flexible open space that incorporates or is inspired by 7 Day Makeover elements (6).

CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

- Consider vehicular and pedestrian movement to the wider context (1).
- Road movement creates a "dead end" (2).
- "Bottleneck" potential at Peppertree/Ferodale road junction (3).
- Playground location to be closer to active zones for passive surveillance and retail activation (9).
- Consider visual permeability. Is the Design connecting to nature and other locations around the site?

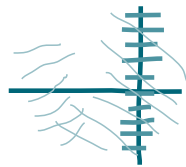
ACTIVATION

- No improvement / connection to established existing commercial zone (4).
- Develop the town centre as an extension and connection to community centre (8).
- Consider incorporation of 7 Day Makeover items into masterplan (6).

05 Vision and Design Moves



5.1 Vision: Key Design Moves



Activate the Spine

- Concentrated along the Peppertree Road spine, strengthening retail, dining, and service functions.



Mixed Use and Compact Form



Main Street Experience



Create Connections

- Strengthen and connect existing pedestrian and cycle networks
- Facilitate open green space in community centre and provide for event space
- Connection to Ferodale Sports Complex, Tallwood residential housing.
- Extend existing community centre space and feel



People First



Cultural and Community Expression



Build Living Heart

- Create 'living' town centre for community events and activities at 38 Ferodale Road.
- Build and strengthen the existing; Community/Retail/Ecosystems
- Create mixed use precinct where people are encouraged to linger.
- Design works to retain existing mature trees
- Improve vegetation quality for riparian zones (currently dense pine), to create a rich, biodiverse site edge.



Cultural and Community Expression



Mixed Use and Compact Form



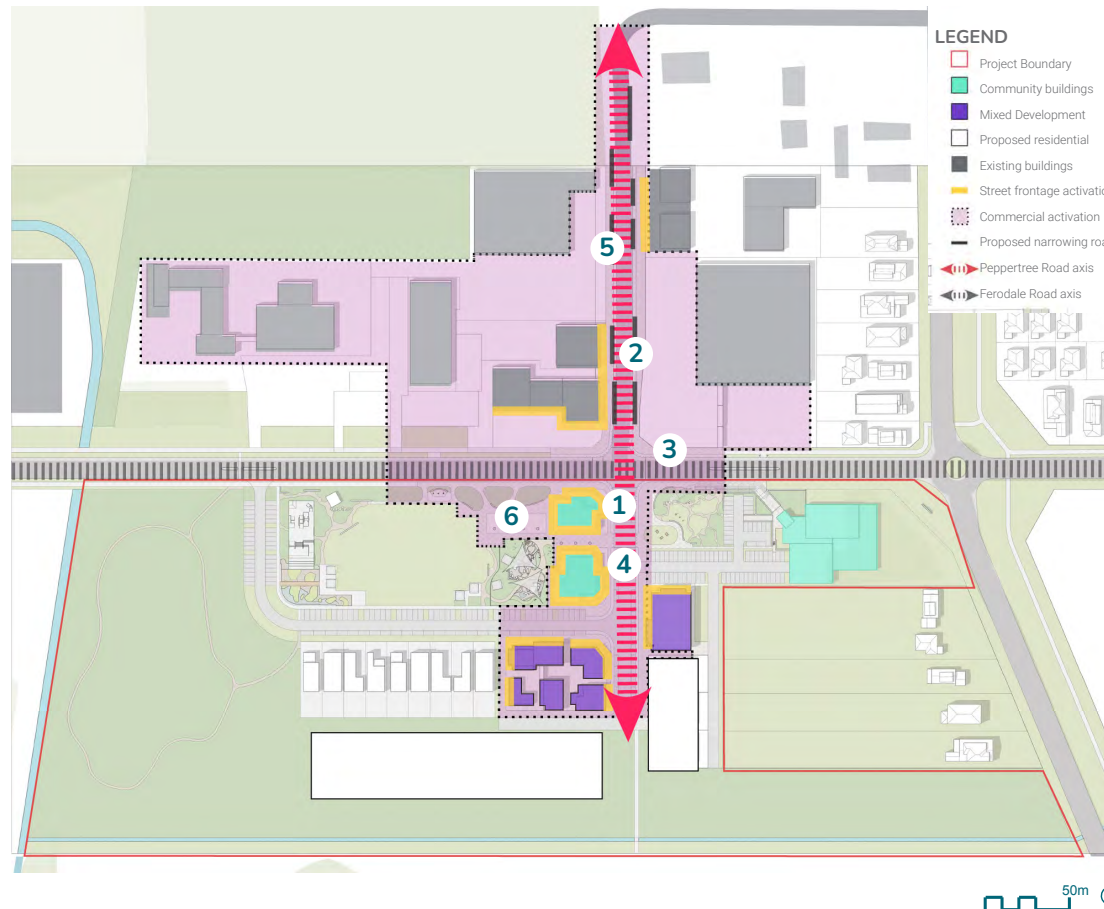
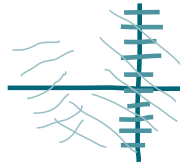
Tall Tree Town



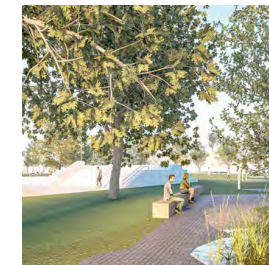
Ecological and water sensitive design

5.2 Design Moves 01

Activate the Spine



- 1 Concentrate retail, dining and services along Peppertree Road to strengthen and activate spine.
- 2 Narrow road to slow traffic and improve pedestrian usability.
- 3 Slow down vehicle movement and improve pedestrian safety with upgrade to traffic lights.
- 4 Prioritise pedestrian usability.
- 5 Improve retail to street frontage.
- 6 Bring economic benefits of mixed design and connected spaces.



More space for people



Prioritising pedestrian connection



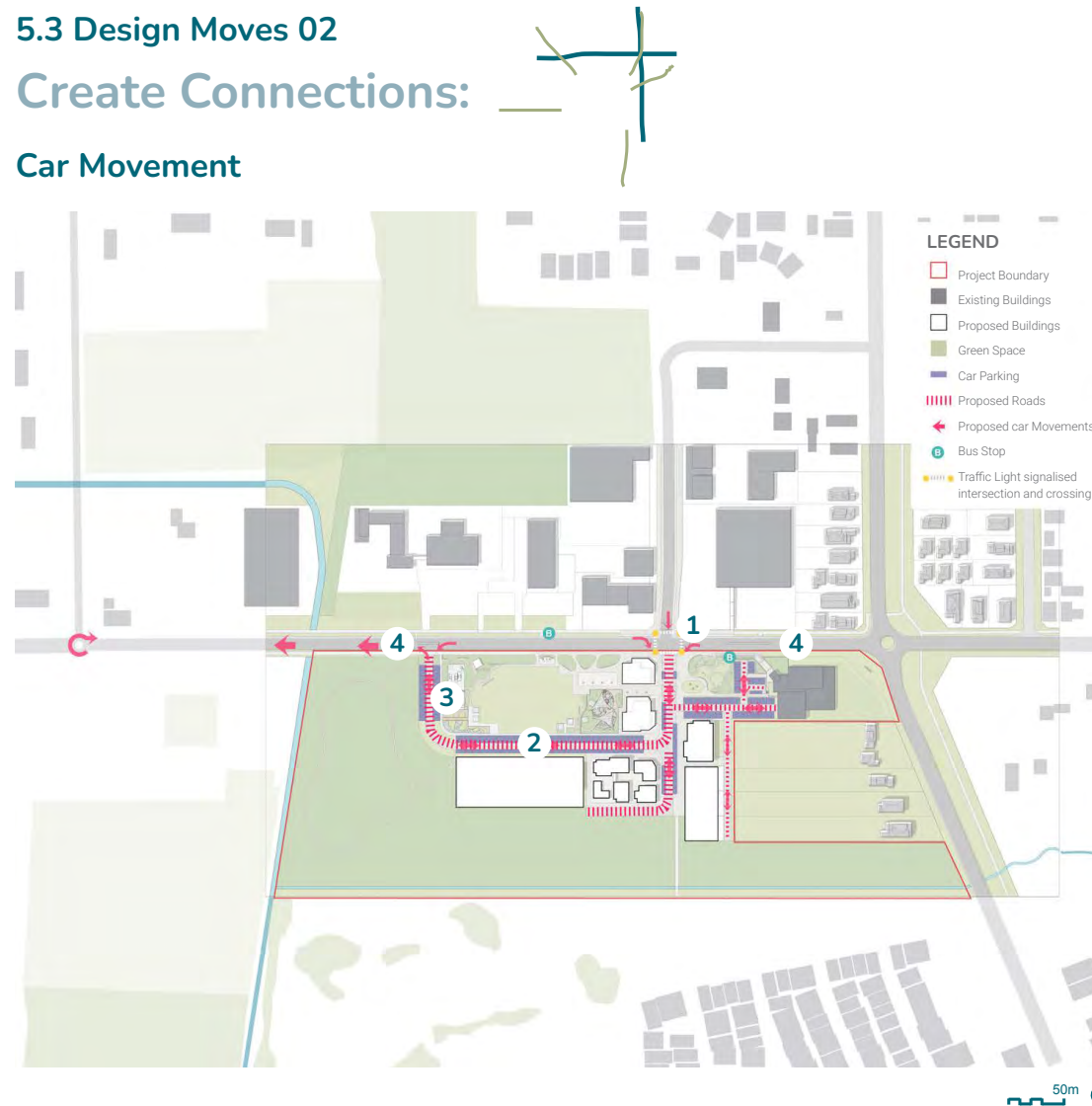
Intersection

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN.

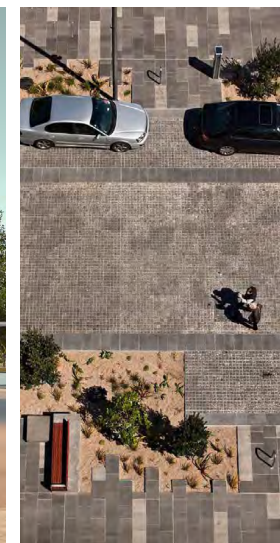
5.3 Design Moves 02

Create Connections:

Car Movement



Intersection



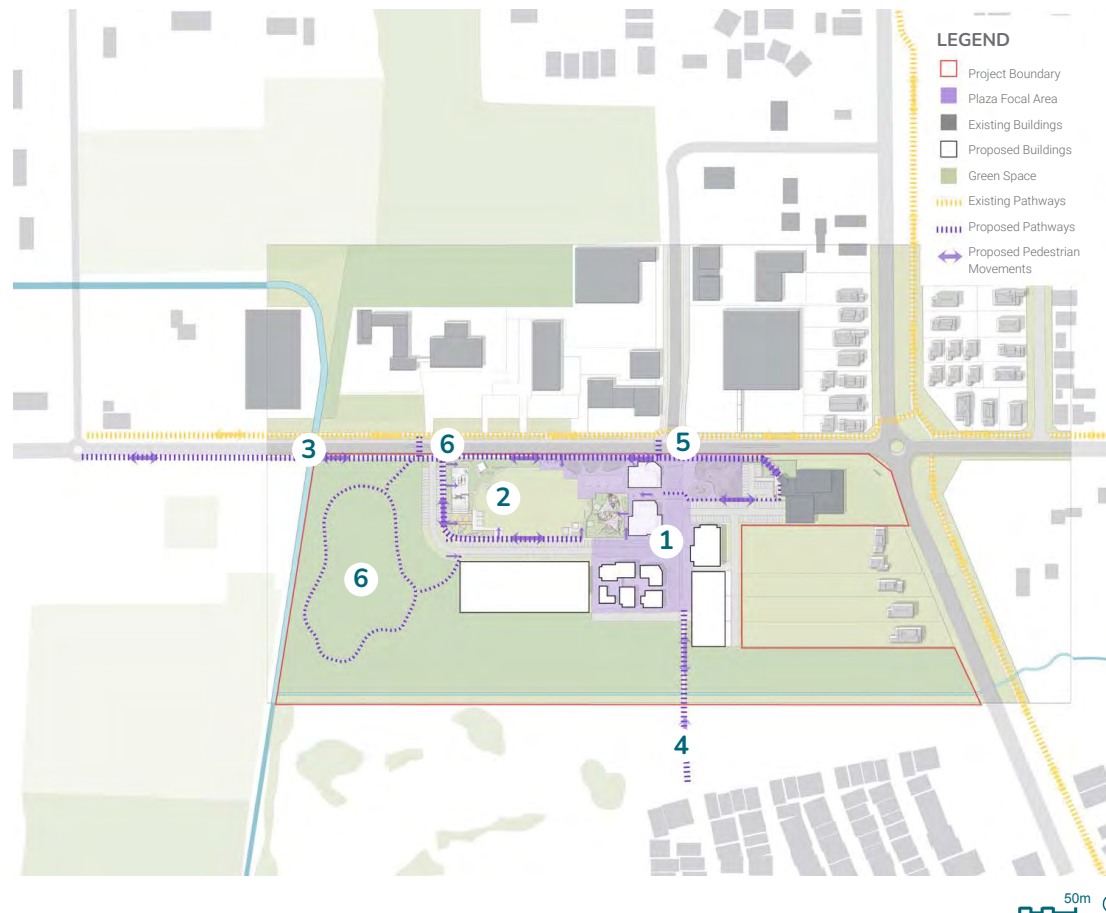
Plaza Shared Zoned

Moir Studio

5.4 Design Moves 02

Create Connections:

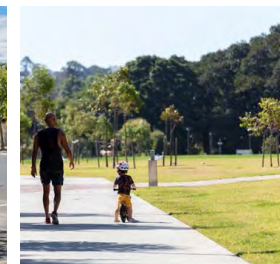
Pedestrian Movement



- 1 Pedestrian movement prioritised across the site.
- 2 Facilitate quality open space with well connected shared pathway network.
- 3 Connection to Ferodale Sports Complex (west) and to future high school through expansion of bridge over Campvale Drain.
- 4 Pedestrian pathway connection to Tallowood residential housing for residents.
- 5 Pedestrian crossing at traffic light intersection at Ferodale / Peppertree Road.
- 6 Opportunity to incorporate informal bush walking trails through strategic clearing and thinning of introduced pine trees.



Mixed pedestrian and road



Prioritising pedestrian connection

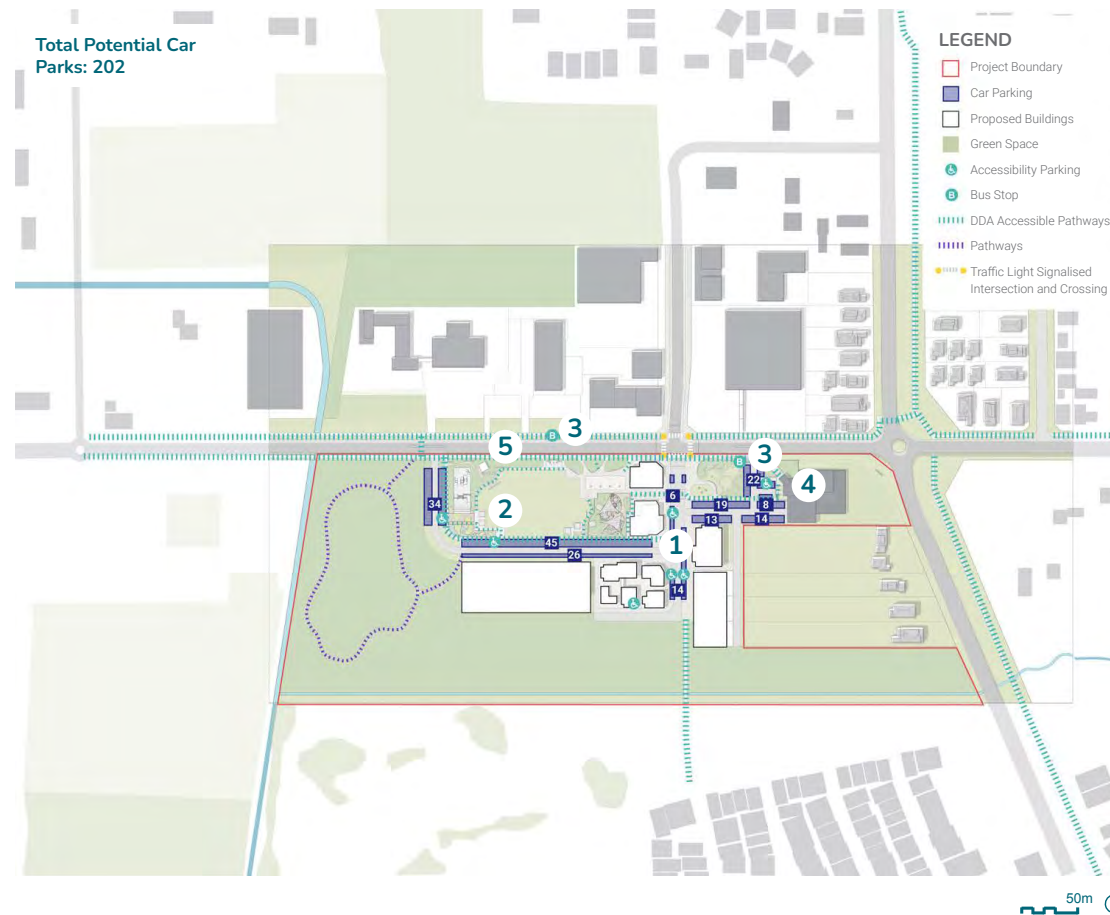


Creating pathway network between open spaces

5.5 Design Moves 02

Create Connections:

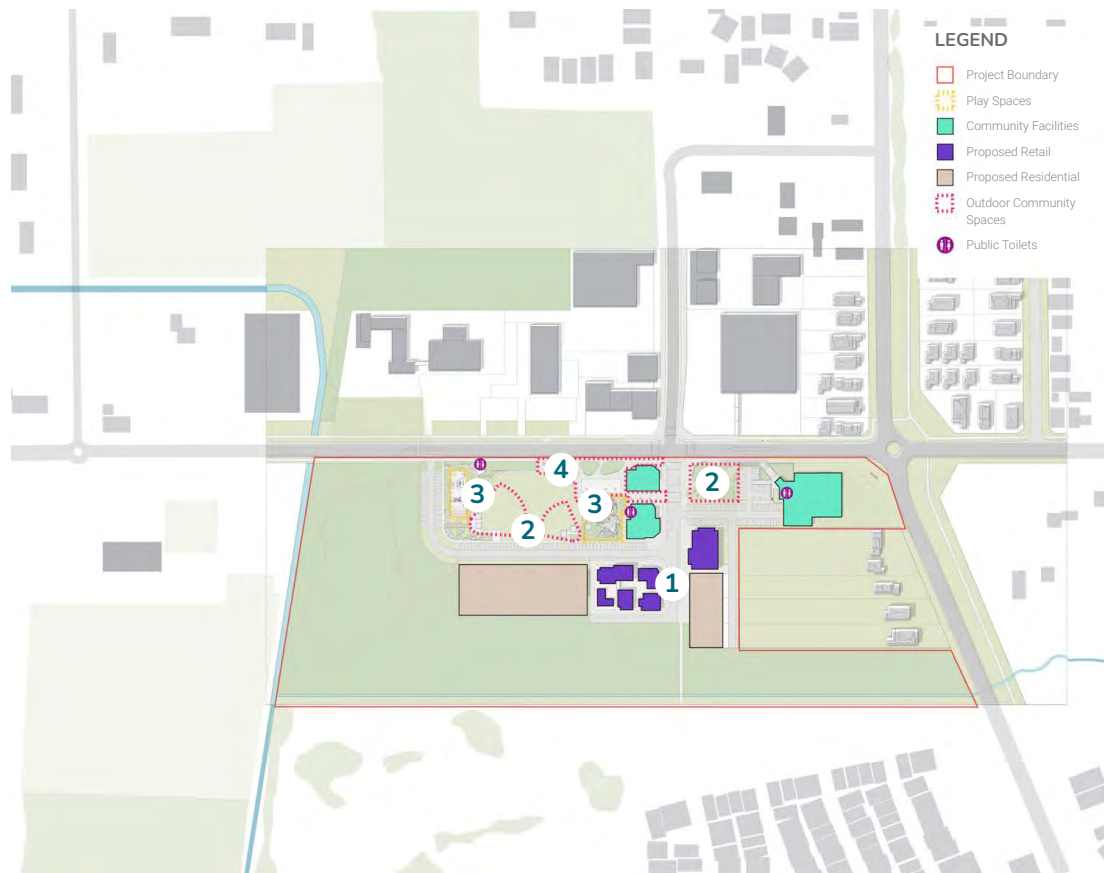
Parking & Accessibility



Accessible parking off Ferodale Road

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5.6 Design Moves 03: Build Living Heart Mixed-Use Precinct

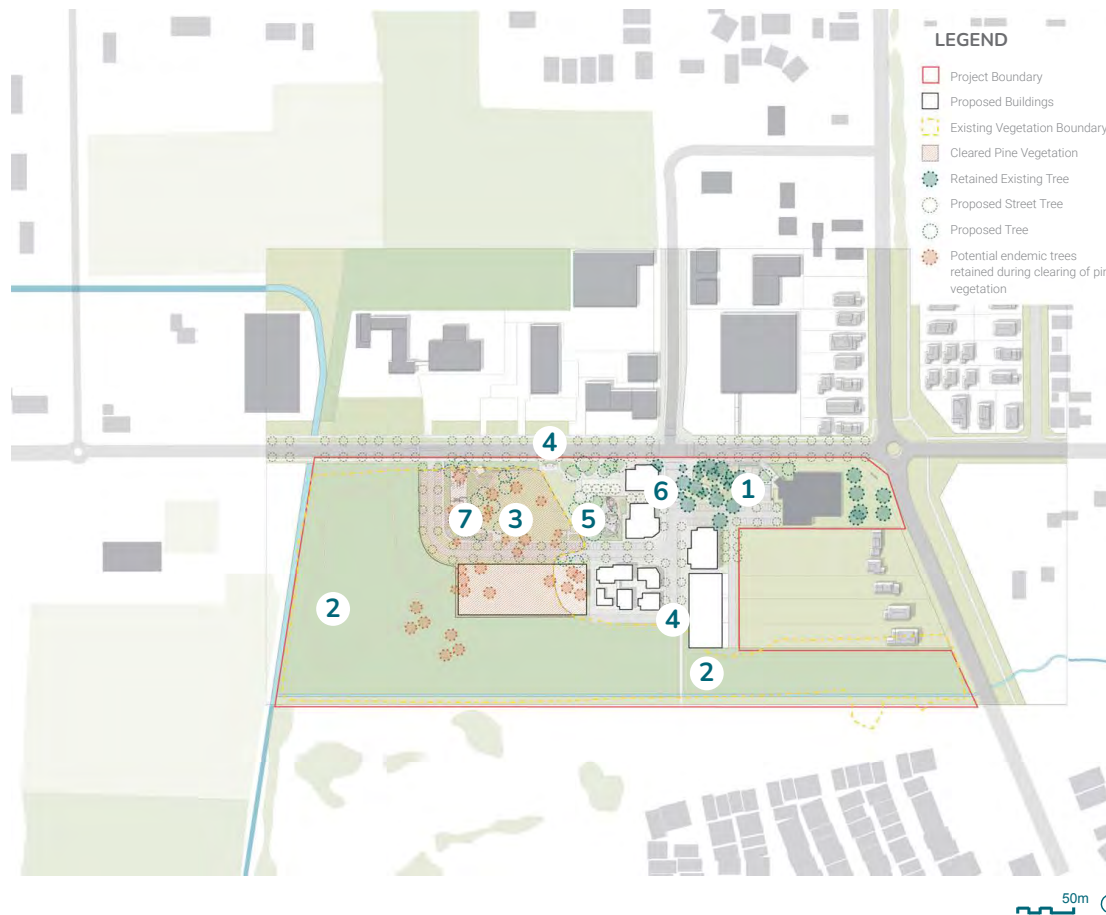


- 1 Establish a mixed-use precinct that encourages people to stay, gather, and connect.
- 2 Create vibrant, flexible spaces to support community events and activities.
- 3 Provide inclusive play areas that cater to all ages and abilities.
- 4 War Memorial relocated to the town centre to accommodate large public gatherings for services & events.



Mixed-use design

5.7 Design Moves 03: Build Living Heart Vegetation



Tree-centred open space



Rain Garden

Moir Studio

5.8 Design Moves 03: Build Living Heart Event Spaces



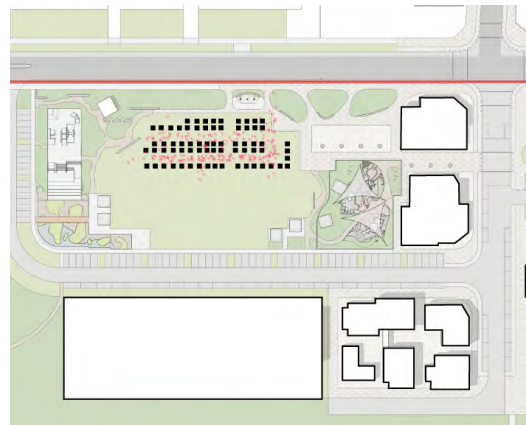
Example Event 01: ANZAC Day



The vision for relocating the Medowie War Memorials to the town centre is to create a prominent, accessible and unifying space for Anzac Day and other commemorative services. By positioning the memorial in a central location, the community can gather safely in greater numbers to honour and reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who have served. The open space surrounding the memorial is approximately 4000m², comfortably accommodating 2000 plus people.

The new setting will centralise existing memorials within a large, open area that provides ample space for ceremonies, clear sight lines for attendees and the necessary supporting infrastructure, including power, parking, public amenities and accessible pathways. This relocation will ensure commemorative events are dignified, inclusive and well-supported, reflecting Medowie's strong connection to the nearby Williamstown RAAF Base and its deep respect for remembrance traditions.

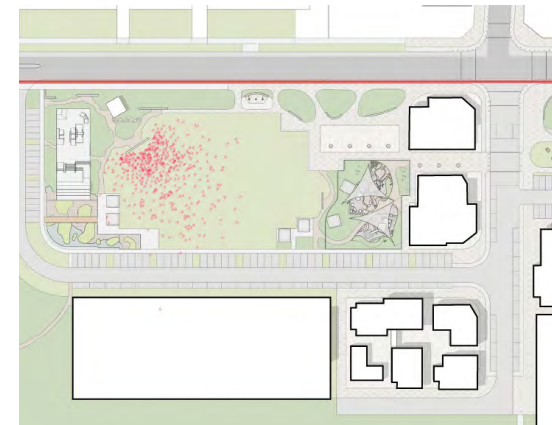
Example Event 02: Medowie Markets



With safe, accessible pedestrian links, shaded seating, and flexible open areas, the Village Green provides an ideal setting for the Medowie Markets. Currently held monthly on the lawn in front of the Bull and Bush with around 90 stalls (approximately 30 sqm each), relocating the markets to the Village Green would accommodate the required 4,600 sqm of space while allowing room for growth and special seasonal events such as Christmas and winter markets.

This move supports local enterprise, attracting more visitors with a vibrant place to meet, shop, and play, reinforcing the town centre as the true heart of the community.

Example Event 03: Community Plaza Event



The vision for the community plaza is to create an inviting, multi-purpose gathering space that celebrates community, culture and the surrounding landscape.

Designed for flexibility, the space accommodates a variety of uses - from small community talks and outdoors cinema nights to larger concerts or festivals - while maintaining a welcoming atmosphere for everyday use and social interaction. Integrated lighting and power ensures the a space that functions efficiently and safely for both daytime and evening events, reinforcing the town centre as a vibrant and active hub.

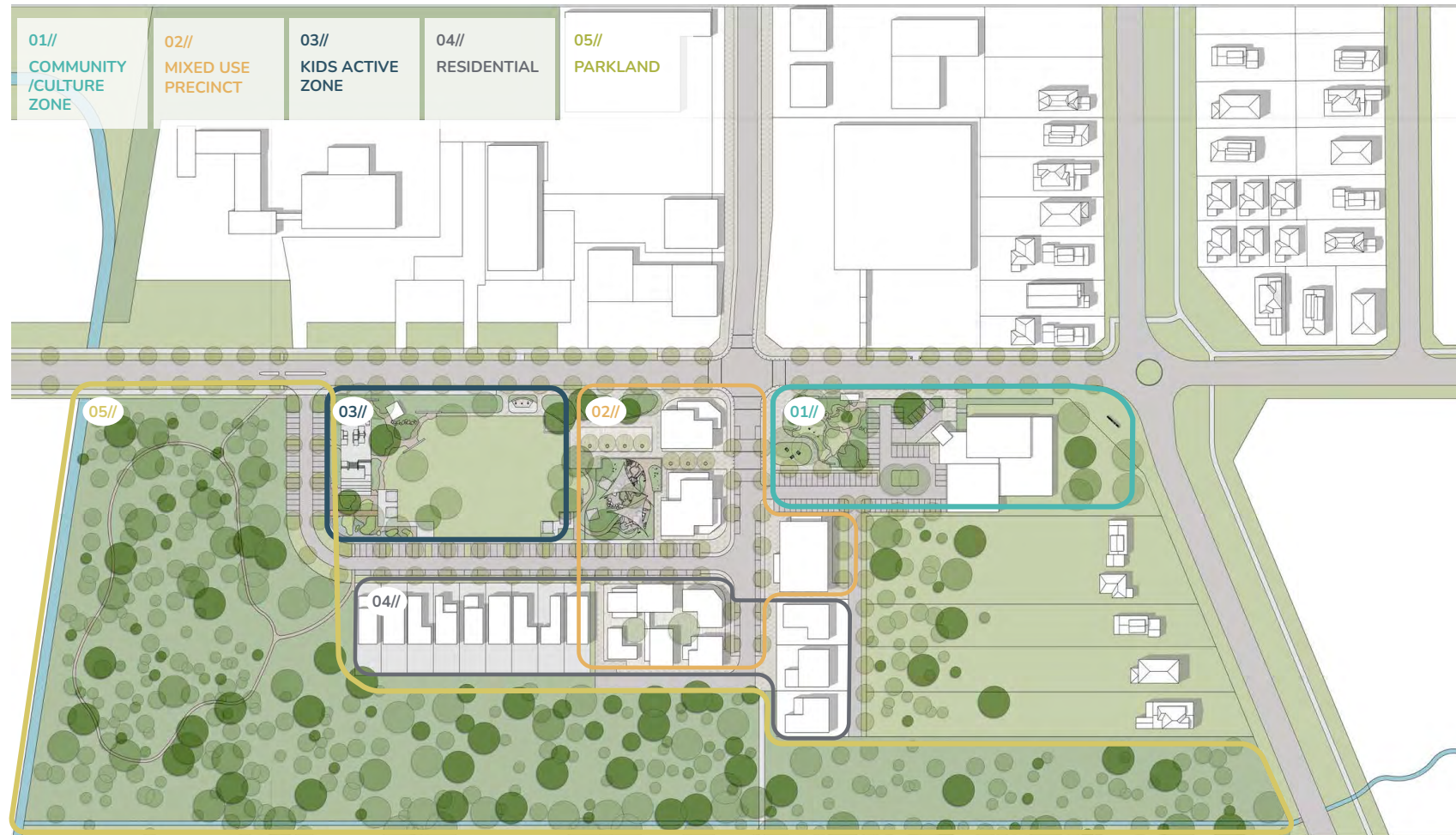
06 The Final Masterplan



6.1 Stage 03: Final Masterplan

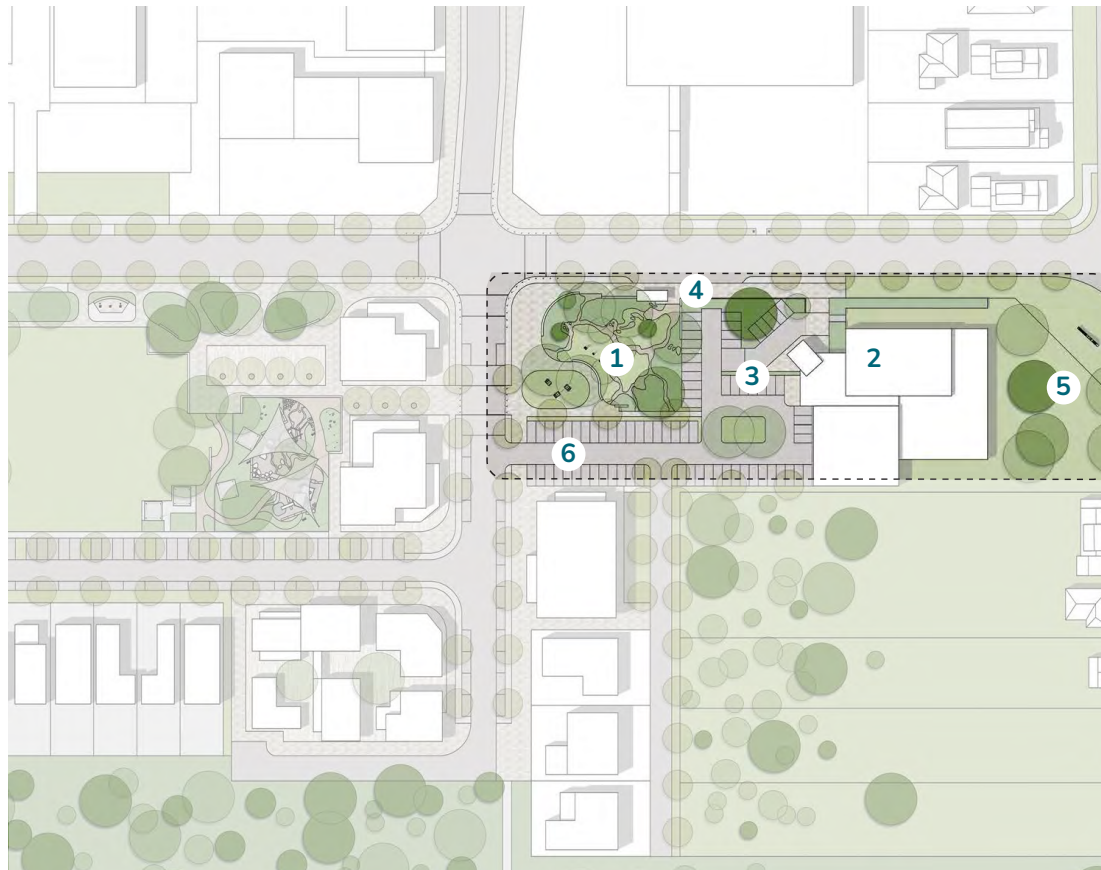


6.2 Final Masterplan: Zones



01//

Community / Culture Zone



- 1 Geoff Dingle Park
- 2 Community Centre / Library
- 3 Parking- Retain existing levels
- 4 Bus Stop and Shelter
- 5 Lions Park
- 6 New car park entry & Additional Parking

01//

Community / Culture Zone

1. Geoff Dingle Park

Named in honour of long-time local Geoff Dingle, this space embodies the spirit of community pride and creativity. Originally shaped through Medowie's 7 Day Makeover, it showcases the power of local collaboration and hands-on design. The park offers a welcoming space for recreation, play, gardening and gathering, a living expression of Medowie's heart and identity.

2. Community Centre / Library

The Medowie Community Centre is a key civic destination, supporting local groups, events and activities. Its planned renewal will transform it into a flexible, inclusive hub with improved accessibility and upgraded facilities. The addition of a library lounge will create inviting study, reading and children's play spaces, designed to support learning, creativity and connection for all residents.

3. Parking

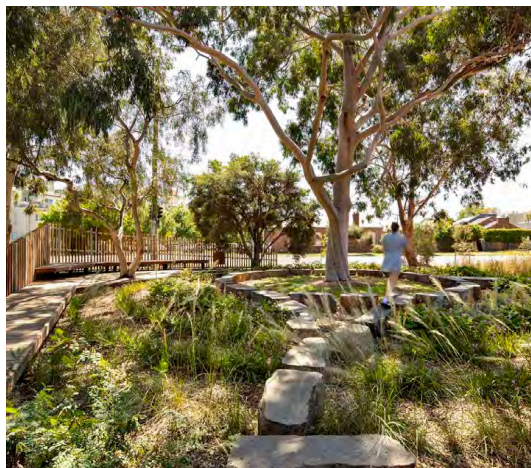
Parking area strategically located near the Community Centre, organised to improve safety, efficiency and pedestrian flow. Existing parking will be upgraded and extended, with a new entry from Peppertree Road. Existing "tall trees" will be retained and showcased where possible. Further Landscape treatments and tree planting will soften hardstand areas and provide shade.

4. Bus Stop and Shelter

Redesigned bus stops with shelters will improve public transport accessibility and comfort. Located within walking distance of key amenities, featuring seating, shade, lighting and clear signage .

5. Lions Park

Lions Park features the Medowie Town centre entry signage (leaf). The parks corner role, welcoming people to the town centre will be reinforced through careful planting and lighting with opportunity for additional art to reinforce Medowie's character.



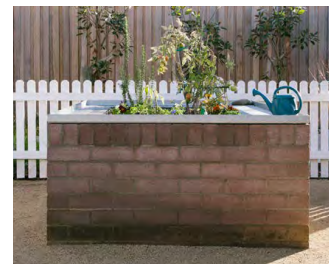
Retain and make feature of native "tall trees" within park



Opportunities for public art drawing inspiration from 7 Day Makeover



Community led garden initiative / Mud Landscape Design



Raised planters accessible gardens / Moir Studio



Retain native "tall trees" within parking bays



Reinforced entry opportunities at Lions Park / Michael Cooke

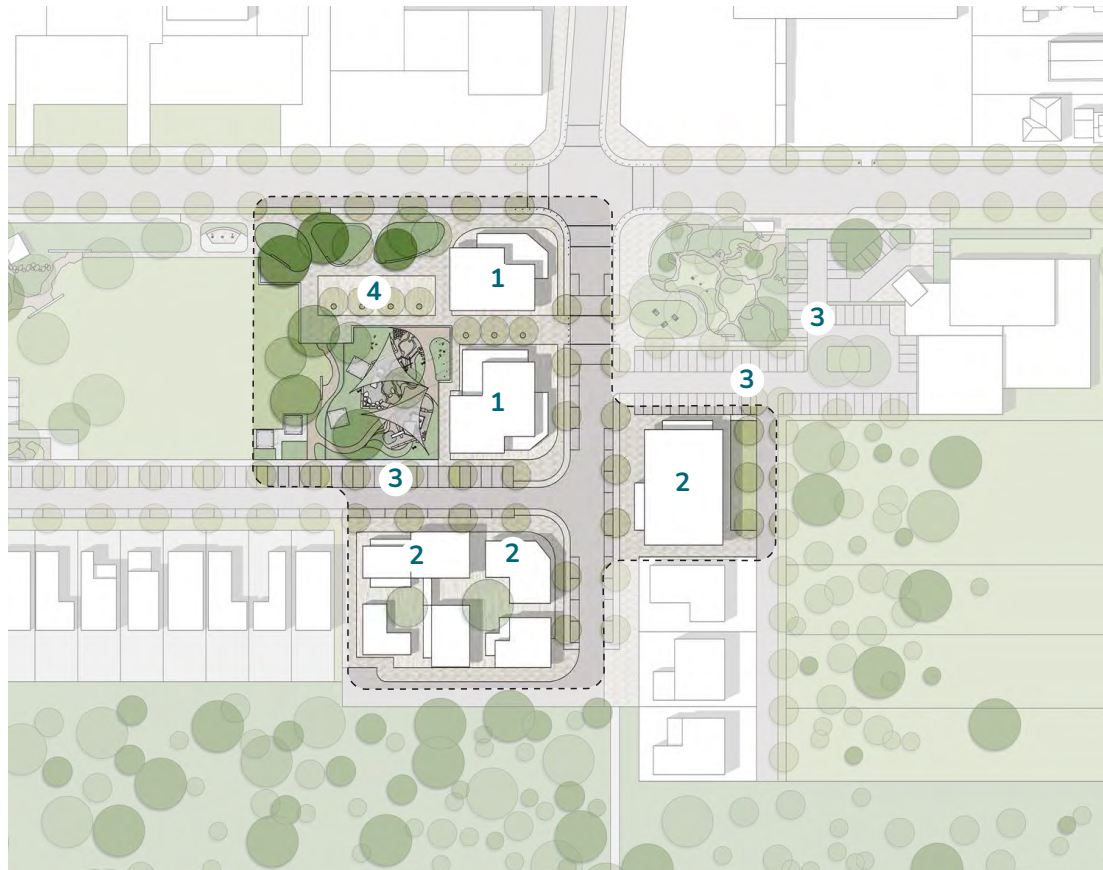
01//

Community / Culture Zone



02//

Mixed Use Precinct



- 1 Community-Focused Mixed Use Development
- 2 Mixed Use Development
- 3 Parking
- 4 Plaza

02//

Mixed Use Precinct

1. Community-Focused Mixed Use Development

Located on the prominent gateway corner, this development will form a vibrant and inclusive community hub where people can live, work, and gather. Active and permeable frontages will promote pedestrian movement and visual connection, while cafés, shops, and community services bring energy throughout the day. The built form and landscape will respond sensitively to the local context, creating a sustainable, people-oriented destination that celebrates Medowie's community identity.

2. Mixed Use Development

This mixed-use precinct will provide a vibrant mix of retail, commercial, and community uses, supporting daily needs within a walkable, welcoming environment. Active street frontages, pedestrian-friendly spaces, and high-quality landscaping will enhance accessibility and character. Emphasising sustainability, accessibility and connection, the development will strengthen Medowie's local identity and contribute to the vitality of the surrounding community.

3. Parking

Parking will be reconfigured to improve safety, legibility, and pedestrian flow. Parallel parking along Peppertree Road is intended to provide standard spaces, as well as accessible parking and designated drop-off zones.

4. Plaza

The town centre plaza is envisioned as a vibrant and inclusive heart for the town - an adaptable space for gathering, celebration, and community life. Seamlessly connected to surrounding development and open space, it will host markets, performances, and events. Equipped with lighting, seating, power, and landscaping, the plaza will offer comfort, safety, and versatility, reinforcing the town centre as the true meeting place of the community.



Integrated skate and play at Bridges Hill / Moir Studio



Mix of retail, commercial and community spaces



Mixed-use development

02//

Mixed Use Precinct



03//

Village Green



- 1 Skate Park
- 2 Playground
- 3 Village Green
- 4 Rain Garden
- 5 War Memorial
- 6 Public Amenities
- 7 Parking

03//

Village Green

1. Kids Active Zone (Skate Park)

The new skate park will replace the existing facility at Boyd Oval, creating a dynamic, inclusive space that encourages recreation. Designed for all ages and skill levels, it will feature a variety of skate elements alongside opportunities for community art—such as murals that reflect Medowie's identity and character.

Lighting will ensure safe use during both day and evening hours, while natural vegetation and site contours will be incorporated to enhance shade, comfort, and the park's distinctive sense of place.

2. Playground

The playground is designed as a safe, welcoming and inclusive space that promotes outdoor play, physical activity and social interaction for families and children of all abilities. The playground incorporates accessible and sensory equipment, along with support infrastructure including fencing, share sails, drinking water and picnic shelters. Strategically located adjacent to public buildings and retail areas, the playground forms an integral component of the town centre's family-focused community.

3. Village Green

To serve as an open, flexible public space, providing a central gathering place for community leisure and informal recreation. Thoughtfully landscaped, connected with pathways and providing comfortable picnic shelters, it enhances the town's civic presence while promoting social interaction, relaxation and sense of place.



Opportunity for creative entry and fencing / SBLA Studio



Playground at Birubi Point / Moir Studio



Open flexible kick-about space



Harold Gregson Skate Park / Moir Studio



Skate park Continua / MBL architectes + bureau David Apheceix, France

ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN.

03//

Village Green

4. Rain Garden

Landscaped, bio-retention area designed to manage storm water while enhancing the town centre's environmental sustainability. It captures and filters runoff from surrounding hard surfaces, reducing local flooding and improving water quality, while providing an attractive, vegetated space that contributes to biodiversity, visual amenity and overall streetscape character.

5. War Memorial

Medowie's war memorials will be relocated to a prominent central location within the town centre, creating a dignified setting that accommodates large gatherings and commemorative events. The new site enhances visibility, accessibility and integration with surrounding civic spaces, reinforcing its role as a focal point for community remembrance and civic pride.

6. Public Amenities

The existing public amenities at Geoff Dingle Park are proposed to be relocated to a more central position, serving the children's play zone, War Memorial, and amphitheatre. Opportunity for additional facilities incorporated into the proposed building to support the adjacent play area.

7. Parking

Parking at the western portion of the site allows for accessibility to play area, surrounding parklands and open space.



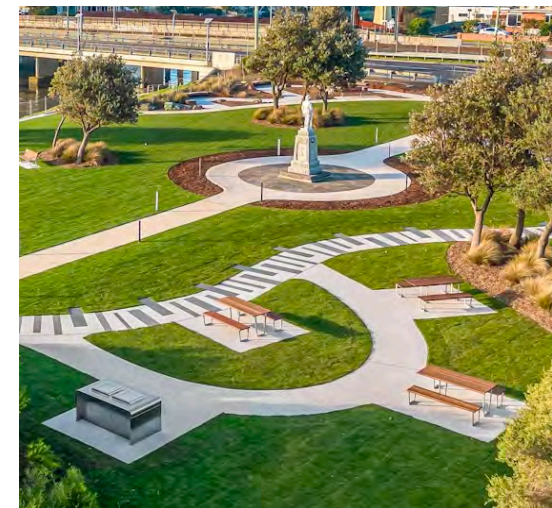
Water sensitive urban design / play



Rain gardens and crossings (Harold Gregson Park / Moir Studio)



Flexible open space for kickabout, Medowie Markets and community events



War memorial with central location and surrounding open space for services / Kingston City Council

03//

Village Green



04//

Residential



- 1 Low/ Medium Density Housing
(Views to Village green)
- 2 Medium Density Housing
- 3 Mixed Use - Housing above Retail / Commercial
- 4 Rain Garden
- 5 Pathway Connection to Tallwood Living

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04//

Residential

1. Low / Medium Density Housing

Provides a mix of residential options that support a vibrant, walkable community during both the day and night. These housing types are envisaged to integrate with the surrounding streetscape and character, provide passive surveillance of public space, contribute to the town centre's activity and diversity; and offer accessible, well-connected living environments that complement local services, retail and public space

2. Medium Density Housing

Delivers compact, efficient housing options that respond to local demand while maintaining Medowie's character. Medium density housing promotes walkability, supports local businesses and creates a stronger sense of community within the town centre.

3. Mixed Use Housing

Combines residential and commercial functions, such as shop-top housing or visitor accommodation. These developments contribute to a diverse range of housing options and visitor accommodation, supporting local retail and services while activating the streetscape. Ideally located in proximity to Newcastle Airport, this enhances the town centre's economic and social vitality.

4. Rain Garden

Refer to page 51 for rain garden description.

5. Pathway connection to Tallowood Living

A safe and accessible pathway will link Tallowood Living directly to the town centre, providing residents with convenient, pedestrian-friendly access to shops, services and community facilities. The pathway enhances connectivity, encourages active travel and strengthens the integration of surrounding residential areas with the town centre.



Connecting spaces / buildings softened with landscaping



Mixed-use housing above retail



Pathway connection (Bungaribee Park / JMD Design)



Low-medium density housing integrating with landscape example

04//

Residential



05//

Parkland



- 1 Conservation Parkland
- 2 Geoff Dingle Park
- 3 Riparian Corridor
- 4 Ephemeral Parkland

05//

Parkland

1. Conservation Parkland

Aims to restore ecological integrity by selectively removing introduced pine trees to allow light into the forest understory and re-vegetate with native flora. This will improve biodiversity and strengthen the habitat corridor, while bush trails provide opportunities for passive recreation and fostering community appreciation of the local natural environment.

2. Geoff Dingle Park

Retain as many mature native trees in community garden to provide shade and enhance Medowie's identity as the place of 'tall trees'

3. Riparian Corridor

Riparian zone incorporates native vegetation to stabilize banks, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and create attractive, multi functional landscape that supports both ecological function and community amenity.

4. Ephemeral Parkland

Along Campvale Drain, the parkland is designed to accommodate periodic inundation during high rainfall events. This multi-functional space provides passive recreation and amenity during dry periods while safely managing stormwater flows, supporting biodiversity and enhancing the town centre's resilience to flooding.

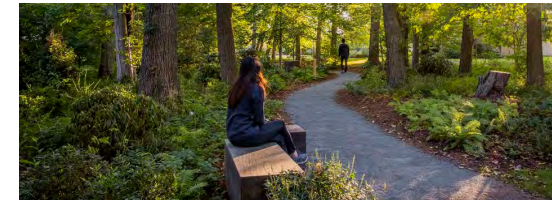
Across all parkland areas, there is a strong opportunity to celebrate Medowie's identity as the "Town of Tall Trees" and reinforce a town centre that connects people with nature. The landscape can provide space for cultural and community expression, reflecting both Worimi and European heritage and strengthening local character. Ecological restoration will enhance amenity, biodiversity, and habitat value, while thoughtfully placed seating will offer quiet moments for reflection and appreciation of Medowie's unique landscape setting.



Western Ridges seating / Moir Studio



Existing landscape conditions to be cleared of weeds and restored



Conservation parkland opportunities



Western Ridges tree art by Dharug artist Shay Tobin

05//

Parkland



ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN.

