

# NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

## 24 MARCH 2026



### PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

The Mayor and Councillors attendance is respectfully requested:

Mayor: L Anderson (Chair).

Councillors: R Armstrong, G Arnott, C Doohan, N Errington, P Francis, P Le Mottee, B Niland, M Watson, J Wells.

#### SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

TIME	ITEM	VENUE
5:30pm:	Public Access (if applied for)	Council Chambers
Followed by:	Ordinary Meeting	Council Chambers

#### **Please Note:**

In accordance with the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, you are advised that all discussion held during the Open Council meeting is public information. This will include any discussion involving the Mayor, a Councillor, staff member or a member of the public. All persons present should withhold from making public comments about another individual without seeking the consent of that individual in the first instance. Should you have any questions concerning the privacy of individuals at the meeting, please speak with the Governance Section Manager or the General Manager prior to the meeting.

Please be aware that Council webcasts its Open Council meetings via its website. All persons should refrain from making any defamatory remarks. Council accepts no liability for any defamatory remarks made during the course of the Council meeting.

Flags, signs, placards or protest symbols are not permitted in the Council Chamber.

Food and beverages are not permitted in the Council Chamber.

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## **BUSINESS**

- 1) Opening meeting.
- 2) Acknowledgement of Country  

We acknowledge the Worimi people as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens. We acknowledge and pay respects to Worimi elders past and present. May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.
- 3) Prayer
  - i. We recognise the rich cultural and religious diversity in Port Stephens and pay respect to the beliefs of all members of our community, regardless of creed or faith.
  - ii. Almighty God, we ask for your blessing as we meet together on behalf of our community. So that today and into the future, you would direct and favour our deliberations to advance the welfare, safety and prosperity of our region.  
Amen.
- 4) Apologies and applications for a leave of absence from Mayor and Councillors.
- 5) Attendance by audio visual link.
- 6) Disclosures of interests.
- 7) Confirmation of minutes.
- 8) Mayoral minute(s).\*
- 9) Urgency motions (if any)
- 10) Motions to close meeting to the public.\*
- 11) Committee of the Whole.
- 12) Reports to Council.
- 13) General Manager reports.\*
- 14) Questions with Notice.
- 15) Questions on Notice.
- 16) Notices of motions.\*
- 17) Rescission Motions.\*
- 18) Confidential matters.\*
- 19) Conclusion of the meeting.

*\*if submitted*

## PRINCIPLES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Port Stephens Council is a local authority constituted under the Local Government Act 1993. The Act includes the Principles for Local Government for all NSW Councils.

The object of the principles for councils is to provide guidance to enable councils to carry out their functions in a way that facilitates local communities that are strong, healthy and prosperous.

### Guiding principles for Council

#### 1) Exercise of functions generally

The following general principles apply to the exercise of functions by Council. Council should:

- a. provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making.
- b. carry out functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers.
- c. plan strategically, using the integrated planning and reporting framework, for the provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- d. apply the integrated planning and reporting framework in carrying out their functions so as to achieve desired outcomes and continuous improvements.
- e. work co-operatively with other councils and the State government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community.
- f. manage lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way.
- g. work with others to secure appropriate services for local community needs.
- h. act fairly, ethically and without bias in the interests of the local community.
- i. be responsible employers and provide a consultative and supportive working environment for staff.

#### 2) Decision-making

The following principles apply to decision-making by Council (subject to any other applicable law). Council should:

- a. recognise diverse local community needs and interests.
- b. consider social justice principles.
- c. consider the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations.
- d. consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- e. Council decision-making should be transparent and decision-makers are to be accountable for decisions and omissions.

3) Community participation

Council should actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the integrated planning and reporting framework and other measures.

**Principles of sound financial management**

The following principles of sound financial management apply to Council. Council should:

- a. spend responsible and sustainable, aligning general revenue and expenses.
- b. invest in responsible and sustainable infrastructure for the benefit of the local community.
- c. have effective financial and asset management, including sound policies and processes for the following:
- d. performance management and reporting,
- e. asset maintenance and enhancement,
- f. funding decisions,
- g. risk management practices.
- h. have regard to achieving intergenerational equity, including ensuring the following:
  - (i) policy decisions are made after considering their financial effects on future generations,
  - (ii) the current generation funds the cost of its services.

**Integrated planning and reporting principles that apply to Council**

The following principles for strategic planning apply to the development of the integrated planning and reporting framework by Council. Council should:

- a. identify and prioritise key local community needs and aspirations and consider regional priorities.
- b. identify strategic goals to meet those needs and aspirations.
- c. develop activities, and prioritise actions, to work towards the strategic goals.
- d. ensure that the strategic goals and activities to work towards them may be achieved within council resources.
- e. regularly review and evaluate progress towards achieving strategic goals.
- f. maintain an integrated approach to planning, delivering, monitoring and reporting on strategic goals.
- g. collaborate with others to maximise achievement of strategic goals.
- h. manage risks to the local community or area or to the council effectively and proactively.
- i. make appropriate evidence-based adaptations to meet changing needs and circumstances.

## PORT STEPHENS COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Local Government Act requires Council to adopt a Community Strategic Plan (10+ years). The Plan includes a Delivery Program (4 years), Annual Operational Plan and a Resource Strategy, it also includes the Council's budget.

The Community Strategic Plan is organised into 4 focus areas:

**OUR COMMUNITY** – An accessible and welcoming community respecting diversity, heritage and culture.

**OUR PLACE** – A liveable and connected place supporting community wellbeing and local economic growth.

**OUR ENVIRONMENT** – Port Stephens' environment is protected, enhanced, sustainable and resilient.

**OUR COUNCIL** – Port Stephens Council leads, manages and delivers valued community services in a responsible way.

## BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Port Stephens Council is a quality and a customer service focused organisation. We use the Business Excellence Framework as a basis for driving organisational excellence. The Framework is an integrated leadership and management system that describes elements essential to organisational excellence. It is based on 9 principles.

These outcomes align with the following Business Excellence principles:

- 1) Clear direction and mutually agreed plans enable organisational alignment and focus on achievement of goals.
- 2) Understanding what customers and other stakeholders value, now and in the future, enables organisational direction, strategy and action.
- 3) All people work in a system. Outcomes are improved when people work on the system and its associated processes.
- 4) Engaging people's enthusiasm, resourcefulness and participation improves organisational performance.
- 5) Innovation and learning influence the agility and responsiveness of the organisation.
- 6) Effective use of facts, data and knowledge leads to improved decisions.
- 7) Variation impacts predictability, profitability and performance.
- 8) Sustainable performance is determined by an organisation's ability to deliver value for all stakeholders in an ethically, socially and environmentally responsible manner.
- 9) Leaders determine the culture and value system of the organisation through their decisions and behaviour.

## MEETING PROCEDURES SUMMARY

**Starting time** – All meetings must commence within 30 minutes of the advertised time.

**Quorum** – A quorum at Port Stephens Council is 6.

### Declarations of Interest

**Pecuniary** – Councillors who have a pecuniary interest must declare the interest, not participate in the debate and leave the meeting.

**Non-Pecuniary** – Councillors are required to indicate if they have a non-pecuniary interest, should a Councillor declare a significant non-pecuniary they must not participate in the debate and leave the meeting. If a Councillor declares a less than significant non-pecuniary they must state why no further action should be taken. Councillors may remain in the meeting for a less than significant non-pecuniary.

**Confirm the Minutes** – Councillors are able to raise any matter concerning the Minutes prior to confirmation of the Minutes.

**Public Access** – Each speaker has 5 minutes to address Council with no more than 2 for and 2 against the subject.

### Motions and Amendments

**Moving Recommendations** – If a Committee recommendation is being moved, ie been to a Committee first, then the motion must be moved and seconded at Council prior to debate proceeding. A Councillor may move an alternate motion to the recommendation.

**Amendments** – A Councillor may move an amendment to any motion however only one amendment or motion can be before Council at any one time, if carried it becomes the motion.

**Seconding Amendments** – When moving an amendment, it must be seconded or it lapses.

**Incorporating Amendments** – If a motion has been moved and the mover and seconder agree with something which is being moved as an amendment by others, they may elect to incorporate it into their motion or amendment as the case may be.

**Voting Order** – When voting on a matter the order is as follows:

- 1) Amendment (if any)
- 2) Motion

**NB – Where an amendment is carried, there must be another vote on the amendment becoming the motion.**

**Voting** – an item is passed where a majority vote for the subject. If the voting is tied the Chairperson has a second (casting) vote which is used to break the deadlock.

**Closed Session** – There must be a motion to close a meeting. Prior to voting on the motion the chairperson will invite the gallery to make representations if they believe the meeting shouldn't be closed. Then Councillors vote on the matter. If adopted the gallery should then be cleared and the matter considered in closed session. Any decision taken in session closed is a resolution. There must be a motion to reopen the Council meeting to the public. If decision occurred in 'closed session', the meeting is advised of the resolution in 'open session'.

**Procedural Motion** – Is a motion necessary for the conduct of the meeting, it is voted on without debate, eg defer an item to the end of the meeting (however, to defer an item to another meeting is not a procedural motion), extend the time for a Councillor to speak etc.

**Urgency Motion** – Is a motion that can be moved at a meeting to have a matter considered at a meeting. An urgency motion (procedural motion) can be moved and seconded to have a matter considered and, if passed (where all Councillors are present), then the substantive motion can be moved, seconded and debated as a motion. If all Councillors are not present, then the Mayor must also rule on the urgency motion. If the procedural motion is lost or the Mayor does not rule the matter is of great urgency, the motion fails to proceed any further and Council resumes to normal business listed on the agenda.

**Points of Order** – when any of the following are occurring or have occurred a Councillor can rise on a 'Point of Order', the breach is explained to the Chairperson who rules on the matter.

A Point of Order can be raised where:

- 1) There has been any non-compliance with procedure, eg motion not seconded etc.
- 2) A Councillor commits an act of disorder if the Councillor, at a meeting of the Council or a committee of the Council:
  - (a) contravenes the Act, the Regulation or this code, or
  - (b) assaults or threatens to assault another Councillor or person present at the meeting, or
  - (c) moves or attempts to move a motion or an amendment that has an unlawful purpose or that deals with a matter that is outside the jurisdiction of the Council or the committee, or addresses or attempts to address the Council or the committee on such a motion, amendment or matter, or
  - (d) uses offensive or disorderly words, or

- (e) makes gestures or otherwise behaves in a way that is sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise discriminatory, or, if the behaviour occurred in the Legislative Assembly, would be considered disorderly, or
- (f) imputes improper motives to or unfavourably personally reflects upon any other Council official, or a person present at the meeting, except by a motion, or
- (g) says or does anything that would promote disorder at the meeting or is otherwise inconsistent with maintaining order at the meeting.

### **Declarations of Conflict of Interest – Definitions**

**Pecuniary interest** is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another person with whom the person is associated as provided in Clause 7 of the Code of Conduct.

**Non Pecuniary interests** are private or personal interests the council official has that do not amount to a pecuniary interest as defined in the Code of Conduct. These commonly arise out of family or personal relationships or involvement in sporting, social or other cultural groups and associations and may include an interest of financial nature.

The matter of a report to council from the conduct review committee/reviewer relates to the public duty of a Councillor or the general manager. Therefore, there is no requirement for Councillors or the General Manager to disclose a conflict of interest in such a matter.

The political views of a Councillor do not constitute a private interest.



## Form of Special Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

1. This form must be completed using block letters or typed.
2. If there is insufficient space for all the information you are required to disclose, you must attach an appendix which is to be properly identified and signed by you.

### Important information

This information is being collected for the purpose of making a special disclosure of pecuniary interests under clause 4.36(c) of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (the Model Code of Conduct).

The special disclosure must relate only to a pecuniary interest that a councillor has in the councillor's principal place of residence, or an interest another person (whose interests are relevant under clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct) has in that person's principal place of residence.

Clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct states that you will have a pecuniary interest in a matter because of the pecuniary interest of your spouse or your de facto partner or your relative or because your business partner or employer has a pecuniary interest. You will also have a pecuniary interest in a matter because you, your nominee, your business partner or your employer is a member of a company or other body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter.

"Relative" is defined by clause 4.4 of the Model Code of Conduct as meaning your, your spouse's or your de facto partner's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child and the spouse or de facto partner of any of those persons.

You must not make a special disclosure that you know or ought reasonably to know is false or misleading in a material particular. Complaints about breaches of these requirements are to be referred to the Office of Local Government and may result in disciplinary action by the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

This form must be completed by you before the commencement of the council or council committee meeting at which the special disclosure is being made. The completed form must be tabled at the meeting. Everyone is entitled to inspect it. The special disclosure must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

Special disclosure of pecuniary interests by [full name of councillor]

in the matter of [insert name of environmental planning instrument]

which is to be considered at a meeting of the PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

to be held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

Pecuniary interest	
Address of the affected principal place of residence of the councillor or an associated person, company or body (the identified land)	
Relationship of identified land to the councillor [Tick or cross one box.]	<input type="checkbox"/> The councillor has an interest in the land (eg is the owner or has another interest arising out of a mortgage, lease, trust, option or contract, or otherwise). <input type="checkbox"/> An associated person of the councillor has an interest in the land. <input type="checkbox"/> An associated company or body of the councillor has an interest in the land.
Matter giving rise to pecuniary interest <sup>1</sup>	
Nature of the land that is subject to a change in zone/planning control by the proposed LEP (the subject land) <sup>2</sup> [Tick or cross one box]	<input type="checkbox"/> The identified land. <input type="checkbox"/> Land that adjoins or is adjacent to or is in proximity to the identified land.
Current zone/planning control [Insert name of current planning instrument and identify relevant zone/planning control applying to the subject land]	

1 Clause 4.1 of the Model Code of Conduct provides that a pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person. A person does not have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be regarded as likely to influence any decision the person might make in relation to the matter, or if the interest is of a kind specified in clause 4.6 of the Model Code of Conduct.

2 A pecuniary interest may arise by way of a change of permissible use of land adjoining, adjacent to or in proximity to land in which a councillor or a person, company or body referred to in clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct has a proprietary interest.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

Proposed change of zone/planning control [Insert name of proposed LEP and identify proposed change of zone/planning control applying to the subject land]	
Effect of proposed change of zone/planning control on councillor or associated person [Insert one of the following: "Appreciable financial gain" or "Appreciable financial loss"]	

[If more than one pecuniary interest is to be declared, reprint the above box and fill in for each additional interest.]

Mayor/Councillor's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[This form is to be retained by the council's general manager and included in full in the minutes of the meeting]



# Declaration of Interest form

Agenda item No. \_\_\_\_\_

Report title \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor/Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ declared a

Tick the relevant response:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>pecuniary</b> conflict of interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>significant</b> non pecuniary conflict of interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>less than significant</b> non- pecuniary conflict of interest

in this item. The nature of the interest is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**If a Councillor declares a less than significant conflict of interest and intends to remain in the meeting, the councillor needs to provide an explanation as to why the conflict requires no further action to manage the conflict. (Attach a separate sheet if required.)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY:** (Committee of the Whole may not be applicable at all meetings.)

Mayor/Councillor left the Council meeting in Committee of the Whole at \_\_\_\_\_pm.

Mayor/Councillor returned to the Council meeting in Committee of the Whole at \_\_\_\_\_ pm.

Mayor/Councillor left the Council meeting at \_\_\_\_\_ pm.

Mayor/Councillor returned to the Council meeting at \_\_\_\_\_ pm.

# MOTIONS TO CLOSE

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 26/49190  
EDRMS NO: PSC2021-00699-003**

**MOTION TO CLOSE**

REPORT OF: TIMOTHY CROSDALE - GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That pursuant to section 10A(2) (d)i of the Local Government Act 1993, the Committee and Council resolve to close to the public that part of its meetings to discuss Confidential Item 1 on the Ordinary agenda namely **Proposed Sale of Land - Raymond Terrace**.
  - 2) That the reasons for closing the meeting to the public to consider this item is that the discussion will include information containing:
    - commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it
  - 3) That on balance it is considered discussion of the matter in open Council would be contrary to public interest, as the receipt and discussion of any information needs to be carried out confidentially to protect the commercial interests of the person who supplied the information.
  - 4) That the report remain confidential and the minute be released in accordance with Council's resolution.
-

# COUNCIL REPORTS

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 26/8539  
EDRMS NO: 58-2024-3-1**

**PLANNING PROPOSAL - 893 PATERSON ROAD, WOODVILLE**

REPORT OF: BROCK LAMONT - STRATEGY & ENVIRONMENT SECTION  
MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITY FUTURES

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Note the outcome of the State agency consultation and public exhibition of the planning proposal.
- 2) Authorises the exercise of delegations to make the amendment to the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 under Section 3.36 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW).

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the outcome of the exhibition of the planning proposal to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (LEP) (**ATTACHMENT 1**) in relation to land at 893 Paterson Road, Woodville (also known as the Woodville Function Centre) and note the outcome of the State agency consultation and public exhibition period (**ATTACHMENT 2**).

The planning proposal seeks to amend Schedule 1 'Additional Permitted Uses' to permit, with development consent, the use of Lot 10 DP 1035397 (893 Paterson Road, Woodville) as a function centre. The effect of the proposal would be to amend the Additional Permitted Uses Map to identify the subject site as a 'function centre'. A 'function centre' is defined under the LEP as 'a building or place used for the holding of events, functions, conferences and the like, and includes convention centres, exhibition centres and reception centres, but does not include an entertainment facility'.

The land is currently zoned RU1 Primary Production which, under the LEP, does not permit function centres as a land use. There is currently a development consent approved on the site (DA16-2018-557-1) for the 'Temporary Use of Land Marriage Ceremonies' dated 14 September 2018.

The current development consent limits the use of the site to only marriage ceremonies, requiring customers to book a separate location for their reception. The planning proposal seeks to allow for the use of the site as a function centre, subject to a future development application to construct and operate a function centre on site.

Site specific constraints and the design of the function centre would be the subject of the future development application.

The subject land is known as 'Gracemere' and adjoins 'Albion Park Farm', both farms are known in the area for their extensive ornamental gardens. The subject land is located within the rural hinterland of Port Stephens in the locality of Woodville, close to Iona Public School, Woodville School of Arts and several hobby farms.

The planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the emerging theme of the endorsed Hinterland Place Plan - 'Economy: New experiences and distinct business opportunities' in the Port Stephens Hinterland.

The Planning Proposal was exhibited from 28 November 2025 to 16 January 2026, with an extended exhibition period to cater for the Christmas and New Year period. 4 submissions were received.

A summary of the planning proposal and property details are provided below.

<b>Date lodged</b>	16 December 2024
<b>Proponent</b>	Wilson Planning on behalf of Kate Coren
<b>Subject property</b>	Lot 10 DP 1035397 (893 Paterson Road, Woodville)
<b>Total area</b>	10.52 ha
<b>Current zoning</b>	RU1 Primary Production
<b>Current use</b>	The subject site contains a dwelling and rural outbuildings occupying around 1ha of land in the centre of the site. The eastern portion of the site (approximately 2.5ha) contains a man-made lake surrounded by extensive ornamental gardens, which provide a backdrop for wedding ceremonies held on the site. The western portion of the site (around 7ha) contains cultivated river flats and extensive areas for livestock grazing.
<b>Proposed changes</b>	Amendment of Schedule 1 of the LEP 'Additional Permitted Uses' to permit, with development consent, the use of Lot 10 DP 1035397, (893 Paterson Road, Woodville), as a function centre.

On 13 June 2025, the planning proposal was submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to seek a Gateway determination in accordance with the Port Stephens Council Planning Proposal Policy.

On 10 July 2025, DPHI issued a Gateway determination (**ATTACHMENT 3**) requiring the planning proposal be updated with additional information prior to public exhibition.

The Gateway determination authorises Council to make the amendments to the LEP under Section 3.36(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

(NSW) (EP&A Act). This gives effect to the planning proposal following the public exhibition period. In accordance with the Gateway determination, the planning proposal was updated and referred to the relevant public authorities. Details of this consultation is detailed below.

The site is considered suitable for the proposed additional permitted use for the following reasons:

- The site is adjoined by rural residential properties. Lot sizes in the locality vary between 5 and 60ha and therefore have limited capacity for large scale agricultural uses that would cause land use conflict with the proposed use.
- The planning proposal is supported by a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) that concludes that the proposal 'will be appropriate for the site and its setting and is unlikely to result in adverse impacts on surrounding properties or the agricultural use of surrounding land'.
- A Flood Impact and Risk Assessment (FIRA) was completed for the site and updated following consultation with NSW State Emergency Service. It determined that the proposed development is compatible with the existing flood hazard and does not result in adverse off-site flood impacts.

## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Direction	Delivery Program 2025-2029
Housing, tourism & economy	Develop and implement Council's key planning documents

## FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and resourcing implications for Council as a consequence of the recommendations of this report are outlined below.

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

## **LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

### Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (EP&A Act)

The planning proposal is being processed in accordance with Part 3 of the EP&A Act, which provides the framework for amending a local environmental plan. DPHI issued a Gateway determination under Section 3.34 of the EP&A Act specifying that the planning proposal should proceed to exhibition, subject to conditions and consultation requirements.

Council is authorised to act as the local plan making authority to make the plan as noted within the Gateway determination. Should Council accept the recommendations, arrangements will be made for the drafting of the amendment to the LEP to give effect to the planning proposal.

### Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (LEP)

The site is currently zoned RU1 Primary Production under the LEP, which does not permit function centres. There is currently a development consent approved on the site (16-2018-557-1), for 'Temporary Use of Land Marriage Ceremonies' dated 14 September 2018. The planning proposal would amend Schedule 1 of LEP to include 'function centre' as a permissible land use on the subject land. This additional permitted use would only apply to the subject site and does not apply to other locations or RU1 Primary Production zoned land throughout Port Stephens.

### Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (HRP)

Part 3 of the HRP outlines 'District Planning and Growth Areas' which includes the Hinterland District. It encourages working farms to co-exist with complementary enterprises and outdoor recreation. Under Planning Priority 2 - Promote rural enterprises and diversification, the HRP seeks to promote those types of rural enterprises that have a synergy with agriculture –including farm stays, camping or farm gate trails, and larger visitor economy activities and events.

The planning proposal is generally consistent with the objectives of the HRP. The proposed 'function centre' is a type of development contemplated by the HRP in the promotion of rural enterprises and diversification and is particularly suitable in the Port Stephens Hinterland.

### Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

The LSPS identifies the 20-year vision for land use in Port Stephens and sets out social, economic and environmental planning priorities for the future. The planning

proposal is consistent with, and would give effect to, the following planning priorities from the LSPS:

**Priority 2: Make business growth easier**

This priority identifies the need to facilitate the growth of successful enterprise. The planning proposal would generate employment and income for the local economy as well as bring people into Port Stephens LGA.

**Priority 3: Support tourism and attract events**

This priority identifies the importance of tourism to the local economy and the need to investigate opportunities to facilitate land uses that support the tourist and visitor economy. The planning proposal would continue to build on the success of the existing business of hosting wedding ceremonies and draw in visitors to the region.

**Priority 9: Protect and preserve productive agricultural land**

This priority identifies the importance of balancing agricultural industries and complementary uses such as artisan food premises, boutique breweries and wedding reception venues that can provide supplementary income for farm-based businesses. A LUCRA was completed as part of the planning proposal, it concludes that the proposal 'will be appropriate for the site and its setting and is unlikely to result in adverse impacts on surrounding properties or the agricultural use of surrounding land'.

**Port Stephens Hinterland Place Plan (HPP)**

The HPP sets out future actions and opportunities in the Hinterland. The planning proposal is consistent with, and would give effect to, the following themes in the HPP:

**Economy: New experiences and distinct business opportunities**

This theme identifies the importance of tourists and visitors to the economy and suggests that "...farm gate experiences, farm stays and low impact events can showcase the Hinterland's history, lifestyle and local produce while increasing vibrancy, community connection and economic outcomes. A function centre on the site would offer low impact events and showcase the Hinterland to locals and visitors to the area.

**Environment: Protection and conservation of our environment**

The rural and natural landscape in the Hinterland is important to the community. The planning proposal will have no major impacts on native vegetation, wetlands, and riparian corridors. Any impacts on the rural landscape can be assessed during the

assessment of a development application and there is considered adequate setbacks from the road and neighbours to mitigate potential impacts.

Character: The Hinterland and our unique identity

The theme identifies the importance of the unique identity of the villages that make the Hinterland. Gracemere and Albion Farm have established themselves as part of the distinctive character and fabric of Woodville. The planning proposal will facilitate the necessary investment to enable Gracemere to continue to deliver an improved standard of facilities and experiences for many in the local community and beyond.

<b>Risk</b>	<b><u>Risk Ranking</u></b>	<b>Proposed Treatments</b>	<b>Within Existing Resources?</b>
There is a risk if the proposal is not supported there will be a missed opportunity for economic development in the Port Stephens Hinterland.	Low	Accept the recommendations.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The planning proposal is likely to deliver a range of social and economic benefits, including:

- Employment opportunities within the Port Stephens LGA and the Hunter Region through construction and operation of a function centre.
- Stimulation of local economic activity through increased local spending.
- Enhancing the existing facilities at the site and awareness of the Port Stephens Hinterland for weddings and similar events.
- Generate additional visitors to the local area.
- Improved economic viability for the existing site to maintain the agriculture operations of the site.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council’s Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

### External communications and engagement

CONSULT	<p>Adjacent and adjoining landowners were notified in writing of the lodgement and exhibition of the planning proposal.</p> <p>The planning proposal was placed on public exhibition from 28 November 2025 to 16 January 2025 and no submissions were received.</p> <p>Consultation was undertaken with the following State agencies as part of the conditions set out by the Gateway determination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW State Emergency Service</li><li>• Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Biodiversity and Flooding)</li><li>• NSW Rural Fire Service</li><li>• Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Agriculture</li></ul> <p>The agency advice is addressed in the response to submissions table (<b>ATTACHMENT 2</b>).</p>
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### Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Strategy and Environment Section with:

- Assets Section.
- Development Services Section.

### **OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Planning Proposal - 893 Paterson Road, Woodville. (Provided under separate cover)
- 2) Submissions Table.
- 3) Gateway Determination.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ATTACHMENT 2 – Submissions Table**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
NSW Rural Fire Service	The RFS notes that the subject property is bushfire prone, however has no concern with the planning proposal.	Noted.
NSW State Emergency Service	<p>The SES advise that Council needs to ensure that the planning proposal is consistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial Direction 4.1 – Flooding</li> <li>• NSW Flood Prone Land Policy</li> </ul> <p>It notes that the site is isolated by floodwaters by both riverine flooding events and local catchment flooding. It is noted that the proposed raising of internal access will offer some flood immunity but will still be overtopped in larger events.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Flood Risk and Impact Assessment (FIRA) be resubmitted in accordance with NSW Government Guidelines to understand the full extent of flood risks to life and property and inform mitigation measures.</p> <p>SES support the proposed approach to close the site ahead of an event and enacting early evacuation off site if flooding is expected.</p> <p>The flood response strategy should be updated based on appropriate trigger heights for site closure, informed by an understanding of when site access will get cut. The probability of coincident flooding from two flooding mechanisms should be considered.</p>	<p>The Flood Assessment Report has been updated to address SES comments.</p> <p>Council's Flood Assessment Review Panel (FARP) has considered SES comments, and the updated report and consider that the proposal is suitable given the nature of flooding on the site, the temporary nature of the proposed use, and the significant warning time to enable evacuation or cancelling of scheduled events.</p> <p>SES were provided with the updated Flood Assessment Report and notified of the FARP assessment.</p>

**ITEM 1 - ATTACHMENT 2 SUBMISSIONS TABLE.**

	<p>It is emphasised that shelter in place is not an appropriate emergency management strategy.</p> <p>Update the FIRA to reference the Australian Warning System warning levels of: Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency Warning.</p>	
<p>Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water - Conservation Programs, Heritage &amp; Regulation Group (CPHR)</p>	<p>CPHR have no objections or additional comments in relation to biodiversity and flooding regarding the planning proposal.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Agriculture and Biodiversity</p>	<p>The Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) includes consultation with adjoining landholders, and no adverse risks were identified.</p> <p>The proposal is consistent with Ministerial Direction 9.2 – Rural Lands as it will not fragment or constrain existing or surrounding agricultural operations and represents a rural value-adding activity that has demonstrated compatibility with the site and its agricultural context.</p> <p>The Department has no further comments or requirements.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>



Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

## Gateway Determination

**Planning proposal (Department Ref: PP-2024-2727):** to permit a function centre as an additional permitted use on Lot 10 DP 1035397, 893 Paterson Road, Woodville.

I, the Director, Hunter and Northern Region, Local Planning & Council Support at the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, have determined under section 3.34(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) that an amendment to the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 to permit a function centre as an additional permitted use at Lot 10 DP 1035397, 893 Paterson Road, Woodville should proceed subject to the following:

The Council as planning proposal authority is authorised to exercise the functions of the local plan-making authority under section 3.36(2) of the Act subject to the following:

- (a) the planning proposal authority has satisfied all the conditions of the gateway determination;
- (b) the planning proposal is consistent with applicable directions of the Minister under section 9.1 of the Act or the Secretary has agreed that any inconsistencies are justified; and
- (c) there are no outstanding written objections from public authorities.

The LEP should be completed within nine (9) months of the Gateway determination.

### Gateway Conditions

1. Prior to public exhibition, the planning proposal is to be updated to:
  - (a) include a completed assessment checklist for planning proposals from Appendix 1 of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023; and
  - (b) include a preliminary contamination site investigation carried out in accordance with the contaminated land planning guidelines to determine if the land is suitable, or can be made suitable, for the intended use.
2. Public exhibition is required under section 3.34(2)(c) and clause 4 of Schedule 1 to the Act as follows:
  - (a) the planning proposal is categorised as standard as described in the *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* (Department of Planning and Environment, August 2023) and must be made publicly available for a minimum of 20 working days; and
  - (b) the planning proposal authority must comply with the notice requirements for public exhibition of planning proposals and the specifications for material that must be made publicly available along with planning proposals as identified in *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* (Department of Planning and Environment, August 2023).

**ITEM 1 - ATTACHMENT 3      GATEWAY DETERMINATION.**

3. Consultation is required with the following public authorities and government agencies under section 3.34(2)(d) of the Act and/or to comply with the requirements of applicable directions of the Minister under section 9 of the Act:

- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Agriculture
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water – Flooding
- NSW State Emergency Services
- NSW Rural Fire Services

Each public authority and government agency is to be provided with a copy of the planning proposal and any relevant supporting material via the NSW Planning Portal and given at least 30 working days to comment on the proposal.

4. A public hearing is not required to be held into the matter by any person or body under section 3.34(2)(e) of the Act. This does not discharge Council from any obligation it may otherwise have to conduct a public hearing (for example, in response to a submission or if reclassifying land).

Dated 10 July 2025

**Craig Diss**  
**Director, Hunter and Northern Region**  
**Local Planning and Council Support**  
**Department of Planning, Housing and**  
**Infrastructure**

**Delegate of the Minister for Planning and**  
**Public Spaces**

PP-2024-2727 (IRF25/1508)

**ITEM NO. 2**

**FILE NO: 26/20866  
EDRMS NO: PSC2016-02097**

**TOMAREE HEADLAND SHUTTLE BUS TRIAL**

REPORT OF: EMILY LIVENS - COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR  
DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITY FUTURES

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Receive and note the findings of Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial report.
- 

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the results of the Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial from 24 December 2025 to 6 January 2026 (excluding Christmas Day).

At its meeting on 25 November 2025, Minute No. 274 (**ATTACHMENT 1**), Council resolved to undertake a Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial utilising Shoal Bay smart parking revenue up to the threshold amount of \$31,000 and provide a further report to Council outlining the results of the Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial.

**Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial overview**

The purpose of the Tomaree Headland shuttle trial was to alleviate traffic congestion and create an improved visitor and resident experience over the peak holiday period.

Council undertook a procurement process to engage a bus provider to deliver the service.

The trial included two 24-seater buses operating in a continuous loop for 13 days, from 24 December 2025 to 6 January 2026 (excluding Christmas Day). The buses stopped at seven locations:

- Tomaree Sports Complex – Nelson Bay depot bus stop
- Nelson Bay town centre – Donald Street bus stop
- Little Beach/Fly Point – Bill Strong Oval bus stop
- Shoal Bay town centre – Shoal Bay Road
- Tomaree Headland – Shoal Bay boat ramp
- Fingal Bay Beach – Marine Drive bus stop
- Fingal Bay shops – Market Street bus stop

A multi-channel marketing campaign was delivered to promote the service in partnership with Destination Port Stephens, and supported by the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group, NSW National Parks and Port Stephens Coaches. This included printed posters and flyers, a paid social media campaign, dedicated website page, inclusions in local newspapers, bus signage, digital signage and printed bus stop signage.

### **Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial results**

A trial report (**ATTACHMENT 2**) has been informed by bus driver data, user surveys and key stakeholder feedback

Key insights from the trial included:

- 2,275 trips recorded on the two buses across 13 days (average 175 trips per day). This equates to approximately 1,134 people at a cost of approximately \$13 per trip (assuming users travelled on a return trip) comparatively the fare on the public bus for the same route would be between \$2.30-\$4.50.
- Shoal Bay town centre, Nelson Bay and Fingal Bay were the most popular places to start a trip.
- 186 trips started at Tomaree Sports Complex (park and ride location).

Shuttle bus user survey data (138 respondents):

- 95% of respondents reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.
- 98% of respondents indicated they would use the shuttle service again.
- 42% of respondents identified as overnight visitors, and 30% identified as residents from either Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay, or Fingal Bay.
- 30% of users reported Nelson Bay as their primary destination, followed by Shoal Bay town centre (25%) and Fingal Bay (24%).
- Overall strong support for it to continue and expand in the future.

Stakeholder de-brief feedback:

- All agreed the trial was delivered well, and popular with those who used the service.
- A desire for further conversations about traffic congestion in Nelson Bay, Fingal Bay, Shoal Bay and Tomaree Headland precinct more broadly.

### **Future Planning**

Council will now continue to work on a strategic approach to peak season traffic congestion across the Tomaree Headland. In the past Council has implemented a range of traffic solutions in Shoal Bay, including the recent introduction of Smart parking, traffic studies and parking changes.

A traffic study is currently underway to review the 2019 study and evaluate effectiveness of past actions and identify future potential actions to address peak season traffic congestion.

To collaboratively address the traffic issues at the Tomaree Headland, a working group between National Parks, Department of Communities and Justice and Council has been established. The group is collaborating on opportunities to increase parking spaces, create drop-off zones and improve traffic flow, in line with Shoal Bay Place Plan.

Funding for this shuttle service is not ongoing and any future service of this nature would need to be delivered by a commercial operator.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Community Wellbeing	Deliver and manage community recreational, leisure and community facilities

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Risk</b>	<b><a href="#">Risk Ranking</a></b>	<b>Proposed Treatments</b>	<b>Within Existing Resources?</b>
There is a risk that the community and stakeholders will have expectations for Council to deliver a future shuttle bus service.	Medium	Receive and note the report.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The purpose of the shuttle bus trial was to alleviate traffic congestion and create an improved visitor and resident experience over the peak holiday period. The results of the trial indicate an appetite from visitors and local community members for this type of service as users widely praised the trial. Based on the usage numbers it is unclear if there was any real impact in reducing parking issues or congestion in the Tomaree Headland or surrounding areas.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

External communications and engagement

INFORM	Council has provided this report for the purpose of informing the community and stakeholders of the results of the Tomaree Headland shuttle bus trial.
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Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Communications and Customer Experience Section with:

- Financial Services Section.
- Assets Section.

**OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendation.
- 2) Amend the recommendation.
- 3) Reject the recommendation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) 25 November 2025, Minute No. 274 - Ordinary Council Minutes.
- 2) Tomaree Shuttle Evaluation Report.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

ITEM NO. 6

FILE NO: 25/278920  
EDRMS NO: PSC2016-02097

**TOMAREE HEADLAND SHUTTLE BUS TRIAL**

REPORT OF: AMBER HERRMANN - ACTING COMMUNICATION &  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITY FUTURES

**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Endorse Option 2 Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial as described at **(ATTACHMENT 1)**.
- 2) Utilise Shoal Bay smart parking revenue to fund the Option 2 trial.
- 3) Provide a further report to Council outlining the results of the Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - 25 NOVEMBER 2025  
MOTION**

<b>274</b>	<p><b>Councillor Mark Watson</b> <b>Councillor Rosalyn Armstrong</b></p> <p>It was resolved that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Endorse Option 2 Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial as described at <b>(ATTACHMENT 1)</b>.</li><li>2) Utilise Shoal Bay smart parking revenue up to the threshold amount of \$31,000.</li><li>3) Provide a further report to Council outlining the results of the Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial.</li></ol>
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Councillor Ben Niland left the meeting at 8:23pm.  
Councillor Giacomo Arnott left the meeting at 8:23pm.  
Councillor Ben Niland returned to the meeting at 8:25pm.  
Councillor Giacomo Arnott returned to the meeting at 8:26pm.

Those for the Motion: Mayor Leah Anderson, Crs Rosalyn Armstrong, Giacomo Arnott, Chris Doohan, Nathan Errington, Peter Francis, Paul Le Mottee, Ben Niland, Mark Watson and Jason Wells.

Those against the Motion: Nil.

The motion was carried.

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to present Council with options for a shuttle bus service on the Tomaree Headland and funding models for consideration (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

At its meeting on 10 June 2025, Minute No.130 (**ATTACHMENT 2**), Council resolved that the General Manager report to Council an evaluation of a shuttle bus service, including potential costs, operational options and funding models.

The Tomaree Headland and the wider Shoal Bay area is one of the most popular visitor destinations in Port Stephens. Over the busy holiday season, visitation to this location reaches a peak, causing traffic congestion and delayed travel times.

CommBank Council IQ data shows that in the previous summer peak season (20 December 2024 to Monday 6 January 2025), over 29,000 people visited Shoal Bay, bringing an estimated \$3.7 million in spend to the local economy over that time period.

Current transport options across the Tomaree Headland include:

- Public Bus Service - running on a large loop around the Tomaree Peninsula.
- Private venue shuttle bus – at specific times from some hospitality venues.
- Ride share service - Uber and taxis

**Birubi Shuttle Bus Trials 2025**

In 2025 Council completed two shuttle bus trials operating two mini buses on a continuous loop servicing the Birubi Headland and wider Anna Bay area:

- Easter School Holidays, (12 April to 27 April 2025) picking up at designated parking spaces along Gan Gan Road and Birubi Point Hall.
- October Long Weekend, (4 October to 6 October 2025) picking up between the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary and the Irukandji Shark and Ray Centre, at accommodation providers along the route.

The trials aimed to reduce traffic congestion and enhance the visitor experience throughout the peak periods. The total cost to run the trials was \$23,200.

Key observations from the trials included:

- High bus vacancy across both trials, a total of 207 recorded rides across 17 days in the Easter holidays and 95 recorded rides across 3 days on the October Long Weekend. Low patronage resulted in a high cost per passenger.
- No observed impact on overall traffic conditions can be assumed due to low patronage.

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

- Negative feedback from some local residents about the safety and parking issues around bus stops (specifically around Fisherman’s Bay Road) during the Easter trial.

**Tomaree Shuttle Bus Options**

A number of potential operational models have been identified in **(ATTACHMENT 1)** for consideration. These options have been informed learnings from the 2025 Birubi shuttle bus trials, consultation with key stakeholders and a review of existing shuttle bus services in other locations.

The options presented in **(ATTACHMENT 1)** would facilitate a maximum of 504 rides per day across each loop.

**Funding Options**

There is no existing budget allocation to fund a shuttle bus trial program. Shoal Bay Smart Parking revenue has been identified as a possible funding source for the trial.

All revenue generated from Smart Parking is reinvested into local projects. Smart Parking funding revenue is currently allocated to a range of infrastructure projects in Shoal Bay identified in the Shoal Bay Place Plan. The Infrastructure Plan was developed in consultation with the community through the development of the Place Plan and includes road and carpark upgrades, town centre improvements, place activation and shared pathways.

Expenditure on additional projects, like the Tomaree Headland shuttle bus, from smart parking revenue would have an impact on the timeframe for delivery on projects listed in the infrastructure delivery plan.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Community Wellbeing	Deliver and manage community recreational, leisure and community facilities

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There is no existing budget allocation to fund a shuttle bus trial program. Shoal Bay Smart parking revenue has been identified as a possible funding source for the trial. All revenue generated from Smart Parking is reinvested into local projects.

The Birubi shuttle bus trials in October 2025 was calculated to cost approximately \$75 per ride.

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	No		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	Yes		Smart parking revenue could be accessed to fund the trial. Funding amount required depends on the option selected in <b>(ATTACHMENT 1)</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 - \$88,000</li> <li>• Option 2 - \$28,000</li> <li>• Option 3 - \$132,000</li> <li>• Option 4 - \$42,000</li> </ul>

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that the community do not broadly support a Council run shuttle bus.	Medium	Propose the shuttle bus to be run as an initial trial to test the model and undertake evaluation, including community perception.	Yes
There is a risk that allocation of funding to a shuttle bus will have implications on existing projects.	Medium	Propose to run as a trial in the short term. Communications Plan to ensure widespread awareness of changes.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The proposed shuttle bus trial options aim to alleviate traffic congestion and create an improved visitor and resident experience over the peak holiday period. The trial has the potential to streamline travel, reduce parking issues, reduce the number of cars on the road and provide a cost-effective solution for visitors to travel around the area.

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.****MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025****COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy uses the IAP2 Framework to identify the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

External communications and engagement

CONSULT	Council has consulted with members of the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group and Destination Port Stephens who provided visitation data and recommendations for the shuttle trial.
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Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Communications and Customer Experience Section with:

- Financial Services Section.
- Assets Section.

**OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial Options.
- 2) 10 June 2025 - Ordinary Council Minutes - No. 130.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**





Nil.

ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.

MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025

ITEM 6 - ATTACHMENT 1 TOMAREE HEADLAND SHUTTLE BUS TRIAL OPTIONS.



 Option	 Date	 Estimated cost	 Stops
<b>Option 1 – Local loop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 45 minute round trip with no traffic</li> <li>• 2 buses running every 20 minutes (approximately)</li> <li>• Continuous loop, 9am to 4pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer school holiday period</li> <li>• 22 December to 2 February</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately \$88,000</li> <li>• 2 x 24 seaters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors Centre</li> <li>• Halifax Holiday Park</li> <li>• Shoal Bay</li> <li>• Fingal Bay</li> <li>• Tomaree Headland</li> <li>• Nelson Bay Depot</li> <li>• Map on page 2</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 – Local loop</b> As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak summer holiday period</li> <li>• 24 December to 4 January</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately \$28,000</li> <li>• 2 x 24 seaters</li> </ul>	As above
<b>Option 3 – Larger loop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 60 minute round trip with no traffic</li> <li>• 3 buses running every 20 minutes (approximately)</li> <li>• Continuous loop, 9am to 4pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer school holiday period</li> <li>• 22 December to 2 February</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately \$132,945</li> <li>• 3 x 24 seaters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Mile Beach</li> <li>• Koala Sanctuary</li> <li>• Nelson Bay Depot</li> <li>• Visitors Centre</li> <li>• Halifax Holiday Park</li> <li>• Shoal Bay</li> <li>• Fingal Bay</li> <li>• Tomaree Headland</li> <li>• Map on page 2</li> </ul>
<b>Option 4 – Larger loop</b> As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak summer holiday period</li> <li>• 24 December to 4 January</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately \$42,000</li> <li>• 3 x 24 seaters</li> </ul>	As above

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**ITEM 6 - ATTACHMENT 1 TOMAREE HEADLAND SHUTTLE BUS TRIAL  
OPTIONS.**

**Local loop – proposed map**

Option 1 and 2



**Larger loop – proposed map**

Option 3 and 4



**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**ITEM 6 - ATTACHMENT 2 10 JUNE 2025 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES -  
NO. 130.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 10 JUNE 2025**

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 25/112443  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03148**

**TRIAL OF TOMAREE SHUTTLE BUS**

**COUNCILLOR: MARK WATSON**

**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Acknowledge the challenge presented by the high number of visitors during the recent Easter/ANZAC peak season, with an average of 1,500 people passing by the Tomaree Headland Help Desk daily, and the resulting difficulty in providing adequate parking.
- 2) Request the General Manager to report to Council with a comprehensive evaluation of a shuttle bus service, including potential costs associated with implementation, and present various options for operational models and funding sources.
- 3) Shuttle bus service is for the next peak season to transport visitors to Tomaree Headland and the surrounding areas in a more efficient and sustainable manner.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - 10 JUNE 2025  
MOTION**

<b>130</b>	<p><b>Councillor Mark Watson Councillor Chris Doohan</b></p> <p>It was resolved that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Acknowledge the challenge presented by the high number of visitors during the recent Easter/ANZAC peak season, with an average of 1,500 people passing by the Tomaree Headland Help Desk daily, and the resulting difficulty in providing adequate parking.</li><li>2) Request the General Manager to report to Council with a comprehensive evaluation of a shuttle bus service, including potential costs associated with implementation, and present various options for operational models and funding sources.</li><li>3) Shuttle bus service trial to aim for the next peak season to transport visitors to Tomaree Headland and the surrounding areas in a more efficient and sustainable manner.</li></ol>
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Cr Rosalyn Armstrong foreshadowed a Matter Arising.

Point 3 was amended to include "trial to aim".

**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**ITEM 6 - ATTACHMENT 2 10 JUNE 2025 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES -  
NO. 130.**

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 10 JUNE 2025**

Those for the Motion: Mayor Leah Anderson, Crs Rosalyn Armstrong, Giacomo Amott, Chris Doohan, Nathan Errington, Peter Francis, Mark Watson and Jason Wells.

Those against the Motion: Nil.

The motion was carried.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - 10 JUNE 2025  
MATTER ARISING**

<b>131</b>	<p><b>Councillor Rosalyn Armstrong Councillor Jason Wells</b></p> <p>It was resolved that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Acknowledge the challenge presented by the high number of visitors to the Tomaree Peninsula during the holiday season resulting in congestion around popular beaches, tourist activities and cruise boat wharf. Most recent examples include an average of 1,500 people passing by the Tomaree Headland help Desk daily during the Easter/Anzac peak season.</li><li>2. Acknowledge the recent strategies trialed by Port Stephens Council to manage the parking and transport issues experienced by visitors during these times such as shuttle bus and proactive early parking direction on Nelson Bay roads to manage choke points at Birubi Point.</li><li>3. Acknowledge that the recent opening of the Tomaree Coastal Walk poses a transport logistic problem for people wishing to walk the full length of this when they start at Tomaree Headland and finish at Birubi or the reverse.</li><li>4. Acknowledge that motor vehicle emissions are one of the most significant contributors to environmental degradation, particularly in eco-sensitive areas which are often fragile ecosystems, home to diverse flora and fauna.</li><li>5. In the interests of responsible promotion of Tourism on the Tomaree Peninsula, request the General Manager report to Council the following:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Complete a comprehensive evaluation of the recent parking management strategies used at Birubi Point i.e. Shuttle bus and highway directions.</li><li>b) In the light of this evaluation, consider and propose a strategy for the Council to address the above issues and-propose sustainable short term and long term solutions, such as electric shuttle buses and building multi storey car parks, on land that is already compromised in respect of its natural amenity, to this issue.</li></ol></li></ol>
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**ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 1 25 NOVEMBER 2025, MINUTE NO. 274 -  
ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES.****MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2025****ITEM 6 - ATTACHMENT 2 10 JUNE 2025 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES -  
NO. 130.****MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 10 JUNE 2025**

Those for the Motion: Mayor Leah Anderson, Rosalyn Armstrong, Giacomo Arnott, Chris Doochan, Nathan Errington, Peter Francis, Mark Watson and Jason Wells.

Those against the Motion: Nil.

The motion was carried.

**BACKGROUND REPORT OF: JOHN MARETICH – ASSETS SECTION MANAGER****BACKGROUND**

The eastern end of Shoal Bay foreshore is a known point of traffic congestion with limited space for vehicles to move in and out of this area. Also, parking demand regularly exceeds available parking spaces during peak periods such as Christmas and Easter holidays. Opportunities for Council to provide additional parking or a larger area for vehicles to turn around are limited due to land availability.

During the recent Easter/ANZAC peak season, it was observed by community groups that on average 1,500 people passed by the Tomaree Headland Help Desk each day to explore Tomaree Headland and its surrounding areas.

The recently built National Parks coastal walkway has increased the popularity of the area. As a result, this has decreased parking availability and increased traffic congestion.

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.



# Tomaree Headland Shuttle

## Trial Evaluation

24 December 2025 to 6 January 2026 (excluding Christmas Day)



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## Overview



717,000 people reached by paid digital ads



Potentially 170,000 people reached by media coverage



5000 flyers distributed



2,269 trips on the shuttle bus



Described as a “**stress-free alternative to driving and parking**”



75% of surveyed users were holiday visitors



94% of people were satisfied or very satisfied



**Proactively shared** by local businesses, community groups, local leaders and Councillors

The Tomaree Headland and the wider Shoal Bay area is one of the most popular visitor destinations in Port Stephens. Over the busy holiday season, visitation to this location reaches a peak, causing traffic congestion and delayed travel times.

CommBank Council IQ data shows that in the previous summer peak season (24 December 2024 to Monday 6 January 2025), over 29,000 people visited Shoal Bay, bringing an estimated \$3.7 million in spend to the local economy over that period.

Current transport options across the Tomaree Headland include:

- Public Bus Service - running on a large loop around the Tomaree Peninsula.
- Private venue shuttle bus – at specific times from some hospitality venues.
- Ride share service - Uber and taxis

At the 25 November 2025 meeting, Council endorsed a recommendation to trial a shuttle bus across the Tomaree Peninsula during the upcoming peak season to assist with traffic congestion and improve access for the community and visitors when visiting busy areas. A number of potential operational models were identified for consideration. The options were informed learnings from the 2025 Birubi shuttle bus trials, consultation with key stakeholders and a review of existing shuttle bus services in other locations.

## Scope

The Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus ran on a continuous loop between 9am and 4pm from Wednesday 24 December 2025 to Tuesday 6 January 2026 (excluding Christmas Day), with seven pick-up points at park and ride, and visitor destinations.

Two shuttle buses were contracted from Port Stephens Coaches to operate for the duration of the trial period. Both services commenced daily at 9am and operated on a continuous loop between Tomaree Sports Complex (Match Field 1) and Market Street, Fingal Bay. Each bus travelled in opposite directions along the route, servicing five designated stops between the two end points.

## Budget

The cost to run this thirteen-day trial is outlined below.

ITEM	DETAILS	COST
Bus hire	2 x 24-seater coaches with driver	\$24,393.60
Printing	Shuttle bus stop signage, posters and scrim	\$2,759.40
Campaign	Social Media Campaigns (PSC & DPS)	\$3,050.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$30,203.00</b>

In-kind support was provided by multiple stakeholders and included:

- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services supplying and funding two digital sign boards to advertise the shuttle bus
- Tomaree Headland Heritage Group providing in-kind marketing support and volunteer hours, including the distribution of flyers to local businesses and accommodation providers
- Council staff providing in-kind support through planning and project delivery activities, including stakeholder coordination, design, temporary bus stop line-marking, signage installation and ongoing project monitoring

### Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Route

**Free shuttle loop operating from 9am to 4pm,  
24 December 2025 to 6 January 2026 (excluding December 25)**

Visiting Port Stephens this holiday period? Hop on the Tomaree Shuttle for easy, stress-free access to Nelson Bay town centre, Little Beach/Fly Point, Shoal Bay, Tomaree Headland and Fingal Bay.






The map shows a green route connecting several key locations in the Tomaree area. Green bus icons are placed at each stop location. A callout box on the right shows a green sign with a bus icon and the text 'Tomaree free shuttle stop'.

**The free shuttle bus will pick up and drop off at local bus stops.**  
Look out for the green signs at the bus stops near these locations:

<p><b>1. Tomaree Sports Complex (Match Field 1)</b> 4981 Nelson Bay Rd</p> <p><b>2. Nelson Bay town centre</b> Donald St bus stop</p> <p><b>3. Little Beach/Fly Point</b> Bill Strong Oval bus stop (10min walk to Little Beach or Fly Point)</p>	<p><b>4. Shoal Bay town centre</b> Bay Village, Shoal Bay Rd bus stop</p> <p><b>5. Tomaree Headland</b> Shoal Bay boat ramp (3min walk to Tomaree Headland)</p> <p><b>6. Fingal Bay Beach</b> Marine Dr bus stop</p> <p><b>7. Fingal Bay shops</b> Market St bus stop</p>
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## Marketing and Promotion

The Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus was promoted in the following ways.

Activity	Description	Statistics
 <b>Website</b>	Dedicated website page	4,631 views
	News article	131 views
 <b>Social media</b>	Paid social media campaign	717,820 reaches 85 engagements (shares, likes, and comments) 865 clicks
	Organic social media posts	51 engagements (shares, likes, and comments)
 <b>Media release and update</b>	<u>Media release</u> Tuesday 16 December 2025,	114 recipients
	Media update Tuesday 23 December 2025	21 recipients
 <b>Media coverage</b>	Print articles: Port Stephens – News of the Area Newcastle Herald Port Stephens Examiner	4 articles
	Online articles: 2HD New FM Newcastle Weekly Port Stephens Examiner	4 articles
	TV: 10 News: Lunchtime NBN Evening News	2 mentions
 <b>Print &amp; Digital assets</b>	Online Shuttle Bus map	178 downloads
	Promotional Signage onsite and delivered to key business locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A2 corflute information</li> <li>• A4 printed posters</li> <li>• Flyers</li> <li>• Scrim signage</li> <li>• Vehicle bus magnets</li> </ul>	32 corflutes 200 posters 5,000 flyers Scrim displayed on PSC Depot fence 8 vehicle bus magnets

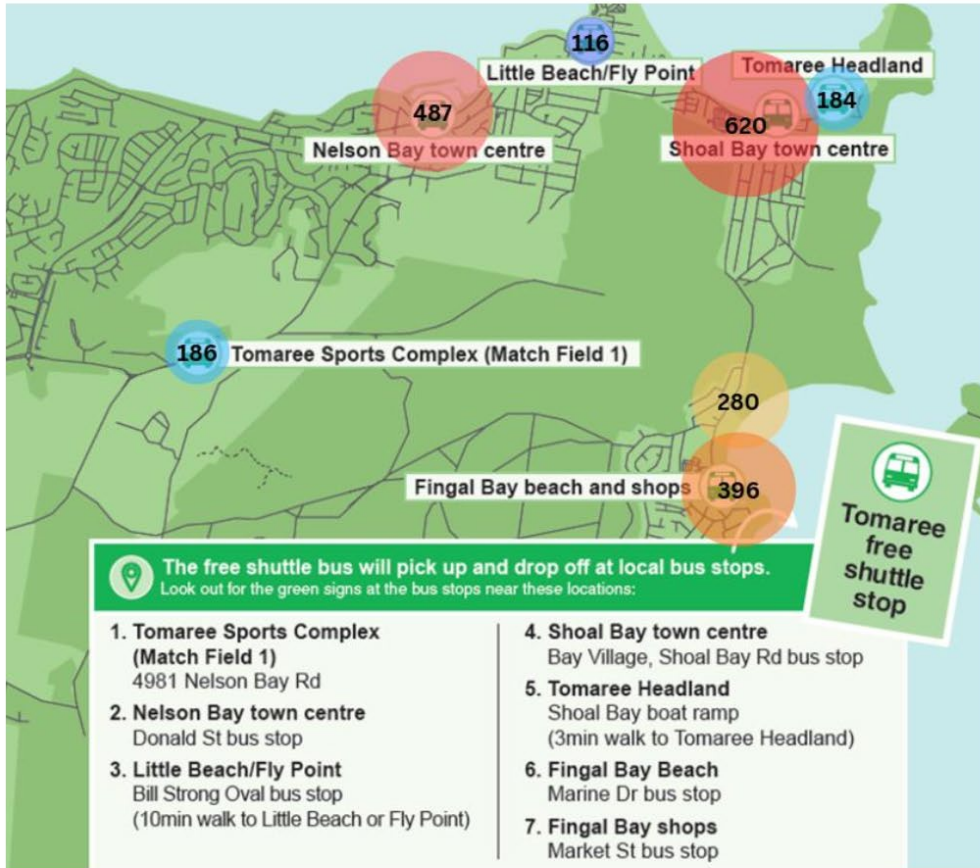
## Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus Trial Evaluation

### Participant Numbers

Port Stephens Coaches tracked passenger pick-ups throughout the trial. The table below describes an overview of total daily pick-ups across the stops. A detailed breakdown by location can be found at Appendix 1.

DATE	BUS 1	BUS 2	TOTAL
Wednesday 24 December	17	27	44
Friday 26 December	38	66	104
Saturday 27 December	39	75	114
Sunday 28 December	126	160	286
Monday 29 December	63	155	218
Tuesday 30 December	108	125	233
Wednesday 31 December	161	79	240
Thursday 1 January	77	56	133
Friday 2 January	81	90	171
Saturday 3 January	93	80	173
Sunday 4 January	106	102	208
Monday 5 January	101	77	178
Tuesday 6 January	100	67	167
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>1,159</b>	<b>2,269</b>

The Shoal Bay Village shops stop was the most popular stop, with 620 trips recorded. The heat map below indicates the top three pickup locations were the town centre areas of Shoal Bay, Nelson Bay and Fingal Bay.



## Survey Results

An online survey was developed through SurveyMonkey to collect feedback from shuttle bus users. Access to the survey was provided through a QR code, which was displayed on corflute signage at all shuttle bus stops and physically on board the shuttle buses. The survey was open from Wednesday 24 December 2025 to Tuesday 6 January 2026.

A total of 138 survey responses were received. Overall satisfaction with the service was very high, with 95% of respondents reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Additionally, 98.5% of respondents indicated they would use the shuttle service again.

Survey results indicated that Shoal Bay town centre was the most common journey starting point, with 27% of respondents beginning their trip there. The most popular primary drop-off location was Nelson Bay town centre, used by 30% of respondents.

In terms of visitor type, 42% of respondents identified as overnight visitors, while 30% were residents from Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay, or Fingal Bay. A further 24% selected 'other', with many indicating they were residents of other areas within Port Stephens or holiday homeowners.

Respondents became aware of the shuttle bus service through a variety of channels, 30% through flyers/posters, 27% through social media, and 14% through word of mouth.

Overall feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Of the 109 responses received to the question "How could we improve the service?", the most consistent themes and recommendations are outlined below:

- **Strong support to extend the service** – recommendations for the shuttle to run for longer periods, including throughout the full summer seasons, school holidays and long weekend. Additionally requests for longer operating hours, with the shuttle operating into the evening.
- **Improved frequency and real-time information** – a major theme was the need for visible timetables at stops, clearer information on service frequency, and real-time tracking via GPS system so users could better plan their trips.
- **Route extension and additional stops** – many respondents suggested expanding the route to additional destinations, particularly One Mile, Birubi/ Anna Bay, Salamander Bay, Tilligerry Peninsula and major accommodation hubs.
- **Improved signage, maps and wayfinding** – feedback highlighted the need for clearer signage at bus stops, route maps (both on-site and online), and better indication of shuttle direction and loop structure.

- **Increased capacity and comfort** – suggestions included larger buses, more seating, seating at bus stops, and improved accessibility (including ramps for people with disabilities).
- **Better promotion and awareness** – several responses indicated the service was not well advertised, particularly for visitors. Suggested improvements included promotion through accommodation providers, caravan parks, flyers and online platforms.

### Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder feedback was gathered through a post-trial debrief with key organisations and was broadly positive, with stakeholders consistently viewing the shuttle bus trial as successful. Key themes included:

- The Tomaree Headland Association supported the trial and identified opportunities for improvement, including enhanced real-time tracking and data collection, broader advertising, larger bus signage, and improved measurement of traffic impacts through tools such as vehicle counters or drones.
- Port Stephens Coaches reported strong patronage and no major operational issues during the trial. They reported they did not observe a noticeable reduction in vehicle numbers. Minor safety concerns were identified at informal bus stop locations, particularly at Shoal Bay Boat Ramp, due to high traffic and vehicle movements. Traffic congestion was also noted as impacting service timing and punctuality.
- Destination Port Stephens highlighted opportunities to offset operational costs through tourism-focused bus branding and recommended a more coordinated, unified marketing approach across stakeholders.
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service received limited direct visitor feedback; however, they were supportive of the initiative and considered the trial to be successful. They suggested enhanced promotion of existing public bus services, especially for the Tomaree Coastal Walk.

## Conclusion

Tomaree Headland is one of the most popular visitor destinations in Port Stephens. Over the busy holiday season, visitation to this location reaches a peak causing traffic congestion, delayed travel times and parking issues.

The Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus was tested as a strategy to support the visitor experience, while reducing these evident traffic issues. This involved two 24-seater buses running on a continuous loop between 9am and 4pm from Wednesday 24 December 2025 to Tuesday 6 January 2026 (excluding Christmas Day), with seven pick-up points.

This is the third shuttle bus trial in Port Stephens, with two other shuttle services tested in the Anna Bay area over Easter and the October long weekend in 2025. In comparison to these previous trials, the Tomaree Headland Shuttle Bus demonstrated a higher level of usage, engagement, and overall success.

Based on the trial conducted:

- Overall usage data indicates that the shuttle service was utilised by both visitors and local residents. While the service provided an alternative transport option, it did not, on its own, significantly alleviate traffic congestion or parking pressures across the Tomaree Peninsula.
- Based on total users over the thirteen-day trial period, the average cost per passenger journey was \$13.30.
- Survey feedback was overwhelmingly positive. While respondents provided a number of constructive suggestions for improvement, the majority indicated that the service was effective and fit-for-purpose, with 98.5% of respondents stating they would use the shuttle again.
- Stakeholder feedback consistently indicated that the trial was successful in improving ease of movement and access for many visitors and residents. However, it remains difficult to determine the extent to which the shuttle reduced overall traffic congestion and parking demand.
- It is acknowledged that a shuttle service alone cannot fully resolve ongoing traffic and parking challenges. Continued congestion during the trial period was anticipated, reinforcing the need for further investigation and complementary transport and traffic management measures.

ITEM 2 - ATTACHMENT 2 TOMAREE SHUTTLE EVALUATION REPORT.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Passenger Number Breakdown

		Tomaree Headland Free Shuttle Service													
		24/12/2025	26/12/2025	27/12/2025	28/12/2025	29/12/2025	30/12/2025	31/12/2025	1/01/2026	2/01/2026	3/01/2026	4/01/2026	5/01/2026	6/01/2026	Total
Fingal Bay Shops		3	11	10	55	11	36	49	25	31	53	39	24	35	382
Fingal Bay Surf Club		0	12	10	14	4	27	43	16	21	9	27	26	26	235
Shoal Bay Boat Ramp Carpark		0	3	7	5	7	8	3	2	6	4	5	17	3	70
Shoal Bay Village Shops		12	10	7	49	32	34	40	28	20	25	26	23	27	333
Bill Strong Oval		2	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	0	18
Opp Nelson Bay Woolworths		0	2	4	0	8	3	25	6	2	2	9	2	9	72
Tomaree Sports Complex		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		17	38	39	126	63	108	161	77	81	93	106	101	100	1110
		24/12/2025	26/12/2025	27/12/2025	28/12/2025	29/12/2025	30/12/2025	31/12/2025	1/01/2026	2/01/2026	3/01/2026	4/01/2026	5/01/2026	6/01/2026	Total
Tomaree Sports Complex		2	20	24	13	26	19	21	17	8	5	8	12	11	186
Opp Nelson Bay Woolworths		17	23	10	76	74	26	30	4	15	32	45	28	35	415
Bill Strong Oval		4	1	2	21	20	11	6	2	4	1	9	9	8	98
Shoal Bay Village Shops		3	14	14	39	24	39	15	20	42	16	36	16	9	287
Shoal Bay Boat Ramp Carpark		1	2	18	5	5	30	4	7	15	9	4	12	2	114
Fingal Bay Surf Club		0	6	7	6	6	0	3	4	6	5	0	0	2	45
Fingal Bay Shops		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	12	0	0	0	14
		27	66	75	160	155	125	79	56	90	80	102	77	67	1159



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**ITEM NO. 3**

**FILE NO: 25/335809  
EDRMS NO: 25/158517**

**POLICY REVIEW - PUBLIC TREE AND VEGETATION VANDALISM POLICY**

REPORT OF: BROCK LAMONT - STRATEGY & ENVIRONMENT SECTION  
MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITY FUTURES

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Receive and note the submission **(ATTACHMENT 1)**.
- 2) Revoke the Tree Vandalism Policy dated 14 March 2023 (Minute No. 51).
- 3) Adopt the revised Public Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy **(ATTACHMENT 2)**.

---

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the revised Public Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy (the 'policy') at **(ATTACHMENT 2)**.

The policy was publicly exhibited for 28 days, from 3 November 2025 to 1 December 2025. During this time, one submission was received **(ATTACHMENT 1)**. The submission requested that the policy, and the implementation of the policy, be sensitive to the experiences of residents who have been wrongfully accused of tree vandalism.

No changes have been made to the revised policy in response to the submission. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Compliance Policy, which mandates procedural fairness, ensuring that the Council addresses compliance matters fairly and without bias.

The revised policy includes various response measures designed to raise awareness of tree and vegetation vandalism in the community and serve as effective deterrents.

Please note that yellow highlighting in the attached policy indicates amendments, while strikethrough text identifies sections to be deleted.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Environmental balance	Develop and implement a program for Council to deliver technical environmental advice, strategies and policies

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The revised policy outlines different investigation and response procedures based on the severity of an incident.

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal or policy implications.

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that in the absence of a policy that the incidence of tree vandalism will increase.	Medium	Adopt the recommendations.	Yes
There is a risk that the absence of a policy will make Council's compliance and enforcement measures inconsistent.	Medium	Adopt the recommendations.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The policy's primary goal is to minimise vandalism of public trees and vegetation throughout Port Stephens. Public trees and vegetation are valued public assets which enhance the area's appearance, amenity and biodiversity. This policy serves as a deterrent to support their protection.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

### External communications and engagement

CONSULT	The policy was placed on public exhibition for 28 days and notified on Council's website. One submission was received which is addressed in <b>(ATTACHMENT 1)</b>
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The EAG was consulted during the policy review. Their feedback and comments have been incorporated into the revised policy.

### Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Strategy and Environment Section with:

- Governance Section.
- Assets Section.
- Community Services Section.
- Public Domain and Services Section.
- Development Services Section.

### **OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Submission Table.
- 2) Revised - Public Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 1 SUBMISSION TABLE.**

Policy Review – Public Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy

No.	Author of submission	Comment	Council response
1	Resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy should consider the experiences of residents who have been falsely accused of tree vandalism, highlighting the need for sensitivity in handling such accusations</li> <li>• Policy should include educational components on distinguishing natural dieback from vandalism</li> <li>• Essential to communicate the outcomes of investigations clearly to prevent misinformation</li> <li>• While signage can educate the community, it may also perpetuate stigma against innocent residents. Careful placement and messaging are crucial to avoid misleading implications</li> <li>• Issues like erosion from vehicle parking and the need for windbreaks should be addressed in the policy, as they directly affect residents</li> <li>• Policy needs to ensure responsible publicising of vandalism incidents to avoid creating a public trial atmosphere that negatively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Public Tree and Vandalism Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Compliance Policy. The Compliance Policy mandates procedural fairness, ensuring that the Council acts fairly and without bias in the handling of compliance matters</li> <li>• The Policy does not include education component specifics. Educational materials related to tree health can be developed independently from the policy itself</li> <li>• The draft policy addresses this issue by requiring the Council to publicize prosecutions (for significant events) through the media. Additionally, Council notifies complainants about the outcomes of its investigations</li> <li>• While signage content and location are outside the scope of the policy, they will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis during significant events. This approach will allow for careful consideration of each situation, ensuring that signage effectively addresses community concerns while remaining sensitive to potential stigma</li> <li>• Erosion resulting from car parking and windbreaks is not a relevant factor for inclusion in the Public Tree and Vegetation Policy.</li> <li>• The policy does not offer detailed guidelines regarding the specifics of publicizing incidents. Instead, it specifies that the</li> </ul>

**ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 1 SUBMISSION TABLE.**

		<p>affects innocent residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the policy does not consider the potential outcomes of its actions, it risks failing to serve the community and enhancing residents' lived experiences</li> </ul>	<p>Council will communicate information about damage, responses, and prosecutions through the media. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the Compliance Policy upholds the principles of procedural fairness, ensuring that the Council operates fairly and without bias in its actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Public Tree and Vandalism Policy is to be read inconjunction with the Compliance Policy. The Compliance Policy mandates procedural fairness, ensuring that the Council acts fairly and without bias in the handling of compliance matters</li> </ul>
--	--	---	--

## ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 2 REVISED - PUBLIC TREE AND VEGETATION VANDALISM POLICY.

## Policy



**FILE NO:** PSC2008-2921

**TITLE:** PUBLIC TREE AND VEGETATION VANDALISM POLICY

**OWNER:** STRATEGY AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION MANAGER

**1. PURPOSE:**

1.1 This policy sets out a consistent approach for Council when responding to public tree and vegetation vandalism incidents in Port Stephens. It includes a range of response measures including education, monitoring, regulation, enforcement and rehabilitation which are collectively aimed at curbing tree and vegetation vandalism, raising the public profile of the tree and vegetation vandalism, fostering greater community stewardship of trees and vegetation and supporting in the community in order to serve as effective deterrence measures.

**2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Tree and vegetation vandalism continues to be of concern in Port Stephens and is particularly apparent in coastal areas where development pressure as well as conflicts between water views and vegetation puts trees / vegetation on Council managed land at risk.
- 2.2 Tree and vegetation vandalism has a significant and cumulative impact on Council assets, the community and the environment. Impacts include reduced visual amenity, and community amenity and well-being, the loss of wind-breaks and erosion control in some locations, and the loss of wildlife habitat, and reduced shade.
- 2.3 Such vandalism can also have substantial financial and human resource costs for Council including tree and vegetation replacement costs, the cost of the investigation, rehabilitation and repair costs, and the cost of implementing potential punitive and/or deterrence measures.

**3. SCOPE:**

3.1 This policy applies to all instances of tree and vegetation vandalism on Council managed land.

**4. DEFINITIONS:**

4.1 An outline of the key definitions of terms included in the policy.

Policy

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ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 2 REVISED - PUBLIC TREE AND VEGETATION VANDALISM POLICY.



Policy

Council managed land	Any land that is under the care, control and management of Port Stephens Council.
Prosecution	Investigation and determination of compliance action in response to alleged vandalism, with action taken where an offence is proven. May include caution, fines or court appearance. Engaged contractors may also be prosecuted for tree and vegetation vandalism.
Public tree and vegetation vandalism	The intentional and unlawful destruction, damage or injury to trees and/or vegetation on Council managed land. Examples include poisoning, slashing, pruning, removal and ringbarking.
Vegetation	Includes any of the following, whether dead or alive, native or exotic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a tree</li> <li>- an understorey plant</li> <li>- a groundcover</li> <li>- a plant occurring in a wetland or inter-tidal area</li> </ul>

5. STATEMENT:

- 5.1 Vandalism of trees and vegetation on community and public land is unlawful criminal offence and all reports of tree vandalism on public land will be investigated in accordance with the PSC Compliance Policy and responded to in accordance with Appendix 1 – Tree and Vegetation Response Assessment Model.
- 5.2 The long term protection and management of trees and vegetation on public land (including re-establishment in previously cleared areas) is integral to maintaining the economic, cultural, environmental and social values of Port Stephens.
- 5.3 Council is committed to reducing/stopping tree and vegetation vandalism within Port Stephens and to responding to the events in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The identification and prosecution of perpetrators of public tree and vegetation vandalism will be pursued by Council consistent with this policy, and Council's Compliance Policy and Council Prosecutions Policy.
- 5.5 Council will assess and respond to tree and vegetation vandalism in accordance with Appendix 1. the retention value (Very low, Low, Medium, or High) of the vandalised tree in accordance with Port Stephens Council Tree Technical Specification which takes into account the following factors: significance of the tree; the tree's life cycle stage; the profile of the site; the tree's safe useful life expectancy; the environmental effects; the target where the tree could fall;

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damage caused; and the cost of remediation.

- 5.6 In the absence of successful prosecutions, Council and the community will work together for the prevention of further damage and the rehabilitation of damaged areas.
- 5.7 Community education is a key mechanism to promote the value of trees and vegetation, and to encourage the reporting of vandalism.
- 5.8 Council will report on the number of recorded tree and vegetation vandalism incidents within Port Stephens every 6 months.
- 5.9 Council may install surveillance equipment in certain areas experiencing reoccurring tree and vegetation vandalism incidents as required to protect trees and vegetation including rehabilitation.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 6.1 All members of the public have responsibility for complying with this policy.
- 6.2 Strategy and Environment have responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and providing advice on this policy.
- 6.3 Strategy and Environment Development and Compliance have responsibility for monitoring and undertaking compliance in accordance with Council's Compliance Policy.
- 6.4 Public Domain and Services have responsibility for undertaking and funding relevant response measures under this policy.
- 6.5 All Council officials have a responsibility to understand and comply with this policy and associated procedure.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 7.1 Compliance Policy
- ~~7.2 Council Prosecutions Policy~~
- 7.3 Environmental Management Systems Framework ~~Environmental Assessment Procedure (EMS 3.0)~~
- ~~7.4 Environmental Incident Procedure (EMS 4.0)~~
- 7.5 Environment Policy
- ~~7.6 Heritage Policy~~
- 7.7 Legal Management Directive
- ~~7.8 Tree Vandalism Management Directive~~
- 7.9 Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (EP&A) 1979
- 7.10 Port Stephens Council ~~Tree Biodiversity~~ Technical Specifications

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- 7.11 Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
- 7.12 State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

**CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

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<b>EDRMS container No.</b>	PSC2008-2921	<b>EDRMS record No.</b>	23/75818
<b>Audience</b>	Councilors, staff and community		
<b>Process owner</b>	Strategy and Environment Section Manager		
<b>Author</b>	Natural Systems Coordinator		
<b>Review timeframe</b>	3 years	<b>Next review date</b>	14 March 2026 XX 2028
<b>Adoption date</b>	August 2018		

**VERSION HISTORY:**

Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
1	August 2018	Natural Resources Coordinator	Reviewed the previous policy (Tree/Vegetation Vandalism Policy), included numbering to each paragraph and updated the version control.  Substantial re-write of the policy which necessitates replacing the existing policy dated July 2014.  Intent of existing policy remains unchanged.	246

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Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
2	December 2020	Natural Resources Coordinator	<p>1.1 - Deleted paragraph.</p> <p>5.1 – Insert ‘healthy ecosystems’ delete environmental health.</p> <p>5.1 - added ‘of Port Stephens’ residents’.</p> <p>5.3 – Deletion of consistently.</p> <p>5.5 – Insert ‘proportionate’, ‘deterrent’, to rehabilitate”.</p> <p>5.5 - Delete ‘deterrence, the rehabilitation of, and in accordance with the relevant guidelines’.</p> <p>7.9 – Insert ‘Environmental Planning &amp; Assessment Act (EPA&amp;A) 1979’.</p> <p>7.10 – Insert Tree Vandalism Guidelines: Response measures for low, medium and high impact vandalism events.</p> <p>Delete Appendix 1 – Tree Vandalism Guidelines: Response measures for low, medium and high impact vandalism events.</p>	277

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3	14 March 2023	Natural Systems Coordinator	<p>2.2 – Delete ‘This.’</p> <p>2.2 – Insert ‘Tree’.</p> <p>4.1 – Insert ‘Prosecution’ to the table.</p> <p>4.1 – Insert definition to the table ‘Investigation and determination of compliance action in response to alleged vandalism, with action taken where an offence is proven. May include caution, fines or court appearance’.</p> <p>5.1 – Insert ‘Vandalism of trees on community and public land is criminal offence and all reports of tree vandalism on public land will be investigated.’</p> <p>5.2 – Replace ‘Council values trees and vegetation on Council managed land and the significant contribution they make to healthy ecosystems and the health and wellbeing of Port Stephens’ residents’ with ‘The long term protection and management of trees and vegetation on public land (including re-establishment in previously cleared areas) is integral to maintaining the economic, cultural, environmental and social values of Port Stephens.’</p> <p>5.3 – Delete ‘maintaining the economic, cultural, environmental and social values of Port Stephens.’</p> <p>5.3 – Insert ‘Council is committed to reducing/stopping tree vandalism within Port Stephens.’</p>	051
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			<p>5.4 – Delete 'and'.</p> <p>5.5 – Removed reference to assessment to industry standards and replaced with reference to Port Stephens Council Tree Technical Specification for tree value.</p> <p>5.8 – Insert “Council will report on the number of recorded tree vandalism incidents within Port Stephens every 6 months.”</p> <p>5.9 – Insert “Council may install surveillance equipment in certain areas experiencing reoccurring tree vandalism incidents as required to protect trees and vegetation”.</p> <p>6.5 – Insert “All Council officials have a responsibility to comply with this policy and associated procedure.”</p> <p>7.3 – Replaced reference to Environmental Legislative Requirements Procedure with Environmental Assessment Procedure.</p> <p>7.10 – Replaced reference to Tree Vandalism Guidelines: Response measures for low, medium and high impact vandalism events with Port Stephens Council Tree Technical Specification.</p> <p>Changed author to reflect name change</p>	
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4	XX 2025	Natural Systems Coordinator	<p>Title – Insert 'Public' and 'and Vegetation'</p> <p>1.1 - Insert 'public' and 'and vegetation'</p> <p>1.1 – Replace 'It includes a range of response measures which are collectively aimed at raising the public profile of the tree vandalism in the community in order to serve as effective deterrence measures' with 'It includes a range of response measures including education, monitoring, regulation, enforcement and rehabilitation which are collectively aimed at curbing tree and vegetation vandalism raising the public profile of tree and vegetation vandalism, fostering greater community stewardship of trees and vegetation, and supporting effective deterrence measures.'</p> <p>2.1 - Insert 'and vegetation'</p> <p>2.2 – Replace 'Tree vandalism has a significant and cumulative impact on Council assets and the environment. Impacts include reduced visual and community amenity, the loss of wind-breaks and erosion control in some locations, and the loss of wildlife habitat.' with 'Tree and vegetation vandalism has a significant and cumulative impact on Council assets, the community and the environment. Impacts include reduced visual amenity, and community amenity and well-being, the loss of wind- breaks and erosion control in some locations, and the loss of wildlife habitat, and reduced shade.'</p> <p>2.3 - Insert 'and vegetation'</p>
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		<p>3.1 - Insert 'and vegetation'</p> <p>4.1 – Insert 'Engaged contractors may also be prosecuted for tree and vegetation vandalism.' to the Prosecution definition</p> <p>4.1 – Insert definition to the table 'Public tree and vegetation vandalism - The intentional and unlawful destruction, damage or injury to trees and/or vegetation on Council managed land. Examples include poisoning, slashing, pruning, removal and ringbarking.'</p> <p>4.1 – Insert definition to the table 'Vegetation - Includes any of the following, whether dead or alive, native or exotic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a tree</li> <li>- an understorey plant</li> <li>- a groundcover</li> <li>- a plant occurring in a wetland or inter-tidal area</li> </ul> <p>5.1 – Replace 'Vandalism of trees on community and public land is criminal offence and all reports of tree vandalism on public land will be investigated.' with 'Vandalism of trees and vegetation on community and public land is unlawful and all reports of vandalism on public land will be investigated in accordance with the PSC Compliance Policy and responded to in accordance with Appendix 1 - Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Response Assessment Model.'</p> <p>5.3 – Replace 'Council is committed to reducing/stopping tree vandalism within Port Stephens.' with 'Council is committed to reducing/stopping tree and vegetation vandalism within Port Stephens and to responding to the events in accordance with Appendix</p>
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		<p><b>1:</b></p> <p>5.4 – Replace 'The identification and prosecution of perpetrators of public tree vandalism will be pursued by Council consistent with this policy, Council's Compliance Policy and Council Prosecutions Policy.' with 'The identification and prosecution of perpetrators of public tree and vegetation vandalism will be pursued by Council consistent with this policy and Council's Compliance Policy.'</p> <p>5.5 – Replace 'Council will assess the retention value (Very low, Low, Medium, or High) of the vandalised tree in accordance with Port Stephens Council Tree Technical Specification which takes into account the following factors: significance of the tree; the tree's life cycle stage; the profile of the site; the tree's safe useful life expectancy; the environmental effects; the target where the tree could fall; damage caused; and the cost of remediation.' with 'Council will assess and respond to tree and vegetation vandalism in accordance with Appendix 1.'</p> <p>5.6 – Delete 'In the absence of successful prosecutions.'</p> <p>5.8 - Insert 'and vegetation'</p> <p>5.9 – Replace 'Council may install surveillance equipment in certain areas experiencing reoccurring tree vandalism incidents as required to protect trees and vegetation.' with 'Council may install surveillance equipment in certain areas experiencing reoccurring tree and vegetation vandalism incidents as required to protect trees and vegetation including rehabilitation'</p>
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			<p>sites:</p> <p>6.2 – Delete 'monitoring,'</p> <p>6.3 – Replace 'Strategy and Environment' with 'Development and Compliance' and insert 'monitoring and'</p> <p>6.5 – Insert 'understand and' and delete 'and associated procedure'</p> <p>7.0 – Replace Related Documents</p> <p>7.1 Compliance Policy</p> <p>7.2 Council Prosecutions Policy</p> <p>7.3 Environmental Assessment Procedure (EMS 3.0)</p> <p>7.4 Environmental Incident Procedure (EMS 4.0)</p> <p>7.5 Environment Policy</p> <p>7.6 Heritage Policy</p> <p>7.7 Legal Management Directive</p> <p>7.8 Tree Vandalism Management Directive</p> <p>7.9 Environmental Planning &amp; Assessment Act (EP&amp;A) 1979</p> <p>7.10 Port Stephens Council Tree Technical Specifications' with</p> <p>7.1 Compliance Policy</p> <p>7.2 Environmental Management System Framework Environment Policy</p> <p>7.3 Legal Management Directive</p> <p>7.4 Environmental Planning &amp; Assessment Act (EP&amp;A) 1979</p> <p>7.5 Port Stephens Council Biodiversity Technical Specifications</p> <p>7.6 Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</p> <p>7.7 State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021'</p> <p>Insert Appendix 1 – Tree and Vegetation Response Assessment Model</p>	
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APPENDIX 1 – TREE AND VEGETATION RESPONSE ASSESSMENT MODEL

Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Officer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

VANDALISM ASSESSMENT

Criteria (0.125 Weighting for each Main Criteria)	T#1	T#2	T#3	T#4	T#5	T#6	T#7	T#8	T#9
<b>Significance of the tree</b>									
Type 2 for YES or 1 for NO for each item									
Historical value									
Commemorative tree									
Significant tree (on register)									
Exceptionally old or fine specimen									
Curious growth habit or physical appearance									
Horticultural/scientific value									
Unusually large size									
Rare to the area									
Outstanding aesthetic quality									
Valuable habitat or corridor or community area									
Key stone species									
Contributes to landscape									
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Life Cycle Stage</b>									
Type 3 for young, 10 for semi-mature, 42 for mature									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Site</b>									
1 for low profile, 2 for average profile and 3 for high profile									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SULE (Safe Useful Life Expectancy)</b>									
Type 1 for short, 2 for medium or 3 for long									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Criteria (0.125 Weighting for each Main Criteria)	T#1	T#2	T#3	T#4	T#5	T#6	T#7	T#8	T#9
<b>Environmental effects</b>									
<b>Type 2 for YES or 1 for NO</b>									
Did the vandalism cause contamination?									
Did the vandalism contribute to erosion?									
Did the vandalism result in the loss of nesting sites?									
Is the area able to be restored?									
Did the vandalism impact threatened species?									
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Target</b>									
<b>1 for occasional, 2 intermittent, 3 frequent, 4 for constant</b>									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Damage</b>									
<b>Type 2 for major or 1 minor</b>									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Cost of remediation</b>									
<b>Type in actual amount divided by 1000</b>									
<b>WEIGHTED TOTAL</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

RESPONSE ACTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE	ACTION
<p><b>Minor Significance</b></p> <p>2.63 - 6.253</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon preliminary assessment the following may occur:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Letterbox surrounding residents</li> <li>◦ Install temporary signage</li> <li>◦ Leave tree in place as far as safety allows</li> <li>◦ Rehabilitate or replant</li> <li>◦ Consider recouping remediation costs where lawfully available</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Refer to Port Stephens Council's Compliance Policy for regulatory response options</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moderate Significance</b></p> <p>6.253 - 9.876</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letterbox surrounding residents</li> <li>• Install temporary signage</li> <li>• Leave tree in place as far as safety allows</li> <li>• Consider if permanent signage is warranted</li> <li>• Replant and rehabilitate damaged areas</li> <li>• Consider recouping remediation costs where lawfully available</li> <li>• Refer to Port Stephens Council's Compliance Policy for regulatory response options</li> </ul>

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SIGNIFICANCE	ACTION
<p><b>Major Significance</b></p> <p><b>9.876 - 13.5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letterbox surrounding residents</li> <li>• Install temporary signage</li> <li>• Leave tree in place as far as safety allows</li> <li>• At the discretion of the General Manager, erect permanent signs on the site highlighting the damage and its consequences</li> <li>• Publicise damage, responses and prosecutions in the media</li> <li>• Involve residents and community groups (eg. Landcare and schools) directly in planning and implementing rehabilitation strategies</li> <li>• Persist with rehabilitation works and maintenance of rehabilitated areas to ensure no loss of vegetation over time</li> <li>• At the discretion of the General Manager, draw attention to the damage through banners.</li> <li>• Consider use of covert surveillance cameras on sites where vandalism is frequent, and camera resources permit.</li> <li>• Consider recouping remediation costs where lawfully available</li> <li>• Refer to Port Stephens Council's Compliance Policy for regulatory response options</li> </ul>

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**ITEM NO. 4**

**FILE NO: 26/4932  
EDRMS NO: PSC2017-00180**

**SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT: JULY TO DECEMBER 2025 AGAINST THE PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL DELIVERY PROGRAM 2025-2029**

REPORT OF: ZOE PATTISON - DIRECTOR CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT  
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Adopt the Six Month Progress Report for July to December 2025 (**ATTACHMENT 1**) on the progress of Port Stephens Council's Delivery Program 2025-2029.

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council and the community with an update on the progress of Council's Delivery Program 2025-2029.

This is the first progress report of the Delivery Program 2025-2029, first adopted by Council in June 2025.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Resources and finance	Deliver the Integrated Planning and Reporting program.

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The Six Month Progress Report (**ATTACHMENT 1**) is generated from a combination of information and data from across Council's operations.

All financial figures included in this report are preliminary, unaudited and subject to review as part of the audited 2025-2026 financial statements for Council.

Council Officers have made their best effort to provide the latest data available from Council's operations at the time of writing this report.

There are no financial or resource implications in providing this report.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Essential Element 4.9 of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for Local Government in NSW, September 2021 stipulates that: ‘The General Manager must ensure that progress reports are provided to the Council, with respect to the principal activities detailed in the Delivery Program, at least every 6 months’.

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that Council will not adopt the Six Month Progress Report July to December 2025, placing Council in breach of legislation leading to reputational loss.	Low	Adopt the recommendation.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plans are founded on a basis of social, economic, environmental and governance factors through 4 focus areas, Our community, Our place, Our environment and Our Council.

The report reflects these factors and provides a progress report according to each focus area along with a scorecard of Council’s key result measures.

To date Council is achieving, within the resources available, what it has set out to do against the following targets:

- Service delivery on track to deliver 100% of Operational Plan actions against a target of >95%
- Community satisfaction of 3.01 against a target of better than baseline of 2.94 out of 5

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

- Employee wellbeing 81% against a target of > 80%
- Risk management 86% against a target of >85%
- Asset Management 108.24% against a target of >100% asset maintenance ratio
- Financial sustainability currently anticipated at \$1.322M underlying surplus, against a target of achieving an underlying financial result better than budget.

### COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

#### External communications and engagement

INFORM	Following Council consideration, the report will be made available on Council's website and distributed across a number of communication channels.
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#### Internal communications and engagement

The Six Month Progress Report July to December 2025 has been developed in consultation with all sections of Council and has been reviewed by the Executive Team.

### OPTIONS

- 1) Accept the recommendation.
- 2) Amend the recommendation.
- 3) Reject the recommendation.

### ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Six Month Progress Report.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.



# Six Month Progress Report

July to December 2025



## GUUDJI YIIGU

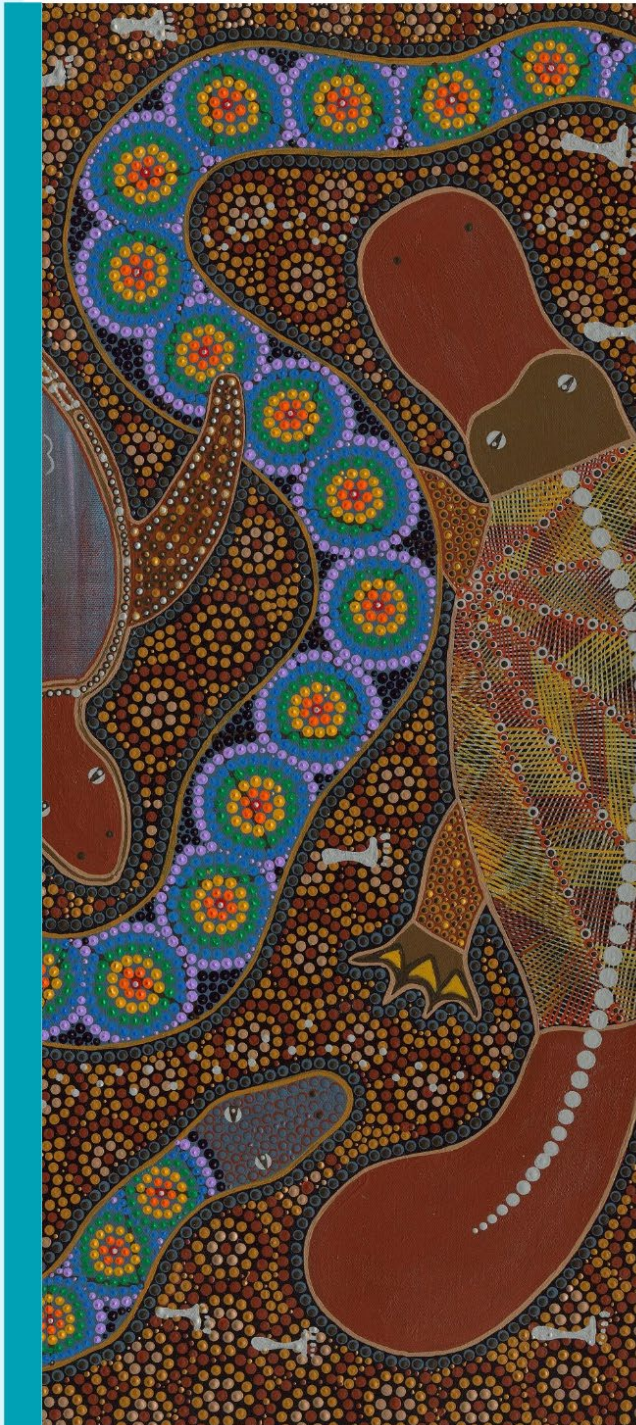
(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

We welcome you to Port Stephens – part of the Worimi Aboriginal Nation. Port Stephens Council acknowledges the Worimi people as traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways on which we all live, learn, work and play.

We value and respect the Worimi people and the legacy 60,000 years of Aboriginal Nation traditions and culture brings with it. As part of Council's culture of acceptance, diversification and harmony we walk alongside the Worimi people on a journey of listening and learning.

Together we will strive to make this a better place for all people. As guardians of these lands, we ask that you tread lightly to help preserve the biodiversity and respect those who came before as well as those who will follow.

Artwork by Regan Lilley.



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The six-month progress report from July to December 2025 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines (September 2021), Essential Element 4.9. ‘The General Manager must ensure that progress reports are provided to the Council, with respect to the principal activities detailed in the Delivery Program, at least every six months.’

All financial figures included in this report are preliminary, unaudited and subject to review as part of the audited 2025-2026 financial statements for Council.



## General Manager's message

During the second half of 2025, our commitment to delivering sustainable infrastructure and housing for our growing community has continued to be a priority. While the year was not without weather challenges, the past six months have allowed us to move from crisis response to proactive planning and service delivery following the natural disasters earlier in the year. This period of relative stability has enabled us to accelerate major projects while maintaining the direct community engagement that is central to everything we do.

Our commitment to roads remains a top priority. Through the record \$29 million Roads Acceleration Program (RAP), we've successfully completed pavement rehabilitation of Medowie Road and Clarence Town Road, significantly improving safety and drainage for local commuters. In December, we commenced developing a Roads Futures Strategy to ensure our road management is efficient, transparent, and aligned with community expectations. This review includes analysing and using data collected from a current pothole repair trial on high-traffic routes, aimed at identifying appropriate long lasting repair options. Beyond these local works, we continue to advocate for the reclassification of major regional routes to secure permanent state and federal funding to restore roads damaged by the 2025 natural disasters.

We have made significant strategic growth and sustainable development progress in the latter half of 2025. Council officially endorsed the [Salamander Bay Town Centre Place Plan](#), guiding the balance of new housing and commercial opportunities with the protection of our natural assets, such as the Mambo Wetlands. We progressed the future of Medowie town centre by launching the draft Medowie Town Centre Masterplan for public exhibition, an important step toward creating a vibrant, modern and welcoming heart for Medowie. We also welcomed global opportunities provided by the new international terminal at Newcastle Airport, delivering a boost to our local economy and forecast to inject substantial investment over the coming decades and creating thousands of jobs.

Throughout this busy period, fostering community connections has remained a core pillar of our work. Between July and December 2025, we delivered a range of programs, including a month-long NAIDOC Week celebration and our vibrant "It's On!" festive program, which culminated in New Year's Eve fireworks at Nelson Bay. We also continued to invest in the next generation by launching the 2025 to 2026 Community Funding Program, offering over \$450,000 in grants and scholarships to support local talent.

I want to thank our staff and the community for their support during this productive six-month period as we work together to ensure Port Stephens remains a place where our community thrives.

Tim Crosdale  
General Manager of Port Stephens Council

## Scorecard

Our six key result measures underpin everything we do at Port Stephens Council:

	<p><b>Service delivery</b></p> <p>Our target: &gt;95% Integrated Plans delivered on time                  Achievement: 100%                  (As at December 2025)</p>	
	<p><b>Community satisfaction</b></p> <p>Our target: A score of 2.94 out of 5*                  Achievement: A score of 3.01 out of 5*                  *Overall satisfaction with Council's services                  (Source: 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey)</p>	
	<p><b>Employee wellbeing</b></p> <p>Our target: &gt;80% Employee Engagement                  Achievement: 81%                  (Source: 2025 Employee Engagement Survey)</p>	
	<p><b>Risk management</b></p> <p>Target: &gt;85% Risk Management Maturity score                  Achievement: 86%                  (As at June 2025)</p>	
	<p><b>Financial sustainability</b></p> <p>Our target: Underlying financial result better than budget                  Achievement: Anticipated \$1.322M                  (Source: December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review)</p>	
	<p><b>Asset management</b></p> <p>Our target: 100% asset maintenance ratio                  Achievement: 108.24%                  (Source: 2024-2025 Annual Report)</p>	

**ON TRACK:** On track to achieve the target



**MONITOR:** Within 5% of the target



**OFF TRACK:** > 5% off the target



## Snapshot – July to December 2025



### Our community

- **Customer Experience Live Chat** – We've launched Webchat to the community, giving our customers another convenient way to connect with us online.
- Launched **The Place Is Yours\***, a youth-led project which aims to empower young people to shape their community, build new skills and foster a sense of pride in their community through a series of workshops, training and projects.
- With a review underway, over 200 responses were received via the Join the Conversation campaign for **Our Incredible Place Strategy**. The data will be incorporated into the 2026 to 2031 plan for supporting events, arts and culture within the community.
- Over \$450,000 across various grants and scholarships has been released under the 2025 to 2026 Port Stephens **Community Funding Program** offering financial support to community groups, event organisers, athletes, businesses and schools.

\* Supported by Federal and State Government funding.



**Activations**  
222  
events held



**Beach visits**  
375,000+ visits to  
One Mile, Birubi and  
Fingal Bay



**Childcare places**  
54,000+ childcare  
places filled



**Library programs**  
384 programs

### Our place

- We've rolled out educational content on road maintenance, following our **Roads Acceleration Program Communications Plan** being shared with the Communication and Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) early last month.
- Following the recent Natural Disasters – Council has supported the community by compiling our largest ever **disaster claim** (>\$40M) evidence package.
- **24/25 Local Housing Strategy Annual Report** – 50% of the planned actions have been completed or are currently underway. We remain the Council with the fastest approvals in the Hunter region with an average of 49 days, and have approved over 660 houses, including a new social and affordable housing development in Raymond Terrace.
- **Place Plans** – Council adopted the Tilligerry Place Plan and Salamander Bay Place Plan in August and November 2025 following broad community engagement and will now progress to implementation planning.



**DA approvals**  
396



**Roads expenditure**  
\$19.7 million



**Capital Works in progress**  
4 projects



**Capital Works completed**  
9 projects



**Our environment**

- **Koala Habitat Mapping** – Over 200 drone and detection dog surveys completed across the LGA with over 75% participation from landholders volunteers. Data will support the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) preparing an updated Koala habitat map, expected June 2026.
- **Coastal Management Program (CMP)** – commencement of Stage 2 Shoal Bay Sand Nourishing Works and expected completion of Corlette Sand Nourishment Works project in 2026 (Special Rate Variation Funding).
- **Culturally Informed Cool Burns** – The final year of Culturally Informed Cool Burns was delivered with Worimi LALC on Worimi lands in September, funded under the Council's Environmental Trust Grant. These final burns mark the completion of the 3-year Cultural Burning grant project.
- Over two weekends in November, residents participated in the **Port Stephens Garage Sale Trail**, resulting in 162 garage sales, 1351 participants across the region and 36,008 items listed for reuse sale.



**Bush regenerated**  
10.8 hectares



**Bin collections**  
1.8 million bin lifts



**Weed treatment**  
690 hours of treatments



**Waste diversion**  
36,000+ reuse items listed for sale

**Our Council**

- The **International Terminal at Newcastle Airport** – opened in September with the first flights to Bali taking off in October. Domestic flights have also increased with flights to Perth and Hobart now on offer.
- The endorsement of the **Salamander Town Centre Place Plan** in November 2025 further supports Council's approach to Property Investment and Development delivering housing stock, income generating opportunities and investment in our community.
- Continued implementation of **Financial Sustainability Strategies** contribute to Council's key priorities (roads, drainage, footpaths, housing and environment).
- **Community Catch Ups** were held to provide the opportunity to chat with local Councillors and Council Staff. In addition to our Community Catch Ups, Mayor Leah Anderson held multiple **Monthly Mayor Meetups**.



**International flights**  
Now operational



**New citizens**  
42 conferees from 17 countries



**Financial result**  
Anticipated underlying financial result better than budget



**Community Catch Ups**  
3 with Councillors  
10 with Mayor

## Delivery Program update

In this report, we use the icons below to indicate the status of our Operational Plan actions, which form part of the Delivery Program 2025 to 2029.

**ON TRACK:** Operational Plan Actions are on track to achieve the target



**MONITOR:** Operational Plan Actions are within 5% of the target



**OFF TRACK:** Operational Plan Actions are > 5% off the target









# Our community

An accessible, welcoming and connected community respecting diversity, traditions and culture



## C1 Community wellbeing

Our community feels connected, included, supported and has access to services and facilities to support their wellbeing

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>C1.1.1</b> Implement the Community Wellbeing Strategy (CWS) to provide services and support for a diverse community	C1.1.1.1 Implement the actions of the Community Wellbeing Strategy	
<b>C1.1.2</b> Develop and implement the Disability Inclusion Action Plan to encourage Port Stephens to be inclusive and access friendly	Refer to C1.1.1.1	
<b>C1.2.1</b> Deliver a program of education and care services for families and carers of children	C1.2.1.1 Deliver early education and care for children	
<b>C1.3.1</b> Deliver and manage community recreational, leisure and community facilities	C1.3.1.1 Initiate and manage recreational, leisure and community services	
<b>C1.4.1</b> Deliver a program for public libraries as contemporary, accessible, vibrant and welcoming community spaces	C1.4.1.1 Deliver public library services, programs and resources	
<b>C1.5.1</b> Refer to C1.4.1 and E1.1.1		




## C2 Traditions & culture

Our community supports the richness of its traditions and culture

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>C2.1.1</b> Deliver the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement to recognise and support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	C2.1.1.1 Implement actions of the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement	
<b>C2.2.1</b> Implement the Events, Arts and Culture Strategy	C2.2.1.1 Implement actions of the Events, Arts and Culture Strategy	

### C3 Connecting with community

Our Council is committed to enabling an engaged and informed community







<b>Delivery Program Activity</b>	<b>Operational Plan Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>C3.1.1</b> Deliver the 4-year Customer Experience Roadmap and Action plan	C3.1.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor Council's Customer Experience Roadmap and Action Plan	
<b>C3.2.1</b> Implement the Communication and Engagement Strategy	C3.2.1.1 Deliver Council's communications and community engagement activities	
	C3.2.1.2 Council will continue to advocate and engage with Department of Communities and Justice, as the owners of the Tomaree Headland site, to find suitable short, medium and long-term options for the site.	

# Our place

A liveable, safe and connected place supporting community wellbeing and local economic growth




## P1 Housing, tourism & economy

Our community has adaptable, sustainable and diverse housing, tourism and economy

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>P1.1.1</b> Implement the Economic Development Strategy, including ongoing support for sustainable tourism	P1.1.1.1 Implement actions of the Economic Development Strategy	
<b>P1.1.2</b> Develop and implement Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary Business Plans	P1.1.2.1 Implement the annual actions of the Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary Operational Plan	
<b>P1.2.1</b> Develop and implement Council's key planning documents	P1.2.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor land use plans and strategies	
<b>P1.2.2</b> Implement the Local Housing Strategy, focusing on housing diversity, affordability and supply for our community	P1.2.2.1 Implement the actions of the Local Housing Strategy	
<b>P1.3.1</b> Develop an annual program for Council to provide development services to enhance liveability	P1.3.1.1 Deliver the annual program of development services	
<b>P1.4.1</b> Develop shareholder value through an effective partnership with Newcastle Airport	P1.4.1.1 Develop shareholder value through an effective partnership with Newcastle Airport	

## P2 Infrastructure, facilities & connections



Our community's infrastructure, facilities and connections are safe, convenient, reliable and adequately resourced

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>P2.1.1</b> Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2025-2035 (SAMP)	P2.1.1.1 Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the SAMP 2025-2035	
<b>P2.1.2</b> Deliver asset and engineering services to meet customer demand	P2.1.2.1 Deliver asset and engineering services	
<b>P2.1.3</b> Deliver the 4-year Public Infrastructure Program	P2.1.3.1 Implement Council's adopted annual Capital Works Program	

P2.1.4 Deliver the program for maintenance of Council's assets	P2.1.4.1 Maintain Council's civil and community infrastructure	
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### P3 Community safety

Our community feels safe and resilient

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P3.1.1 Develop an annual program for Council to provide compliance services to enhance public safety and health	P3.1.1.1 Deliver the annual program of compliance services	
P3.2.1 Deliver an emergency management framework that supports emergency services, other agencies and our community	P3.2.1.1 Deliver emergency management services, programs and resources	

# Our environment

Port Stephen’s environment is protected, enhanced, sustainable and resilient

## E1 Environmental balance

Our community’s natural and built environment supports biodiversity conservation, and is sustainably balanced and resilient to environmental risks, natural hazards and climate change

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>E1.1.1</b> Develop and implement a program for Council to deliver technical environmental advice, strategies and policies	E1.1.1.1 Develop and monitor environmental policies and strategies	✓
	E1.1.1.2 Deliver technical environmental advice, and impact assessment services	✓
<b>E1.2.1</b> Develop and implement a program for Council to mitigate environmental risks associated with climate change and natural hazards	E1.2.1.1 Implement actions in the Port Stephens Coastal Management Program (CMP)	✓

## E2 Environmental sustainability

Our community uses resources sustainably, efficiently and equitably

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
<b>E2.1.1</b> Develop and implement a program for Council to lead the way to a sustainable and climate positive future	E2.1.1.1 Implement actions in the Emissions Reduction Action Plan	✓
<b>E2.2.1</b> Deliver a Waste program to support the reduction of the community's environmental footprint whilst providing efficient services	E2.2.1.1 Implement the Waste Management Strategy 2021-2031	✓

# Our Council



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

## L1 Resources & finance

Our Council is resourced, financially sustainable and advocates to meet community needs

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
L1.1.1 Deliver the 4-year Workforce Management Strategy	L1.1.1.1 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy	✓
L1.2.1 Develop and implement strategic direction and governance of Council	L1.2.1.1 Coordinate and deliver Councillor and executive support services	✓
	L1.2.1.2 Advocate for community priorities and work with other levels of government and stakeholders	✓
	L1.2.1.3 Work with Hunter Councils to enhance the Hunter Region	✓
L1.3.1 Deliver Governance Services and internal audit program	L1.3.1.1 Implement governance and legal services and enterprise risk management framework	✓
	L1.3.1.2 Implement and coordinate the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) requirements and internal audit processes	✓
L1.3.2 Deliver the Integrated Planning and Reporting program	L1.3.2.1 Deliver the legislative requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	✓
	L1.3.2.2 Complete the Community Satisfaction Survey	✓
L1.3.3 Deliver the 4-year program for Service Reviews and Continuous Improvement Strategy	L1.3.3.1 Implement the annual Service Review program and actions of the Continuous Improvement Strategy	✓
L1.4.1 Implement the 3-year Digital Strategy and Roadmap	L1.4.1.1 Implement annual actions from the Digital Strategy and Roadmap	✓

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT.**

<p><b>L1.5.1</b> Implement the Long-Term Financial Plan 2025 to 2035</p>	<p>L1.5.1.1 Implement Council's Long-Term Financial Plan 2025 to 2035 and Annual Budget for 2025 to 2026 including Financial Sustainability Strategy and Roadmap</p>	
<p><b>L1.5.2</b> Implement the Property Investment Strategy</p>	<p>L1.5.2.1 Implement actions and projects in the Property Investment Strategy</p>	



PORT STEPHENS  
COUNCIL

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ITEM NO. 5

FILE NO: 26/5164  
EDRMS NO: PSC2017-00180

**DRAFT INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING DOCUMENTS AND FEES AND CHARGES**

REPORT OF: ZOE PATTISON - DIRECTOR CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT  
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Endorse the draft Integrated Planning and Reporting documents to commence public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days, which includes the:
  - a) Delivery Program 2025 to 2029 incorporating the Operational Plan 2026 to 2027 (**ATTACHMENT 1**).
  - b) Resourcing Strategy 2026 to 2036 (**ATTACHMENT 2**).
  - c) Fees and Charges 2026 to 2027 (**ATTACHMENT 3**).
- 2) Note that a report will be provided to Council following public exhibition.
- 3) Revoke the resolution to borrow \$5 million dated 9 February 2021, Minute No. 013 (**ATTACHMENT 4**).

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement to place the following draft Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days and invite submissions in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 (Local Government Act):

- Delivery Program 2025 to 2029 incorporating the Operational Plan 2026 to 2027 (**ATTACHMENT 1**).
- Resourcing Strategy 2026 to 2036, incorporating the Workforce Management Strategy 2025 to 2029, Long Term Financial Plan 2026 to 2036 and Strategic Asset Management Plan 2026 to 2036 (**ATTACHMENT 2**).
- Fees and Charges 2026 to 2027 (**ATTACHMENT 3**).

This report also seeks Council endorsement to revoke the Council resolution Minute No. 013 from the Ordinary Council Meeting on 9 February 2021 Nelson Bay Public Domain and Car Parking which impacts the Long Term Financial Plan 2026 to 2036 (**ATTACHMENT 4**).

The introduction of Smart Parking was intended to manage parking demand and generate a dedicated revenue stream to reinvest in the various parking precincts over time, including Nelson Bay town centre. The parking revenue is directed to a

reserve to support a staged program of road upgrades, additional parking capacity, public domain improvements and town centre activation initiatives.

In February 2021 Council resolved to take out a \$5 million bank loan to fund the acceleration of the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan, supported by cash flows from the Smart parking reserve. Without the funds from the loan, the work would still occur, just not at an accelerated rate.

At the time, revenue modelling was necessarily conservative due to the limited operating history of the system, and early collections were committed to the initial installation and traffic works. Any loan drawdown was therefore contemplated from 2021/22 onwards, subject to demonstrated revenue performance and cash flow certainty, with the potential interest impacts to be managed through Council's Long Term Financial Plan.

While provision for the loan has continued to be modelled within the Long-Term Financial Plan, the timing of any drawdown has been deferred for successive years due to financial sustainability of the Smart Parking reserve. Projections of the Smart Parking reserve have identified that a loan cannot be sustained without using the parking revenue from other precincts. This would affect the planned works for other parking precincts. This is due to a material change in economic conditions since the original resolution, including a significant increase in interest rates from below 2 per cent to above 5 per cent because of inflationary pressures, as well as substantial escalation in construction costs.

The Long-Term Financial Plan within the Resourcing Strategy has been prepared without the loan commitment to allow for a more accurate and realistic long-term projection. It would also provide an opportunity to re-engage with the community on the scope, timing and prioritisation of projects within the Public Domain Plan to ensure the proposed works and funding sources continue to reflect community expectations and deliver the best possible outcomes for the town centre.

Alternate sources of funding, such as grants and contributions would continue to be investigated to fund the staged approach to the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Resources and finance	Deliver the Integrated Planning and Reporting program.

## **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Council is required to adopt the Operational Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Fees and Charges before 30 June each year and cannot expend funds or charge fees unless the process, including public exhibition and consideration of submissions is undertaken.

The acceleration of the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan through borrowings would have material implications on the individual precincts within the Smart parking reserve. At current interest rates, the debt servicing costs associated with any loan would exceed the capacity of the Nelson Bay precinct revenue alone. In turn this would require revenue generated from other Smart Parking precincts, including Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay, and Anna Bay, to meet principal and interest repayments.

The subsequent reduction in the funds available within those precinct reserves would result in the deferral or reprioritisation of planned infrastructure upgrades and public domain improvements.

<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

## **LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Council is required to undertake integrated planning and reporting activities in accordance with the Local Government Act, Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (Local Government Regulation) and the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines (IPR Guidelines) and Handbook (IPR Handbook) September 2021. Sections 403 to 406 and 608 to 610 of the Local Government Act outline the specific requirements for developing the IP&R documents and Fees and Charges.

In summary, under this legislation and Guidelines, Council is required to:

- Review the Plan before 30 June following the Council election.
- Adopt the IP&R documents prior to 30 June 2026 in order to set the budget and allow for funds to be expended for the following financial year.
- Prepare a long-term strategy (Resourcing Strategy which includes the Long Term Financial Plan, Workforce Management Strategy and Strategic Asset Management Plan) for the provision of resources required to perform its functions.
- Establish a new delivery program after the Council election to cover the principal activities of the council for the 4-year period commencing on 1 July following the election.
- Have its operational plan adopted before the beginning of each year and detail the activities to be engaged in by the council during the year as part of the delivery program covering that year.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

- Set its fees and charges prior to 1 July 2026 and make the rates prior to 1 August 2026.
- Publicly exhibit all of the IP&R documents and Fees and Charges for a period of at least 28 days, considering submissions prior to adoption of the final documents.

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that Council does not have the resources to meet its Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.	Medium	Staff continue to realistically plan and investigate resourcing opportunities as outlined in the Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy.	Yes
There is a risk that if the draft documents are not exhibited as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fees therein cannot be charged.</li> <li>• Funds cannot be expended; and</li> <li>• Plans will not be implemented prior to 1 July as legislatively required.</li> </ul>	Low	Public exhibition of draft documents during April and May 2026 to allow sufficient time for public submissions and Council consideration and adoption of the final documents prior to 30 June 2026.	Yes

### SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan are founded on a quadruple bottom line basis of social, economic, environmental and governance factors through 4 interconnected focus areas: Our community, Our place, Our environment and Our Council. The 4 focus areas provide a structure for planning in each of the documents, enabling Council to address key actions while aiming to holistically meet the community's vision of 'A great lifestyle in a treasured environment'.

### COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
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## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

### External communications and engagement

CONSULT	<p>The draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, draft Resourcing Strategy and draft Fees and Charges will go on public exhibition for at least 28 days.</p> <p>Community input will be considered at a Council meeting in June 2026 following the public exhibition process and prior to adoption of the documents.</p> <p>The documents will be available for download from Council's website, with hard copies available for viewing at Council's administration building and libraries.</p>
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### Internal communications and engagement

The draft documents have been developed in consultation with all sections of Council and the Executive Team.

### **OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Delivery Program 2025 to 2029 Operational Plan 2026 to 2027. (Provided under separate cover)
- 2) Resourcing Strategy 2026 to 2036. (Provided under separate cover)
- 3) Fees and Charges 2026 to 2027. (Provided under separate cover)

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

- 4) Ordinary Council Minutes - Nelson Bay Public Domain and car parking - 9 February 2021. (Provided under separate cover)

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM NO. 6**

**FILE NO: 26/25761  
EDRMS NO: PSC2019-05143**

**EXEMPTION FROM TENDER AND CONTRACT CONSOLIDATION**

REPORT OF: GLEN PETERKIN - FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Grant an exemption from inviting tenders for agreements listed at **(ATTACHMENT 1)** under Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) due to extenuating circumstances where inviting tenders would not result in a satisfactory result, including a positive financial outcome.
- 

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to seek an exemption from inviting tenders for Smart Parking agreements listed in **(ATTACHMENT 1)**. This exemption is under Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (the Act) and relates to extenuating circumstances that prevent a satisfactory result being achieved by the tender process. This will allow Council to negotiate and enter into new multi-year agreement with Duncan Solutions that incorporates all integrated services, hardware and Information Technologies (IT) solutions currently provided.

Council currently engages Duncan Solutions for a suite of 9 individual Smart Parking products and services listed in **(ATTACHMENT 1)** including software applications, hardware, and support that all form the whole Smart Parking system. Each of these individual products has a varying level of interdependency with other products in the suite and has been integrated with internal Council applications. Due to these interdependencies and integration points, moving away from Duncan Solutions for 1 or more individual products is not possible without incurring costs, limiting integration capabilities or causing system migration downtime.

The Act requires councils to invite tenders before entering into an agreement that exceeds 2 years. Councils must not invite or submit tenders without a firm intention and capacity to proceed with a contract, including having funds available. An exemption can be applied in extenuating circumstances where it is determined that a satisfactory result would not be achieved through the invitation of tenders.

Application of this type of exemption for key IT subscriptions, licences, software applications, support agreements and highly integrated products is common due to

the integration with Council's systems and to maximise the use of physical asset lifecycle once it is purchased.

The average asset lifecycle for this asset class is 10 years. All current Smart Parking assets were delivered new to Council or refurbished post 2020.

In the previous 6 years, Council has entered into the following multi-year agreements with Duncan Solutions after completing a competitive tender process for each.

- 1) Park 'n' Pay App.
- 2) Meter Service Maintenance.
- 3) Parking Network and Guidance Monitoring System.

In addition, Council currently engages Duncan Solutions on purchase order terms for the following products and services with the view of also consolidating all these services with a common contract expiration date.

- Parking Meter Maintenance.
- Senforce Licensing and Integration.
- AutoIssue Software, Licensing and Integration.
- In Ground Parking Sensor Integration.
- Smart Parking Permit Portal.
- PEMS Software, Licensing and Integration.
- Park 'n' Pay App Software, Licensing and Integration.

Each product and service currently provided to Council by Duncan Solutions has been analysed for the benefits of inviting tenders both individually and as an entire suite of products and services using the following evaluation criteria. The results are listed in **(ATTACHMENT 1)**.

- Opportunity to achieve cost savings by consolidating all engagements with current provider into combined multi-year agreement compared to full market approach for each individual product.
- High costs and/or extensive business disruption associated with a transition to a new provider.
- The cost to prepare a tender and take the arrangement to market would be disproportionate to the potential value of change.
- There are no planned changes to service requirements that the product currently delivers and service from the vendor is satisfactory.
- There is a lack of alternative providers.
- Product has interdependencies with other Duncan Solution products or high integration to other internal Council applications.

This review determined that no individual product or service would achieve a satisfactory outcome by inviting tenders at this stage of the Smart Parking infrastructure lifecycle.

Should Council enter a consolidated multi-year agreement with Duncan Solutions the benefits will include:

- 1) Reduced financial risk associated with a potential vendor change and provide fixed pricing for the current hardware lifecycle.
- 2) Reduced administration burden achieved through a single consolidated agreement with a common contract expiry date for all products and services.
- 3) Provide stability to Council's Smart Parking suite until the end of the current hardware lifecycle.

It is anticipated this approach will result in a reduced cost to Council in the vicinity of \$3 million.

For these reasons, a tender exemption is being sought to allow commencement of negotiations for a multi-year agreement with Duncan Solutions and/or their third-party suppliers.

### **COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Infrastructure, facilities & connections	Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2025-2035 (SAMP)

### **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Due to the established hardware installations, product interdependencies and integration points, securing a consolidated contract with Duncan Solutions will provide financial stability for the whole of the Smart Parking System.

Council's Smart Parking revenue currently funds community infrastructure projects and activation programs by setting aside revenue in a dedicated infrastructure reserve for each of the precincts where Smart Parking is deployed (Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay and Anna Bay). Any loss in Smart Parking revenue as a result of the cost of changing supplier will impact the implementation of these infrastructure projects and activation programs.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Section 55 (3)(i) of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) provides councils with an exemption from tendering where, because of extenuating circumstances, a satisfactory result would not be achieved by inviting tenders. The estimated total contract length including all products and services listed in **(ATTACHMENT 1)** is anticipated to exceed 2 years but no more than 5 years. The reasons supporting an exemption for each product or service from the tender request are outlined in **(ATTACHMENT 1)**.

Risk	<u>Risk Ranking</u>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that Council becomes dependant on a single Smart Parking supplier leading to a situation where Council must accept the suppliers service and product development level for the life of the agreement.	Low	Agreement to include performance based termination options.	
There is a risk that new technology options are brought to market by competitors during the life of the agreement leading to Council being unable to pursue savings opportunities through new technology uptake.	Low	Agreement to be structured as 3 years with 2 optional 1 year extensions, allowing Council to review competitor product offerings before committing to extensions.	

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

The suite of Smart Parking products provides residents parking equality whilst providing Council with a sustainable income source that is allocated to provide community infrastructure projects and activation programs that otherwise would remain unfunded.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

External communications and engagement

	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.
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Internal communications and engagement

Consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken by the Assets Section to determine the detractors of requesting tenders for whole or individual components of Council's Smart Parking System and to assess the impacts of consolidating all engagements with Duncan Solutions into a single multi-year agreement.

- Governance Section.
- Assets Section.

**OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendation.
- 2) Amend the recommendation.
- 3) Reject the recommendation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) CONFIDENTIAL List of Agreements.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM NO. 7**

**FILE NO: 26/46312  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03148**

## **DRAINAGE ON SPORTS FIELDS**

REPORT OF: JOHN MARETICH - ASSETS SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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### **RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Receive and note the information provided in regard to sports field drainage.
- 2) Continue to seek funding to upgrade sports field drainage and implement through Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding sports fields drainage as resolved at the Council meeting held on 24 June 2025, Minute No. 146 **(ATTACHMENT 1)**.

Port Stephens Council has 48 active grass sports fields across the LGA network which serve the community in multiuse, facilitating both summer and winter sporting codes.

During heavy rain periods water can sit on flat grass sports fields for some time. This not only prevents the field from being used but can also result in damage to the playing surface if used too early or have an impact on the quality of the growing grass. The rate of rainwater dissipation is faster on sand based fields when compared to clay based fields.

Drainage incorporated on a sports field allows for the rainwater to dissipate quicker. This allows for the field to be in operation faster and reduces potential damage as noted above.

While a majority of our fields are sand based, there are still occasions when these fields experience water drainage issues, especially with the recent heavy rain periods we have experienced over the past 3 winter seasons.

Of these 48 sports fields, only 8 currently have subsurface drainage, minimising closures and assisting the continuation of community sport.

Using Council's asset management data, a summary of which fields do have drainage installations are shown in **(ATTACHMENT 2)**.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Infrastructure, facilities & connections	Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2025-2035 (SAMP)

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Using desktop project estimates, the average cost for subsurface slit drainage is \$150,000 per field including topdressing and fertilising schedules upon completion.

The estimate of completing all remaining fields is \$6 million.

Council is actively working with clubs and Sports Councils to identify priorities in preparation for arising funding streams. This process facilitated drainage upgrades on Field no.1 at Salamander Sports Complex and a grant application has also been submitted for Elaine Hurst field at Medowie which is currently under assessment. Both these grant applications included contributions from Council and Sports Council as seed funding.

<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Risk</b>	<b><a href="#">Risk Ranking</a></b>	<b>Proposed Treatments</b>	<b>Within Existing Resources?</b>
There is a risk that Council fails to meet community expectations	Medium	Continue to actively work with clubs and Sports Councils in preparation for arising funding streams.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

Upgraded facilities and reducing closures will deliver significant impacts including enhanced safety and performance for athletes, improved community health through increased physical activity, and strengthened social cohesion.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

External communications and engagement

INFORM	Ongoing discussions with Sports Councils and user groups will continue to seek funding to enable the upgrade of our sports fields. This will be undertaken through the Strategic Asset Management Plan process.
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Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Assets Section with:

- Public Domain and Services Section.

**OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) 24 June 2025 - Ordinary Council - Minute No. 146.
- 2) Sportsfield Drainage Report.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 JUNE 2025**

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**ITEM NO. 2**

**FILE NO: 25/149871**

**EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03148**

**DRAINAGE ON SPORTS FIELDS**

**COUNCILLOR: NATHAN ERRINGTON**

**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Requests the General Manager to prepare a comprehensive report on all sporting fields within the Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA), identifying those that require drainage upgrades. This report is to be presented to the elected Council.
- 2) Seeks funding opportunities from State and Federal Governments, as well as relevant sporting bodies, to assist in the upgrade of drainage systems on sporting fields across the LGA.
- 3) Requests the General Manager to investigate and include in future Council budgets a proposed timeframe and funding strategy to commence drainage upgrades on the identified sporting fields.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - 24 JUNE 2025  
MOTION**

<b>146</b>	<p><b>Councillor Nathan Errington Councillor Mark Watson</b></p> <p>It was resolved that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Requests the General Manager to prepare a comprehensive report on all sporting fields within the Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA), identifying those that require drainage upgrades. This report is to be presented to the elected Council.</li><li>2) Seeks funding opportunities from State and Federal Governments, as well as relevant sporting bodies, to assist in the upgrade of drainage systems on sporting fields across the LGA.</li><li>3) Requests the General Manager to investigate and include in future Council budgets a proposed timeframe and funding strategy to commence drainage upgrades on the identified sporting fields.</li></ol>
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**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 JUNE 2025**

Those for the Motion: Mayor Leah Anderson, Crs Rosalyn Armstrong, Giacomo Amott, Chris Doohan, Nathan Errington, Peter Francis, Paul Le Mottee, Ben Niland, Mark Watson and Jason Wells.

Those against the Motion: Nil.

The motion was carried.

**BACKGROUND REPORT OF: JOHN MARETICH – ASSETS SECTION MANAGER****BACKGROUND**

Port Stephens Council has 48 active grass sports fields across the LGA network which serve the community in multiuse, facilitating both summer and winter sporting codes.

While a majority of our fields are sand based, there are still occasions when these fields experience drainage issues especially with the wet conditions experienced over the past 3 winter seasons. Of these 48 sports fields, only 8 currently have subsurface drainage, minimising closures and assisting the continuation of community sport.

Using desktop project estimates, the average cost for subsurface slit drainage is \$150,000 per field including topdressing and fertilising schedules upon completion. The estimate of completing all remaining fields is \$6 million. Council is actively working with clubs and Sports Councils to identify priorities in preparation for arising funding streams. Several priority sites have been identified from oval closure data, stakeholder feedback and staff inspections. Sites identified include Salamander Sports Complex (4 remaining fields), Tilligerry Soccer Fields, Lionel Morten Oval, Yulong Oval (remaining field), Ferodale Oval, Vi Barnett Field and King Park Sports Complex (4 remaining fields).

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (S7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 JUNE 2025**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

ITEM 7 - ATTACHMENT 2 SPORTSFIELD DRAINAGE REPORT

SPORTSFIELD SUBSURFACE DRAINAGE				
Facility	Surface	Drainage	Priority Rating	Comment
Seaham Park Oval	Seaham Park Oval Grass Sportsfield	No	Low	Rarely used as an operational sportsfield
Brandon Park	Brandon Park Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	YES		Complete
Bowthorne Park	Bowthorne Park Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	YES		Complete
Bowthorne Park	Bowthorne Park Field No 2 Grass Sportsfield	YES		Complete
Stuart Park	Stuart Park Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
King Park Sports Complex	King Park Sports Complex Field 1 Jack Collins Oval	No	High	
King Park Sports Complex	King Park Sports Complex Field 2 Bill Bobbins Oval	No	High	
King Park Sports Complex	King Park Sports Complex Field 3	No	High	
King Park Sports Complex	King Park Sports Complex Field 4	YES		Complete
King Park Sports Complex	King Park Sports Complex Field 5	No	Low	
VI Barnett Field	VI Barnett Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Boomerang Dog Park	Boomerang Dog Park Sports Surface 1	No	Low	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 1	No	High	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 2	No	High	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 3	No	Medium	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 4	No	Low	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 5	No	Low	
Lakeside Sports Complex	Lakeside Sports Mod Field	No	Low	
Lionel Morten Oval	Lionel Morten Oval Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	YES	High	Installed on half field only, further upgrades required
Yulong Park	Yulong Park Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	YES	High	Drainage installed but functions poorly
Yulong Park	Yulong Park Field No 2 Grass Sportsfield	YES	High	Drainage installed but functions poorly
Yulong Park	Yulong Park Field No 3 Grass Sportsfield	YES		Complete
Ferodale Sports Complex	Ferodale Sports Complex Grass Sportsfield 1	No	High	
Boyd Oval	Elaine Hurst Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
Boyd Oval	Boyd Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	Low	
Kindlebank Oval	Kindlebank Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	High	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex Sportsfield No 1	No	Medium	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex League Training Field	No	Low	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex Soccer Training Field	No	Low	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex Sportsfield Field No 2	No	High	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex Sportsfield Field No 3	No	High	
Mallabula Sports Complex	Mallabula Sports Complex Athletics Field	No	Low	
Salamander Bay Sports Complex	Salamander Bay Sports Field No 1 Grass Sportsfield	YES		
Salamander Bay Sports Complex	Salamander Bay Sports Field No 2 Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Salamander Bay Sports Complex	Salamander Bay Sports Field No 3 Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Salamander Bay Sports Complex	Salamander Bay Sports Field No 4 Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Salamander Bay Sports Complex	Salamander Bay Sports Field No 5 Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Korora Oval	Korora Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	Low	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports John Neil Matchfield	No	Medium	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Dick Burwell Oval Grass Sportsfield	No	High	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Don Waring Oval Grass Sportsfield	No	High	Will be installed with 2026 upgrades
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Field No 2 Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Field No 3 Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Field No 4 Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
Tomaree Sports Complex	Tomaree Sports Field No 5 Grass Sportsfield	No	Medium	
Bill Strong Oval	Bill Strong Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	High	
Tom O'Dwyer Memorial Oval	Tom O'Dwyer Memorial Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	Low	Not currently used as an active sportsfield
Fingal Bay Oval	Fingal Bay Oval Grass Sportsfield 1	No	Low	

**ITEM NO. 8**

**FILE NO: 26/47963  
EDRMS NO: PSC2025-03427**

**PROCESSING OF FOOD ORGANICS AND GARDEN ORGANICS TENDER -  
2025/191T**

REPORT OF: JOHN MARETICH - ASSETS SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) That pursuant to section 10A(2)(d) of the Local Government Act 1993, Council resolve to close to the public that part of its meetings to discuss Item 8 on the Ordinary Council agenda namely joint Tender with City of Newcastle Council Processing of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) - Contract No. 2025/191T.
- 2) That the reasons for closing the meeting to the public to consider this item be that:
  - i) The report and discussion will include details of commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial position of the tenderers; and
  - ii) In particular, the report includes confidential pricing information in respect of joint tender Processing of FOGO – Contract No. 2025/191T.
- 3) That on balance, it is considered that receipt and discussion of the matter in open Council would be contrary to the public interest, as disclosure of the confidential commercial information could compromise the commercial position of the tenderers and adversely affect Council's ability to attract competitive tenders for other contracts.
- 4) That the report of the closed part of the meeting is to remain confidential and that Council makes public its decision including the name and amount of the successful tenderer in accordance with Clause 179 of the Local Government General Regulation 2021.
- 5) That Council accept the tender submitted from Bettergrow Pty Ltd to the value of \$2,925,455 ex GST (per year) for the processing of Food and Garden Organics.
- 6) That the contract will commence on 1 July 2027 for a period of 7 years, terminating on 30 June 2034 with an option to extend for a further 2 years.
- 7) Authorise the General Manager to negotiate any variations to the contract during this period.

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to recommend the acceptance of a tender received Bettergrow Pty Ltd for an estimated \$2,925,455 per year excluding GST. This tender

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

is for a contract for the processing of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) at a third-party FOGO processing facility.

This tender was jointly undertaken between Port Stephens Council and The City of Newcastle Council. Each Council will enter into separate contracts.

The contract for the processing of FOGO is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2027 for a period of 7 years with an option to extend by a further 2 years at the discretion of each Council.

The City of Newcastle Council publicly advertised the tender (Contract no. 2025/191T) on behalf of both Councils on the 27 September 2025 with the tender closing on 9 December 2025.

The tender submissions were received and assessed by a Tender Assessment Panel consisting of 2 City of Newcastle staff and 2 Port Stephens Council staff. A breakdown of the tender submissions and assessment is attached (**ATTACHMENT 1**). The evaluation process was supervised by an independent Probity Advisor from Regional Procurement. The Probity Report is attached (**ATTACHMENT 2**).

The intent is to appoint Bettergrow Pty Ltd, an Australian Company with over 40 years of experience in organics processing including biosolids, garden organics, food and grease trap waste. The processing facility for Bettergrow Pty Ltd is located at Ravensworth in the Upper Hunter.

Bettergrow Pty Ltd has purchased an industrial site at Cormorant Road, Kooragang for the development of a FOGO transfer facility. This facility will enable efficient haulage of FOGO to the processing facility in Ravensworth. The Kooragang location significantly reduces travel time for organics collection trucks compared with FOGO transfer locations proposed by other tenderers.

The weightings agreed for this tender were:

Threshold Criteria	Weighting
Work Health & Safety	Pass/Fail
Environmental Management	Pass/Fail
Modern Slavery	Pass/Fail
Weighted Criteria	
Experience, capability and track record	25%
Organics Processing Facility overview, availability & access	25%
Contamination Management	10%
Supplier Diversity	5%
Price	35%

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Environmental sustainability	Deliver a Waste program to support the reduction of the community's environmental footprint whilst providing efficient services

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The additional expenditure for the process of FOGO will be incorporated in the FY28 budget.

<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

NSW has a statewide mandate for FOGO to reduce food waste and stop food waste going to landfill. Local Councils will be required to provide all NSW households who receive a residual (red lid) waste collection service with a FOGO waste service by 1 July 2030.

<b>Risk</b>	<b><u>Risk Ranking</u></b>	<b>Proposed Treatments</b>	<b>Within Existing Resources?</b>
There is a risk that if this tender is not awarded the Council's delivery of FOGO services will be affected.	High	Award the tender.	Yes
There is a risk that if Council does not have FOGO services in place by 2030, Council will be non-compliant with the statewide mandate.	High	Award the tender.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

FOGO is a sustainable waste management system that transforms food scraps and garden waste into compost instead of landfill. It reduces harmful methane emissions, decreases landfill pressure, and creates a circular economy by returning nutrients to soil.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council’s Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

External communications and engagement

INFORM	Due to the confidential nature of this report there was no direct external communication and engagement with the public. The implementation of FOGO does however align with actions from the Port Stephens Council Waste Management Strategy 2021-2031 which highlighted community interest in the ongoing management of FOGO.
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Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the Financial Services Section with:

- Community Services Section.
- Assets Section.

**OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendations.
- 2) Amend the recommendations.
- 3) Reject the recommendations.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) CONFIDENTIAL FOGO Processing Tender.
- 2) CONFIDENTIAL City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council FOGO Processing Solutions Tender - RegPro Probity Report.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM NO. 9**

**FILE NO: 26/37173  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03167**

**LGNSW DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE - 27-29 MAY  
2026 IN MAITLAND**

REPORT OF: TIMOTHY CROSDALE - GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Nominates Council delegates to attend the 2026 Local Government NSW Destination and Visitor Economy Conference from 27-29 May 2026 in Maitland.

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the 2026 Local Government NSW Destination and Visitor Economy Conference in Maitland from 27-29 May 2026.

The conference program is attached for information (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

The conference will aim to embrace not just tourism, but also a wider aspect of economic development to regional and metropolitan councils.

As Councillors are aware, the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Mayor and Councillors Policy (the 'Policy') requires that a resolution of Council be sought for all attendance at a conference or seminar.

The costs associated with registration, travel and accommodation will be covered from within the existing professional development budget, subject to the Mayor or any individual Councillor/s not exceeding the conference budget limits set in the Policy.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Resources and finance	Deliver Governance Services and internal audit program

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Costs associated with registration, travel and accommodation will be covered from within the existing budget, subject to any individual elected member not exceeding the conference budget limits within the Policy.

The registration cost for the conference is \$1,200 (early bird rate).

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL, POLICY AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

The Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors/Mayor Policy requires approval of a full Council meeting.

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that Port Stephens Council will not be represented on matters at the conference.	Low	That the recommendation be adopted.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

Ensuring the Port Stephens local government area is well represented in all matters at the conference will benefit the Port Stephens community.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council’s Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026

COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

### External communications and engagement

	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.
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### Internal communications and engagement

Communication was undertaken with Councillors.

### **OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendation.
- 2) Amend the recommendation.
- 3) Reject the recommendation.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Draft Destination and Visitor Economy Conference Program.

### **COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

### **TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.

Program | DVE



## DRAFT CONFERENCE PROGRAM

As at 30 January 2026

### DAY 1 - Wednesday 27 May 2026

12.30pm-1.15pm	<b>Bus Transfers</b> Delegate Transfers: From selected hotels to Town Hall
1.00pm	<b>Registration &amp; Trade Exhibition Open</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer Light lunch on arrival
2.00pm-3.00pm	<b>Conference</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall - Main Hall
	Welcome to Country
	President's Welcome, Mayor Cr Darcy Byrne, President LGNSW
	Host Destination Welcome, Cr Philip Penfold, Mayor, Maitland City Council
	Ministerial Speech
	<b>Award Presentation</b> NSW Top Tourism Town Awards
3.00pm-3.45pm	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> Location: Trade Exhibition, Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer
3.45pm-4.45pm	<b>Workshops</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall - Main Hall   Evans Room   Maitland Room

<https://ignsw.org.au/DVE/DVE/Program.aspx?WebsiteKey=24f4d616-2b91-427b-9399-dcf9ff37cfce>

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**ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.**

Program | DVE

	<p><b>Stream 1:</b> Playgrounds with Purpose: Building Destination Appeal Through Collective Strategy</p> <p>This interactive workshop introduces councillors to the Playground Destination Collective – a strategic approach to transforming play spaces into tourism assets. Through case studies, design principles, and collaborative planning tools, participants will learn how to elevate local playgrounds into vibrant, inclusive destinations that drive visitation, community pride, and regional identity.</p>
	<p><b>Stream 2:</b> Digital First: Tools &amp; Pathways to Grow Global Tourism Reach</p> <p>This workshop captures the focus on data readiness, digital connectivity, and international market preparation—perfect for tourism delegates looking to future-proof their visitor engagement strategies.</p>
	<p><b>Stream 3:</b> Driving Growth: Unlocking the Power of Road Trips</p> <p>Harnessing drive tourism to support visitor dispersal and economic resilience across Regional NSW.</p>
4.45pm-5.15pm	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b></p> <p>Delegate Transfer Loop: From Town Hall to selected hotels to Maitland Regional Art Gallery</p>
5.15pm-7.15pm	<p><b>Welcome Function</b></p> <p>Location: Maitland Regional Art Gallery</p>
7.15pm	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b></p> <p>Delegate Transfers: From Maitland Regional Art Gallery to select hotels 7.00pm, 7.15pm and 7.30pm</p>

**DAY 2 - Thursday 28 May 2026**

7.45am-8.30am	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b></p> <p>Delegate Transfers: From selected hotels to Town Hall</p>
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**ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.**

Program | DVE

	<p><b>Registration, Information &amp; Trade Exhibition Open</b>                  Location: Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer                  Arrival Tea &amp; Coffee</p>
9.00am-10.45am	<p><b>Conference</b>                  Location: Maitland Town Hall – Main Hall</p>
	Welcome & Introduction
	Destination NSW
	Tourism Australia
	<p><b>Session Title:</b> Tourism Marketing                  From Insight to Impact: Tourism Marketing Strategies That Convert</p>
10.45am-11.30am	<p><b>Morning Tea</b>                  Location: Trade Exhibition, Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer</p>
11.30am-12.15pm	<p><b>Session Title:</b> Short Term Rental Debate (Solutions Focused)</p>
12.15pm-1.15pm	<p><b>Lunch</b>                  Location: Trade Exhibition, Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer</p>
1.15pm-4.30pm	<p><b>Delegate Site Visit &amp; Bus Transfers</b>                  Site Visit Transfers: From Town Hall</p>
<p><b>Site Visit 1</b>                  12.45pm-5.00pm</p>	<p><b>Cultivating connections: Agritourism in action</b>                  Phoenix Park Farm, Tocal Agricultural College and Farm Tours, Tranquil Vale Vineyard</p> <p>Discover the heart of Maitland agritourism in this hands-on excursion. Delegates will have the opportunity to engage with a local producer at Phoenix Park Farm, gain an insight into how agriculture, education, and tourism intersect at Tocal, and sample award-winning local wine and artisan bites at Tranquil Vale Vineyard.</p> <p>With insights into regional planning and farm-based experiences, this tour is a fresh take on rural innovation and visitor engagement.</p> <p>Capacity: 50</p>

ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.

Program | DVE

<p><b>Site Visit 2</b> 1.15pm-4.45pm</p>	<p><b>Creative footsteps: Arts, culture and placemaking in Central Maitland</b> Maitland Art Trail, Maitland Regional Sportsground and Athletics Centre, Maitland Regional Art Gallery</p> <p>Step into Maitland’s cultural heartbeat with this guided walking tour through art, heritage, and community spaces. Delegates will explore public art installations and placemaking initiatives and experience the Beyond the Flood Levels Heritage Walk, followed by behind-the-scenes access to the Maitland Regional Sportsground and Athletics Centre before undertaking a hands-on art class with a local artist at Maitland Regional Art Gallery whilst sampling some local fare.</p> <p>It’s a vibrant showcase of how creativity and culture shape destination appeal.</p> <p>Capacity: 50</p>
<p><b>Site Visit 3</b> 1.15pm-4.45pm</p>	<p><b>Morpeth uncovered: Heritage, hospitality and handcrafted experiences</b> Morpeth to Walka Shared Pathway, Morpeth Heritage Walk, Uaine Candles and Boydell’s Cellar Door and Restaurant</p> <p>Immerse yourself into Morpeth’s rich past and vibrant present on this curated heritage experience. Delegates will walk the riverside pathway and explore the history and vision behind the Morpeth Heritage Walk before participating in immersive experiences at Uaine Candles and Boydell’s Cellar Door and Restaurant.</p> <p>It’s a celebration of storytelling, local enterprise, and the art of selling heritage.</p> <p>Capacity: 50</p>
<p>4.30pm-5.00pm</p>	<p><b>Site Visit Bus Transfers return</b> Site Visit Transfers: From Town Hall</p>
<p>4.30pm-6.30pm</p>	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b> Delegate Transfer Loop: From Town Hall to selected hotels to Town Hall</p>
<p>6.30pm-10.00pm</p>	<p><b>Conference Dinner</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall</p>

**ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.**

Program | DVE

- m	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b> Delegate Transfers: From Town Hall to selected hotels 9.45pm, 10.00pm and 10.15pm</p>
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**DAY 3 - Friday 29 May 2026**

7.34am- 8.30am	<p><b>Bus Transfers</b> Delegate Transfers: From selected hotels to Town Hall</p>
8.15am	<p><b>Registration, Information &amp; Trade Exhibition Open</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer Cloak Room Open Arrival Tea &amp; Coffee</p>
9.00am- 10.35am	<p><b>Conference</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall – Main Hall</p>
	<p>Welcome &amp; Introduction</p>
	<p><b>Session Title:</b> Fuelling Tourism: Funding Pathways &amp; Plug-and-Play Innovation</p> <p>Explore how strategic funding is shaping the future of tourism in NSW. This session dives into successful models and emerging opportunities, featuring insights from Create NSW and Transport NSW's Plug &amp; Play pilot program. Learn how creative partnerships, infrastructure investment, and agile funding frameworks are unlocking new visitor experiences and driving regional growth.</p>
	<p><b>Session Title:</b> Taking Off: How NSW's New Airports Will Boost Tourism</p> <p>New airport developments across New South Wales—including the Western Sydney International Airport and Newcastle Airport's expansion—are unlocking major tourism potential. These infrastructure upgrades are creating direct access to regional destinations, attracting international visitors, and fuelling growth in the state's visitor economy. With new routes, increased airline capacity, and strategic support from Destination NSW, local tourism operators are poised to benefit from a surge in demand and global connectivity.</p>
	<p><b>Session Title:</b> Unlocking Local Potential: Transforming Council Assets into Visitor Experiences</p>

<https://ignsw.org.au/DVE/DVE/Program.aspx?WebsiteKey=24f4d616-2b91-427b-9399-dcf9ff37cfce>

5/8

**ITEM 9 - ATTACHMENT 1 DRAFT DESTINATION AND VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE PROGRAM.**

Program | DVE

	Discover how underutilised Council-owned assets—from heritage buildings to sports facilities—are being transformed into vibrant tourism experiences. This session explores successful case studies and strategic frameworks that unlock economic potential, foster community pride, and attract visitors through creative placemaking and adaptive reuse.
10.35am-11.05am	<b>Morning Tea</b> Location: Trade Exhibition, Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer
11.05am-12.45pm	<b>Conference continued</b> Location: Maitland Town Hall
	<b>Session Title:</b> From Vision to Visitor: Council Case Studies That Inspire
	<b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Gill Minervini  For over 30 years, Gill has produced some of Australia's most engaging and successful international events and festivals, creating unforgettable, immersive experiences for diverse audiences.  She is one of Australia's creative leaders - from festival, event and theatre director to television and radio presenter, public art curator and producer - Gill's experience means successful delivery of outstanding creative ideas, every time.
	Showcase from Host Council 2027
	Closing Remarks, President/Chief Executive LGNSW
12.45pm-1.30pm	<b>Lunch - Grab &amp; Go</b> Location: Trade Exhibition, Maitland Town Hall – Sunken Foyer
1.30pm	Conference concludes

\* Program subject to change

[://lgnsw.org.au/DVE/DVE/Program.aspx?WebsiteKey=24f4d616-2b91-427b-9399-dcf9ff37cfce](http://lgnsw.org.au/DVE/DVE/Program.aspx?WebsiteKey=24f4d616-2b91-427b-9399-dcf9ff37cfce)

**ITEM NO. 10**

**FILE NO: 26/33007  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03158**

**REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

REPORT OF: TIMOTHY CROSDALE - GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Approves provision of financial assistance under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 from Mayoral and Ward Funds to the following:
  - a) Nelson Bay Diggers Bowls Club – Mayoral funds - \$1,000 donation towards travel costs for players.
  - b) Boat Harbour Recreation Club – Mayoral funds - \$770 donation towards licence fees.
  - c) Port Stephens Dragon Boat Club – Rapid response – Cr Roz Armstrong - \$500 donation towards Learn to Paddle Program graduation celebration event.
  - d) Hinton Wallalong Pony Club – Rapid response – Cr Giacomo Arnott - \$500 donation towards annual licence fees.

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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to determine and, where required, authorise payment of financial assistance to recipients judged by the Mayor and or Councillors as deserving of public funding. The Grants and Donations Policy gives the Mayor and Councillors a wide discretion either to grant or to refuse any requests.

Council's Grants and Donations Policy provides the community, the Mayor and Councillors with a number of options when seeking financial assistance from Council. Those options being:

1. Mayoral Funds
2. Rapid Response
3. Community Financial Assistance Grants – (bi-annually)
4. Community Capacity Building

Council is unable to grant approval of financial assistance to individuals unless it is performed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. This would mean that the financial assistance would need to be included in the Operational Plan or Council would need to advertise for 28 days of its intent to grant approval. Council can make donations to community groups.

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2026**

The requests for financial assistance are shown below:

**MAYORAL FUNDS**

Nelson Bay Diggers Bowls Club	An intra club of the Nelson Bay Wests Diggers Group with 100 members, the majority of who are veterans.	\$1,000	Donation towards travel costs for players.
Boat Harbour Recreation Club	Boat Harbour Recreation Club is a volunteer run community facility providing tennis and pickleball for locals and visitors.	\$770	Donation towards licence fees.

**WARD FUNDS**

Port Stephens Dragon Boat Club	Port Stephens Dragon Boat Club is a community-focused sports club based at Soldiers Point promoting fun, fitness and friendship through dragon boating.	\$500	Donation towards Learn to Paddle Program graduation event.
Hinton Wallalong Pony Club	Hinton Wallalong Pony Club is a small family friendly equestrian club.	\$500	Donation towards annual licence fees.

**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Delivery Program 2025-2029</b>
Resources and finance	Develop and implement strategic direction and governance of Council

**FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Source of Funds	Yes/No	Funding (\$)	Comment
Existing budget	Yes		
Reserve Funds	No		
Developer Contributions (\$7.11)	No		
External Grants	No		
Other	No		

**LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

To qualify for assistance under Section 356(1) of the Local Government Act 1993, the purpose must assist the Council in the exercise of its functions. Functions under the Act include the provision of community, culture, health, sport and recreation services and facilities.

The Policy interpretation required is whether the Council believes that:

- a) applicants are carrying out a function, which it, the Council, would otherwise undertake.
- b) the funding will directly benefit the community of Port Stephens.
- c) applicants do not act for private gain.

Risk	<a href="#">Risk Ranking</a>	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that Council may set a precedent when allocating funds to the community and an expectation those funds will always be available.	Low	Adopt the recommendations.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Includes Social, Economic and Environmental Implications

Nil.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies the level of engagement undertaken. An explanation for each level is shown below.

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or developed budgets in the hands of the public.
	No external communications and engagement are required for this report.

The following communication and engagement applies to this report.

#### External communications and engagement

INFORM	Community members are advised of the outcome of their application.
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#### Internal communications and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken by the General Manager's Office.

Consultation has been undertaken to ensure budget requirements are met and approved.

#### **OPTIONS**

- 1) Accept the recommendation.
- 2) Vary the dollar amount before granting each or any request.
- 3) Decline to fund all the requests.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

#### **COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

#### **TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM NO. 11**

**FILE NO: 26/34484  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03232**

**INFORMATION PAPERS**

REPORT OF: TIMOTHY CROSDALE - GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

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**RECOMMENDATION IS THAT COUNCIL:**

Receives and notes the Information Papers listed below being presented to Council on 24 March 2026.

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<b>No:</b>	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Page:</b>
1	Cash and Investment Portfolio - February 2026	138
2	Designated Persons' Return	139
3	Delegations Report	140
4	Council Resolutions	142

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# INFORMATION PAPERS

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 26/21021  
EDRMS NO: PSC2017-00180**

**CASH AND INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO - FEBRUARY 2026**

REPORT OF: GLEN PETERKIN - FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT

**BACKGROUND**

Due to the timing of the distribution of the Council agenda for 24 March 2026, the Cash and Investment Report as at 28 February 2026 was not available for publication at that time.

The Cash and Investment Report as at 28 February 2026 will be available for Council's consideration in a Supplementary Report.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM NO. 2**

**FILE NO: 25/353266  
EDRMS NO: PSC2025-01083**

**DESIGNATED PERSONS' RETURN**

REPORT OF: TONY WICKHAM - GOVERNANCE SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to table Councillor and Designated Persons' Return/s (return) submitted.

In accordance with Part 4 – Pecuniary Interest of the Code of Conduct, all designated persons are required to submit a return. Returns are to be tabled at the first Council meeting after the lodgement date.

The following is a list of position/s who have submitted return/s:

- Ranger PSC1327.
- Development Engineering Coordinator PSC617.
- People, Process and Technology Section Manager PSC503.
- Environmental Operations Team Leader PSC472.
- Community, Economy and Place Team Leader PSC1271.
- Senior Development Planner PSC078.

In addition to the above item, a further position will be included in the annual returns for 2025 to 2026:

- Strategic Planning Officer PSC1152.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

- 1) Designated Persons' Return.

**ITEM NO. 3**

**FILE NO: 26/34443  
EDRMS NO: PSC2009-00965**

**DELEGATIONS REPORT**

REPORT OF: TONY WICKHAM - GOVERNANCE SECTION MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of each occasion the Mayor and/or General Manager have exercised their delegations, other than under section 226 and 335 of the Local Government Act 1993, which are conferred on each role.

The report at **(ATTACHMENT 1)** provides details of the delegation exercised, such as the delegated authority, the date and the reason for exercising the delegation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1) Delegations Report.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER DELEGATION REPORT**

Date exercised	Delegations exercised	Purpose	Role exercising delegation	Reported to Council
2-Feb-26	Clause 178 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021)	RFQ044-2025-26 - Supply and Delivery of One (1) Fuso Canter e918 Electric Truck with Capital Body Works Body (Plant #19306).	Acting General Manager	24/03/2026

**ITEM NO. 4**

**FILE NO: 26/34449  
EDRMS NO: PSC2017-00106**

**COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS**

REPORT OF: TIMOTHY CROSDALE - GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTORATE: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Mayor and Councillors of the status of all matters to be dealt with arising out of the proceedings of previous meetings of the Council in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Community Futures resolutions.
- 2) Corporate Strategy and Support resolutions.
- 3) Facilities and Infrastructure resolutions.
- 4) General Manager's Office resolutions.

**COUNCILLORS' ROOM/DASHBOARD**

Nil.

**TABLED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 1 COMMUNITY FUTURES RESOLUTIONS.**



**Division:** Community Futures  
**Committee:** Ordinary Council  
**Officer:**  
**Date From:** 22/07/2025  
**Date To:** 24/02/2026  
**Printed:** Wednesday, 25 February 2026

**Action Sheets Report**

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 22/07/2025	Lamont, Brock	Request to Revoke Remaining Declared Offshore Wind Zone and Restore to Community and Environment	1/05/2026		
1		Pear, Steven				25/191415
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
It was resolved that the item be deferred to allow Council staff to seek information from the Federal Energy Minister regarding the legal process and the Government's ability to revoke the balance of the offshore wind zone. Correspondence was sent to the Minister on 14 August 2025. Follow-up correspondence was sent on 14 October 2025. Council is awaiting a response.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 28/10/2025	Lamont, Brock	Planning Proposal - 19 Gan Gan Road, Anna Bay	29/05/2026	29/10/2025	
2		Pear, Steven				25/300809
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
A community workshop has been held, a review of the outcomes is being completed.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 28/10/2025	Lamont, Brock	Kings Hill	29/05/2026	29/10/2025	
2		Pear, Steven				25/300809
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Correspondence was sent to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on 22 January 2026 and Council is awaiting a response.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 9/12/2025	Lamont, Brock	Planning Proposal - 339 Tarean Road, Karuah	1/05/2026	10/12/2025	
2		Pear, Steven				25/342831
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Further information has been received from the applicant. The application is being revised prior to being reported to Council.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 9/12/2025	Lamont, Brock	Draft Medowie Town Centre Masterplan	26/05/2026	10/12/2025	
4		Pear, Steven				25/342831
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
The masterplan will return to Council following Public Exhibition to allow for consideration of submissions and any necessary amendments to the masterplan for final endorsement.						

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 2 CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SUPPORT RESOLUTIONS.**



<b>Action Sheets Report</b>	<b>Division:</b>	Corporate Strategy and Support	<b>Date From:</b>	11/04/2023
	<b>Committee:</b>	Ordinary Council	<b>Date To:</b>	24/02/2026
	<b>Officer:</b>		<b>Printed:</b>	Wednesday, 25 February 2026

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 11/04/2023	Pattison, Zoe	22 Homestead Street, Salamander Bay	31/12/2026	12/04/2023	
5 088		Pattison, Zoe				23/92450
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Council is investigating options for the rezoning of 22 Homestead Street, Salamander Bay, and the development of a Vegetation Management Plan, to provide the best opportunity to enable a successful long-term rehabilitation of the site.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 22/08/2023	Pattison, Zoe	Raymond Terrace Gateway Site Masterplan	31/12/2026		
1 193		Pattison, Zoe				23/214729
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Options for the future of the Gateway site will be considered as part of the broader Raymond Terrace Town Centre Strategy.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 24/06/2025	Pattison, Zoe	112 Adelaide Street and 18A Sturgeon Street, Raymond Terrace	30/06/2026	25/06/2025	
1		Pattison, Zoe				25/159107
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
It was resolved that Council progresses with Option 2 outlined in the confidential business paper.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 24/02/2026	Peterkin, Glen	Policy Review - Pricing Policy	30/04/2026	25/02/2026	
2		Pattison, Zoe				26/56178
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Policy to be placed on public exhibition.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 24/02/2026	Donaldson, Cameron	Packaging and Plastics Scheme	31/03/2026	25/02/2026	
1 022		Pattison, Zoe				26/56178
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff to prepare letter as per Council resolution.						

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 3 FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOLUTIONS.**



**Division:** Facilities and Infrastructure  
**Committee:** Ordinary Council  
**Officer:**  
**Date From:** 27/08/2013  
**Date To:** 24/02/2026  
**Printed:** Wednesday, 25 February 2026

[Action Sheets Report](#)

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 28/11/2023	Maretich, John	Sale of closed roads in Raymond Terrace	30/06/2026	29/11/2023	
1		Kable, Gregory				23/324875
243						
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
1 road has been sold and settled, 1 road is under contract and the remaining road is undergoing road closure survey plan.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 28/05/2024	Maretich, John	Bus Stop Infrastructure Plan	31/05/2026	29/05/2024	
1		Kable, Gregory				24/131056
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Council Engineers will continue development of the Bus Shelter Infrastructure Plan. Future Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS) funding is expected to aid in the plan's completion within the next financial year.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 23/07/2024	Maretich, John	Raymond Terrace Boat Ramp	31/12/2026	24/07/2024	
6		Kable, Gregory				24/189773
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
A workshop has been scheduled to discuss the proposed works.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 10/06/2025	Kable, Gregory	Port Stephens Roads Acceleration Program Expanded Funding Strategy	31/12/2026	11/06/2025	
4		Kable, Gregory				25/148178
115						
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
As resolved, strategy for funding of the RAP program will be pursued over the next 18 months.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 24/06/2025	Maretich, John	Medowie Drainage	30/06/2026	25/06/2025	
1		Kable, Gregory				25/159107
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff are preparing a report following the recent external expression of interest to engage a consultant.						

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 3 FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOLUTIONS.**



**Division:** Facilities and Infrastructure  
**Committee:** Ordinary Council  
**Officer:**  
**Date From:** 27/08/2013  
**Date To:** 24/02/2026  
**Printed:** Wednesday, 25 February 2026

**Action Sheets Report**

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 22/07/2025	Maretich, John	Review and Strategic Planning for Dog Recreation Areas in Port Stephens	31/12/2026		
2		Kable, Gregory				25/191415
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff will review the existing dog parks and off-leash areas in accordance with the resolutions. This review will be finalised in 2026 and a report will be prepared for Council. The next revision of the Strategic Assets Management Plan (SAMP) will be modified to incorporate dog parks.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 26/08/2025	Maretich, John	Acquisition of Part 79 Brandy Hill Drive, Brandy Hill for the Brandy Hill Shared Pathway	30/04/2026	27/08/2025	
1		Kable, Gregory				25/231579
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff will prepare the documents required to affect the payment of compensation, for the General Manager's signature as Council's authorised representative.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 9/12/2025	Maretich, John	Tomaree Sports Complex Masterplan	31/05/2026	10/12/2025	
6		Kable, Gregory				25/342831
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
As per resolution the draft masterplan has been placed on public exhibition.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 9/12/2025	Maretich, John	Roads Futures Strategy	30/06/2026	10/12/2025	
1		Kable, Gregory				25/342831
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff to prepare report for Council.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 10/02/2026	Maretich, John	2026 Koori Knockout Event	31/08/2026	11/02/2026	
1 004		Kable, Gregory				26/41065
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Staff will work through the items listed in the resolution.						

**ITEM 4 - ATTACHMENT 3 FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOLUTIONS.**



**Division:** Facilities and Infrastructure      **Date From:** 27/08/2013  
**Committee:** Ordinary Council                      **Date To:** 24/02/2026  
**Officer:**  
**Printed:** Wednesday, 25 February 2026  
**Action Sheets Report**

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 24/02/2026	Maretich, John	Policy Review - Flood Risk Management Policy	30/05/2026	25/02/2026	
3 017		Kable, Gregory				26/56178
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
As per Council resolution, the policy will go on public exhibition for 28 days with the inclusion of items 5.3, 5.7 and 5.8 from the original draft policy.						



**Action Sheets Report**

**Division:** General Manager's Office  
**Committee:** Ordinary Council  
**Officer:**

**Date From:** 23/09/2025  
**Date To:** 24/02/2026

**Printed:** Wednesday, 25 February 2026

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 23/09/2025	Wickham, Tony	Proposal to Alter the Port Stephens Local Government Boundaries	30/04/2026	24/09/2025	
9		Crosdale, Timothy				25/263649
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Resolution of Council progressing.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 28/10/2025	Wickham, Tony	General Manager's delegations	30/04/2026	29/10/2025	
1		Crosdale, Timothy				25/300809
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Resolution of Council progressing.						

Type	Meeting	Officer/Director	Subject	Est. Compl.	Emailed	Completed
Report	Ordinary Council 9/12/2025	Wickham, Tony	Delegations	30/04/2026	10/12/2025	
3		Crosdale, Timothy				25/342831
<b>25 Feb 2026</b>						
Resolution of Council progressing.						

# NOTICES OF MOTION

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 26/52919**

**EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03148**

**E-SCOOTERS AND E-BIKES**

**COUNCILLOR: NATHAN ERRINGTON**

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**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Requests the General Manager to write to the NSW Minister for Transport and the Member for Port Stephens seeking:
    - a) An update on the NSW Government's progress regarding legislation and regulatory reform for e-bikes and e-scooters;
    - b) Clarification of enforcement powers and compliance standards; and
    - c) Advice on any proposed changes affecting local government responsibilities.
  
  - 2) Requests the General Manager to write to the Superintendent of the Port Stephens Police District requesting:
    - a) Feedback on enforcement challenges;
    - b) Identification of high-risk areas; and
    - c) Recommendations for improved collaboration between Council and NSW Police.
  
  - 3) Requests the General Manager to investigate and report back to Council on:
    - a) The adequacy of existing signage across Council-managed sporting fields, parks, shared pathways and community facilities;
    - b) Whether additional or clearer signage is required to prohibit or regulate e-bike and e-scooter use in designated areas.
- 

**BACKGROUND REPORT OF: BROCK LAMONT – STRATEGY & ENVIRONMENT SECTION MANAGER**

**BACKGROUND**

Councils are not the jurisdictional authority for e-bikes or e-scooters in NSW. Enforcement and regulation is undertaken by the NSW Police and Transport for NSW.

A NSW Parliamentary Inquiry was completed in 2025 into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options. A number of the findings from this inquiry have been supported by Government and integrated into the NSW Government's E-micromobility Action Plan (the Action Plan).

The Action Plan has 3 focus outcomes being:

- Improving road safety outcomes
- Reducing fire risks and harm to people, infrastructure and assets, and
- Encouraging uptake.

Within the Action Plan, the NSW Government has committed to the following compliance related actions to be led by Transport for NSW:

#### Policy and regulation

- Progressing reforms to legalise the use of e-scooters in public places.
- Review the definition of an e-bike in the NSW Road Rules, with reference to a national definition and international standards. This review will consider safety, rider and community implications of reform.
- Reviewing the Roads Act 1993 to create a more contemporary planning and management framework for roads and streets across NSW, better enable Transport and councils as decision makers, and recognise that roads are not only for vehicle traffic, but for all road users.
- Explore options to ensure current laws enable police to seize illegal vehicles remain fit-for-purpose and deter illegal e-micromobility devices being ridden in public places.
- Review road rules related to e-micromobility devices and bicycles riding on footpaths and associated speed limits. This review will explore potential benefits and safety implications for riders and pedestrians as well as broader impacts.
- Review statutory guidance on safety signage and the design of shared paths to identify opportunities for improvement. This will be done in consultation with key stakeholders including bike groups, disability groups, local councils, other vulnerable road user groups to ensure a wide range of needs and considerations are captured through the review.
- Explore opportunities to enhance enforcement, including testing technologies to support roadside enforcement.

Should this Notice of Motion be supported, staff would undertake the actions set out within.

A number of the above actions committed to within the Action Plan have not yet been implemented by the NSW Government.

As Council is not the regulatory agency for e-bikes and e-scooters, the action relating to an audit of regulatory signage is considered to be premature. This review could be completed once the NSW Government has progressed the Action Plan further and a request specific to signage could be included in Council's correspondence.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**ITEM NO. 2**

**FILE NO: 26/52882**

**EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03148**

**PEAK SEASON IN PORT STEPHENS**

**COUNCILLOR: NATHAN ERRINGTON**

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**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Requests the General Manager to undertake a comprehensive review of Council's approach of peak season management in Port Stephens, including targeted engagement with key local businesses, tourism operators and other relevant stakeholders.
  - 2) Requests that the General Manager report to Council on the outcomes of the peak season review, including identified issues, opportunities and recommended actions.
  - 3) Requests the General Manager to investigate with Destination Port Stephens to have a Forum for all tourism operators.
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**BACKGROUND REPORT OF: EMILY LIVENS – ACTING COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SECTION MANAGER**

**BACKGROUND**

The visitor economy is one of Port Stephens' most significant economic and social contributors creating jobs, driving business investment, and enhancing the vibrancy of our community.

The tourism sector supports 2,296 jobs in Port Stephens, with an average spend per trip of \$450. In 2024, the region welcomed 1.72 million visitors, generating \$822 million in expenditure.

At the same time, peak holiday periods place strain on local roads, parking and public spaces, particularly in high profile locations like Birubi Headland, Nelson Bay and Shoal Bay.

Alongside Council's core visitor services at the Holiday Parks, and Visitor Information Centre, Council provides several additional services over peak season including:

- Additional public place cleaning and waste collection
- Holiday bin service during the summer season
- Traffic management and signage in key locations

- Additional ranger and compliance services
- Additional communications about service changes, holiday and beach safety.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

# CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

In accordance with Section 10A, of the Local Government Act 1993, Council can close part of a meeting to the public to consider matters involving personnel, personal ratepayer hardship, commercial information, nature and location of a place or item of Aboriginal significance on community land, matters affecting the security of Council, Councillors, staff or Council property and matters that could be prejudice to the maintenance of law.

Further information on any item that is listed for consideration as a confidential item can be sought by contacting Council.