

LIVE

PORT STEPHENS Local Housing Strategy



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

An aerial photograph of a residential town, likely Port Stephens, Australia. The town is densely packed with houses, many with red-tiled roofs, interspersed with green trees. In the background, there is a vast expanse of forest and distant mountains under a clear blue sky. A large, semi-transparent circular overlay is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image, containing the title and a paragraph of text.

Acknowledgement of Country

Port Stephens Council acknowledges the Worimi People, the traditional custodians of the land on which this document was prepared. We pay respect to knowledge holders and community members of the land, and acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, past, present and future.

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Introduction

Executive summary

The Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA) is growing and Live Port Stephens provides the road map to accommodate people who want to live in our LGA over the next 20 years.

As a major driver in Australia's largest regional economy, Port Stephens has recently attracted substantial investment to support infrastructure and future job growth. Major public, private and civil projects will make Port Stephens a regionally significant hub for the defence, tourism, manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, marine, and energy sectors.

Proximity to Greater Newcastle and the Hunter's rich resources will attract investment, businesses and a skilled workforce to Port Stephens looking to capitalise on established transport connections and the global gateway that is Newcastle Airport.

These jobs will attract workers and families over the next 20 years looking for a work life balance in one of the Hunter's most beautiful and varied landscapes.

Port Stephens can offer new homes that are well connected to schools, transport, beaches and waterways, sporting and other facilities. From coastal communities, urban release areas, hinterland villages, waterfront homes and town apartments, to spacious homes in the suburbs and rural retreats, housing in Port Stephens can provide lifestyles to suit every household.

The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan requires councils to prepare local housing strategies to deliver housing close to jobs and services to create sustainable lifestyles in liveable communities. Live Port Stephens creates capacity for a diverse range of new homes close to established and planned employment hubs in Port Stephens and Greater Newcastle.

Live Port Stephens will:

- ensure suitable land supply
- improve housing affordability
- increase diversity of housing choice
- facilitate liveable communities

Live Port Stephens is the overarching strategy to guide land use planning decisions for new housing in Port Stephens and satisfies action 4.1 in the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement. It comprises four outcomes (what we want to achieve), 12 priorities (how we will get there) and 23 actions (what we do next). The outcomes will meet the directions set for Hunter councils in State planning strategies and the priorities identify the broad issues or policy areas that we need to focus on. The actions listed at the end of each chapter identify the specific steps to achieve each outcome.



I originally came for work and then stayed. It became my home. My friends and family are now here.

Port Stephens Snapshot

Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA) spans 860 square kilometres and forms part of the Hunter region, Australia's largest regional economy. It is bounded by Dungog Shire and Mid Coast Council areas to the north, Maitland City to the west, and the City of Newcastle to the south. The Pacific Ocean lies to the east.

Port Stephens is home to approximately 72,700 people living in coastal communities, hinterland villages, rural retreats, or in the suburbs. Each local centre in the LGA offers housing and lifestyles that create diverse communities.

Identified as part of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, Raymond Terrace, Tomago and Williamstown are regionally significant strategic and employment centres in Port Stephens. Tomago and Williamstown have been identified as 'Catalyst Areas' in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and are earmarked for significant growth and investment over the next 20 years. Due to its proximity to Williamstown and Tomago, as well the potential for residential growth, Medowie is likely to emerge as a strategic centre playing an important role both within Port Stephens and Greater Newcastle.

Newcastle Airport at Williamstown provides a global gateway for the Hunter region and is home to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base and associated aerospace and aviation support services. The arrival of the Joint Strike Fighter is anticipated to create some 3000 direct and indirect jobs for civilian and defence workers and the expansion of the aerospace precinct around the airport is likely to have a significant impact on the growth of Port Stephens and Greater Newcastle.

Tomago is an established major employment area comprising various industrial and manufacturing activities including, mining support, heavy industry and aluminium production. Investment in a major gas fired power station at Tomago will provide energy infrastructure to grow the region.

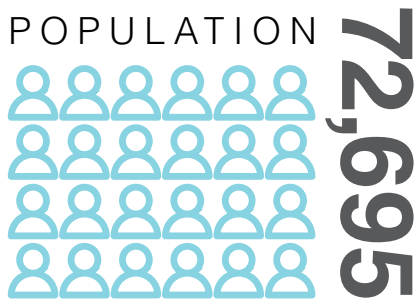
Nelson Bay and the Tomaree Peninsula are similarly major contributors to the regional economy, hosting iconic tourist destinations that attract State, national and international visitors.

Access to Newcastle Airport, the Port of Newcastle, and key regional road and rail corridors make Port Stephens a major hub for businesses seeking to capitalise on freight and logistics infrastructure.

Town centres in Raymond Terrace, Medowie, and Nelson Bay provide for residents and visitors to live, shop, work, gather and be entertained. Coastal towns and villages provide unique tourist and visitor experiences and support strong communities that enjoy living in a unique natural setting. The rural west of Port Stephens provides a scenic backdrop for villages and rural residential retreats that reflect a rich history of land use in our LGA.

Port Stephens encompasses diverse natural and cultural heritage, including Aboriginal cultural heritage. Areas of environmental significance shape our landscape, including National Parks, the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park, the Watagan to Stockton Green Corridor, estuaries and wetlands, Grahamstown Dam, the Stockton sand dunes, and the Hunter and Williams Rivers.

Port Stephens snapshot



8300

EMPLOYED AT WILLIAMTOWN BY 2036



27k

JOBS IN PORT STEPHENS



\$5bn

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT



+13%

POPULATION INCREASE IN 10 YEARS



37%

AGED 55 AND OVER AND MEDIAN AGE IS 45

Housing affordability



\$405

MEDIAN WEEKLY RENT IN 2016



135

PEOPLE NEEDING SOCIAL HOUSING



5.5%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



14%

HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING HOUSING STRESS

Housing diversity



333

DWELLINGS APPROVED IN 2017 TO 2018



74%

SEPARATE HOUSES



2.48

PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD



33k

DWELLINGS IN 2016

Liveability



18.3km

MEDIAN DISTANCE TO WORK



35%

LIVED HERE FOR 20+ YEARS



56%

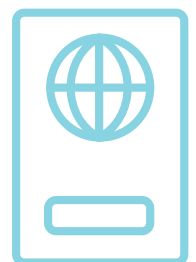
WORKFORCE RESIDE IN LGA

1.8m

VISITORS CONTRIBUTING

\$539m

TO LOCAL ECONOMY



Opportunities and constraints

Significant commitments to invest in Port Stephens to grow the regional and local economy and to provide the infrastructure to support growth will drive demand for new housing over the next 20 years.

Investment in Newcastle Airport, new infrastructure to support urban development, town centre rejuvenation, smart city innovations, and education facilities will attract people looking to live near jobs and in vibrant communities.

Port Stephens is renowned for its scenic and natural beauty, with environmentally and culturally significant areas. Port Stephens attracts residents seeking homes with strong connections to surrounding areas as well as the natural environment, including our beaches, rivers and waterfronts, forests, sand dunes, or the rural hinterland.

Our diverse landscape can present potential constraints for new housing in some areas such as flooding, biodiversity values, drinking water catchments, and bushfire. Other constraints from existing land uses in Port Stephens will shape how we grow and where new housing is located, including aircraft noise and productive agricultural land.

Existing urban areas and centres in Port Stephens present key opportunities to accommodate future housing. New housing located within walking distance to main streets, shops, schools and parks will sustain liveable communities.

Investment in rejuvenating town centres, such as Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay, and an emerging strategic centre at Medowie will create opportunities for people to live in vibrant centres, and an increased resident population can ensure local economies are supported.

Existing urban areas and neighbourhoods in Port Stephens can provide a diverse and affordable mix of housing options close to employment hubs in Port Stephens and other parts of Greater Newcastle such as Maitland and Newcastle City.

Raymond Terrace, Anna Bay, and the Tilligerry Peninsula can provide opportunities for growing local centres through small scale renewal, for example townhouse redevelopments or shop top housing in centres.

New development and new housing in Port Stephens can contribute to the revitalisation of existing communities and fund local infrastructure investment such as facilities for residents, including sporting facilities, community and cultural facilities, road upgrades and cycle paths.

Existing and planned infrastructure supports urban release areas at Kings Hill, Raymond Terrace, Medowie, Karuah and Anna Bay. Increased growth provides opportunities for future investment and upgrades in Port Stephens such as improved public transport and connections to other strategic centres in Greater Newcastle.

Housing vision

In 2040, Port Stephens will offer homes in diverse neighbourhoods and centres that enable people to live close to work, raise their families in healthy neighbourhoods, escape the rat race surrounded by picturesque landscapes, or enjoy retirement in active communities. New and existing residents are spoilt for choice when it comes to choosing their dream home.

Local centres are the hub of community life and provide spaces for people to gather, celebrate and explore. Our natural and cultural heritage shapes our places and is reflected in the local character of our neighbourhoods and centres.

Port Stephens residents are more connected than ever with local, regional and global transport networks providing easy access to jobs, interstate and overseas travel, education and health services. Residents and visitors use walking and cycling links to access local shops, schools, parks and sporting facilities.

New areas are planned to be liveable neighbourhoods and designed to support sustainable homes and lifestyles. Communities grow in places that create a sense of belonging and foster wellbeing.

Raymond Terrace is an attractive, affordable and vibrant centre with homes for people seeking shorter trips to work in Heatherbrae, Williamstown and Tomago, and easy access to other centres in Greater Newcastle. A revitalised town centre provides homes close to shopping, dining, and entertainment. Residents are connected via cycle ways and paths to surrounding suburbs, schools, parks and sports fields. Raymond Terrace is supported by new housing at Kings Hill offering a range of housing choices in the area.

Our coastal waterways and the scenic natural environment are reflected in the local character of the coastal towns and villages on the Tomaree and Tilligerry peninsulas. New development is concentrated within existing urban areas between the bush and the waters of Port Stephens and strong local communities enjoy convenient, active lifestyles.

Medowie attracts families looking for space to grow and maintain convenient connections to Greater Newcastle. As a place of tall trees, the streets and backyards are part of a green urban landscape that supports plants, animals and people.

Karuah has undergone substantial growth that has reinvigorated the town centre and attracted 'escapers' from Greater Newcastle and beyond.

Fern Bay enjoys an exciting new town centre and provides diverse housing choices in one of the region's most convenient locations.

Port Stephens will attract new residents and provide housing that meets their needs. New urban development opportunities, including a mix of infill and greenfield opportunities, will be investigated as Greater Newcastle grows.

Outcome 1

Ensure suitable land supply



Priorities

- 1.1 Ensure adequate supply of new housing
- 1.2 Remove barriers to unlock housing supply
- 1.3 Increase the proportion of infill housing

Home in Port Stephens can mean living in a seaside village, a suburban neighbourhood, a coastal retreat or a peaceful rural escape. The variety of landscape settings means residents are spoilt for choice when seeking a home to suit their lifestyle. Port Stephens features pristine natural environments, beautiful waterways, and easy access to jobs, services and facilities, making it a destination of choice for many.

In 2018, Port Stephens was the third fastest growing local government area in the Hunter (behind neighbouring Maitland and Cessnock). The population of Port Stephens grew from approximately 64,300 in 2008 to 72,700 in 2018, an increase of 13%.

Major economic stimulus and committed investment in Port Stephens is likely to continue this trend, with planned economic growth around Newcastle Airport at Williamstown and Tomago industrial precinct and significant investment committed to support the visitor economy on the Tomaree Peninsula. The introduction of the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to the RAAF base at Williamstown will alone create an additional 3000 jobs by 2036.

Proximity to these job markets makes living locally an attractive option, with most housing opportunities in Port Stephens located

within 15 minutes of a Greater Newcastle employment centre. Existing and future residential areas, such as Karuah, Fern Bay, Kings Hill, and Medowie can provide affordable options for people looking for a relaxed lifestyle less than 30 minutes from major employment areas in Williamstown, Maitland, Broadmeadow, and Newcastle City centre.

As the way we work changes, Port Stephens will be an even more attractive choice for people choosing to work remotely and live in a beautiful location. Port Stephens offers easy access to both Australian and international destinations, with Newcastle Airport putting local residents within an hour of Melbourne or Brisbane.

The Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report identifies population growth slowing over time due to limited land supply in Port Stephens. This is consistent with State government population projections for our LGA. The Report demonstrates that when land supply is available, the population of Port Stephens grows, and when land supply is constrained, housing affordability decreases and people settle elsewhere in Greater Newcastle.



Table 1 shows the projected supply of new dwellings in Port Stephens to 2040, based on the current existing land supply. This supply includes undeveloped land already zoned for residential development or sites that have been conditionally approved by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for rezoning as of December 2019.

Table 1 shows the available proportion of dwellings located on greenfield sites, infill opportunities and on rural residential sites.

A high proportion of the projected supply will be provided from large urban release areas, such as Kings Hill, and this is reflected in the proportion of greenfield dwellings within Raymond Terrace (87%) and Port Stephens (72%).

The data shows that without intervention to identify additional housing opportunities

(e.g. rezoning new urban greenfield sites or amending development controls within existing urban areas), the current available housing supply is unlikely to support the demand identified by DPIE¹.

Regular monitoring will be undertaken to compare actual dwelling production with the forecasts and to inform intervention actions. Without adequate housing supply in Port Stephens, people moving to the area over the next 20 years may not be able to find homes near where they work or within their budget.

Currently only 56% of people working in Port Stephens live in the LGA and the State Government's Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (GNMP) directs local councils to deliver housing close to jobs. To shift this statistic over the next 20 years, Port Stephens can provide homes for people moving to the area for these new jobs.

Table 1 Current supply of new dwellings by area to 2040

Area	Greenfield proportion	Infill proportion	Rural residential proportion
Fern Bay	90%	3%	7%
Karuah	92%	8%	0%
Medowie	68%	22%	10%
Raymond Terrace (incl. Kings Hill)	87%	13%	0%
Rural East	100%	0%	0%
Rural West	0%	5%	95%
Tilligerry	7%	93%	0%
Tomaree	43%	57%	0%
Port Stephens	72%	25%	3%
TOTAL NEW DWELLINGS	7500		

Source: Remplan 2019, Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report

Note: This table refers to 'planning areas' as identified in the Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report²

Port Stephens has long been a desired destination for retirees and older people moving from cities and other areas to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle in beautiful surroundings. Demand for homes suited to older persons is likely to continue.

Other key trends that are likely to impact future demand for new housing includes 'regional returners' or people who left the area as young adults and are choosing to move back later in life as they grow families or value the lifestyle in Port Stephens. Facilitating an appropriate supply of housing provides opportunities to retain younger people with

strong connections to our LGA, who value access to developable land that is close to family, centres and employment.

The Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report recommends finding new housing opportunities to increase dwellings and meet this expected demand in order to avoid negative impacts on housing affordability.²

Live Port Stephens contains the actions to identify additional housing opportunities, create more diversity and housing choice, and to support housing affordability in our LGA.



Priority 1.1 Ensure adequate supply of new housing

Significant commitments to invest in Port Stephens to grow the regional and local economies and provide the infrastructure to support that growth will drive demand for new housing over the next 20 years.

Port Stephens has always been an attractive place to live, renowned for its scenic and natural beauty and environmentally and culturally significant areas. Supporting economic and population growth, while preserving productive agricultural land, the environment and natural landscape requires a balanced approach when planning for future urban and rural housing areas.

Various other constraints, such as flooding, biodiversity corridors, bushfire, slope, and proximity to conflicting land uses will also impact new housing opportunities in Port Stephens.

Locations with few constraints that can capitalise on existing infrastructure should be prioritised. Future greenfield housing areas will preferably be located on land that is in proximity to an existing centre, adjoining an existing urban area, or where it can be demonstrated that sewer, water, electricity, transport, and drainage infrastructure can be delivered.

The Greenfield Housing Criteria at Appendix 1 guides the identification and assessment of future urban greenfield rezoning requests. The criteria in Appendix 1 reflects a preference for future greenfield housing on land that is unconstrained and acknowledges that some rezoning requests will require a higher level of strategic justification and supporting information to be considered for development.

Rural residential housing can also contribute to the overall housing supply and increase housing diversity. Planning for this type

of housing supply requires balancing the protection of agricultural land with provision of adequate housing to meet demand. Rural residential housing will be prioritised in locations where:

- The land is unlikely to be required for agriculture and is unsuitable for more intensive urban purposes in the future due to physical constraints such as slope, environmental characteristics, or natural hazards;
- Less intensive urban development results in better management of the land; and
- The delivery of infrastructure required to service the development is physically and economically feasible.

The Rural Residential Criteria at Appendix 2 guides the identification and assessment of future rural residential rezoning requests. The criteria in Appendix 2 reflects a preference for future rural residential opportunities on land that is relatively unconstrained, not suitable for urban development, and not identified as important agricultural land.

New rezoning requests will be assessed against the relevant criteria in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and Council's local strategies.

To plan for the co-ordinated delivery of local and State infrastructure, services, and the community facilities necessary to support new development, rezoning requests will be prioritised in consultation with State agencies, including Hunter Water Corporation, Transport for NSW and DPIE.

Rezoning requests will be prioritised to ensure the objectives of State, regional and local plans (including Live Port Stephens) can be delivered, such as housing in locations that connect people to jobs and public transport, conservation of important environmental and biodiversity values, and provision of community and social infrastructure.

Priority 1.2 Remove barriers to unlock housing supply

There are sites identified in adopted local area strategies, that have failed to progress to rezoning for new housing for any number of reasons. This may include fragmented ownership, environmental constraints requiring significant investigations, or challenges in funding and providing necessary infrastructure.

As part of boosting housing supply, sites already identified for housing can be re-examined to identify barriers to delivery and the opportunities for unlocking housing supply on these sites.

Fragmented land ownership (where a development precinct has multiple landowners) can complicate the process of making land use changes, particularly if significant resources are required to fund the studies and investigations to support a rezoning. Fragmented land ownership is common to a number of precincts identified in existing land use strategies for future housing and may have stalled potential land supply from being rezoned.

Environmental constraints also have the potential to stall the delivery of housing, especially when studies and investigations are expensive, time consuming, or difficult to resource and coordinate. Landowners might be reluctant to invest in a rezoning process where environmental constraints can impact potential yield and certainty.

Infrastructure requirements, like the timely provision of roads, sewer and water infrastructure, can also be a barrier for housing development. In our LGA, sewer and water infrastructure is the responsibility of Hunter Water and the annual Hunter Water Growth Plan provides detailed maps with the likely timeframes for servicing new development. Hunter Water also supports developer delivered infrastructure ahead of schedule through funding deeds. Council provides advice to Hunter Water in the preparation of the Hunter Water Growth Plan and consults Hunter Water on land use plans and applications including in relation to drainage and water quality within drinking water catchments.



Case study: investigating environmental constraints at Anna Bay

The Anna Bay Strategy and Town Plan was adopted by Council in 2008. The Strategy identifies land with potential for housing development, and the need for detailed flood investigations to support any future development. For individual landowners, the

studies proved cost prohibitive and rezoning investigations stalled until Council sought grant funding from the NSW Government to prepare a comprehensive area flood study as part of the NSW Floodplain Management Program in 2017. The Anna Bay Tilligerry Creek Flood Study will guide future development in the area and unlock future residential sites at Anna Bay.

Figure 1 Anna Bay and Tilligerry Flood Study area



Priority 1.3 Increase the proportion of infill housing

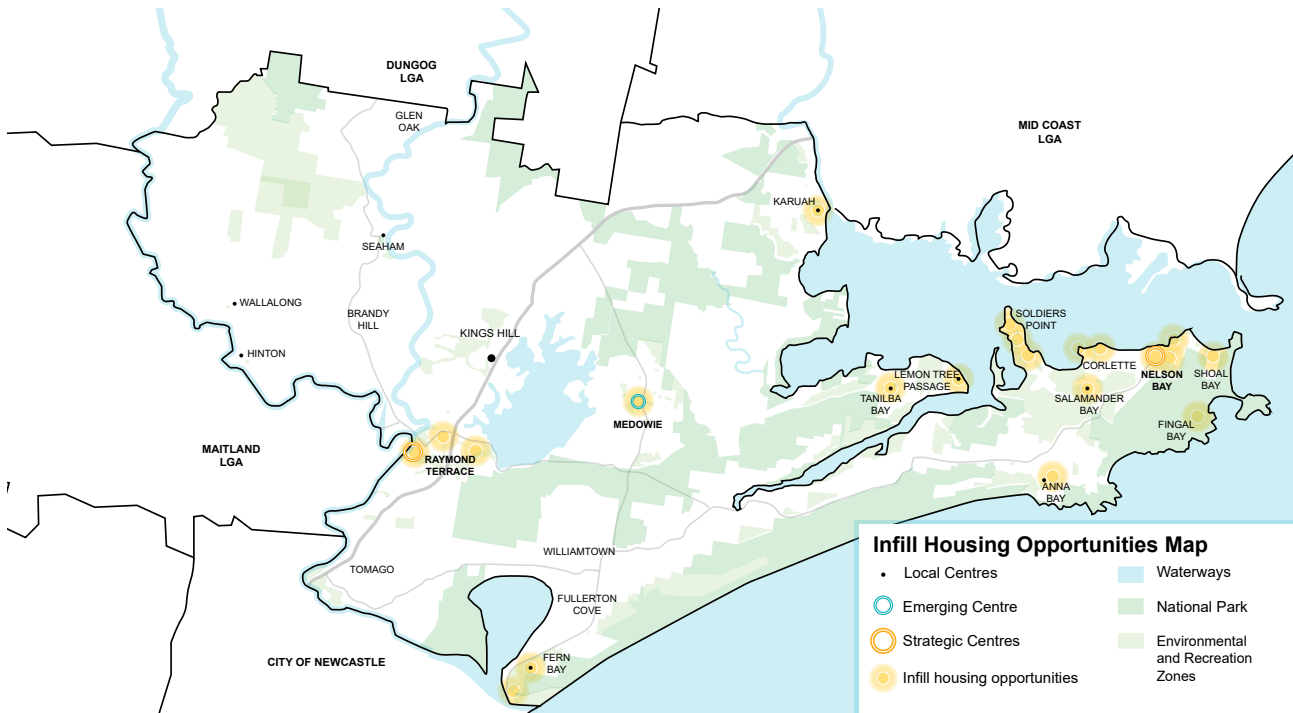
Infill housing is the redevelopment of existing urban areas for additional housing such as duplexes, terraces, townhouses or granny flats. The GNMP has set a target for new dwellings to be 60% infill and 40% greenfield across Greater Newcastle by 2036.

The current housing supply in Port Stephens is predominantly greenfield housing with 78.8% being houses on separate lots. Table 1 above shows that without intervention this trend is likely to continue with infill housing

only making up 25% of the projected supply of new dwellings to 2040. Live Port Stephens proposes actions, including amendments to development controls and monitoring of supply, to increase the proportion of infill housing.

Infill housing creates more compact neighbourhoods which promotes more efficient use of existing infrastructure such as pathways, roads, parks and more efficient delivery of services such as water, garbage collection and electricity. It also improves the viability and availability of social infrastructure and community facilities.

Figure 2 Infill Housing Opportunities Map



The provision of additional housing in close proximity to retail and commercial centres enhances the economic viability of those centres with research showing that areas that are more walkable are also more economically sustainable³. Local businesses are more likely to thrive when resident populations increase, particularly in areas that have seasonal tourist and visitor economies.

Infill housing can be a sustainable solution to reducing urban sprawl and retaining the green spaces that surround our towns and villages. Some types of infill housing can provide more affordable first homes for young families, or provide older people with opportunities to age in place, close to shops, services, friends and family.

The Infill Housing Study identifies opportunities for new housing in liveable communities within walking distance to existing centres⁴. Based on the study, Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay

and Corlette offer the greatest opportunities for new infill housing. Anna Bay and the Tilligerry Peninsula (Tanilba Bay, Mallabula and Lemon Tree Passage) are also identified as suitable locations and Medowie and Karuah have some opportunities for selected types of infill housing.

The Infill Housing Opportunities Map shows the areas identified in the Study and the urban areas that can accommodate infill housing within walking distance of commercial services.

The Infill Housing Opportunities Map guides the identification and assessment of future rezoning requests for infill development. The criteria in the Study reflects a preference for future infill opportunities on relatively unconstrained residential land within 400m of commercial centres.



Outcome 3 summarises the findings of the Infill Housing Study and identifies the dwelling types that can complement existing streetscapes and neighbourhoods.

Actions	Links to
1. Prioritise rezoning requests for future greenfield housing that are consistent with adopted planning strategies and meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1	Priority 1.1
2. Prepare an annual report of land supply and dwelling production	Priority 1.1
3. Undertake an audit to identify the barriers preventing existing identified land supply from being developed	Priority 1.2
4. Consider opportunities for Council to lead actions to unlock potential land supply	Priority 1.2
5. Consider recommendations in the Infill Housing Study to facilitate infill housing in centres, including considering incentives to encourage selected types of infill	Priority 1.3
6. Review the rezoning request process to align with the outcomes and priorities of Live Port Stephens	Priority 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3



We didn't want a big yard and maintenance that comes with it. It was affordable and in our price range.

Outcome 2

Improve housing affordability



Priorities

- 2.1 Respond to housing stress
- 2.2 Provide more affordable housing near jobs
- 2.3 Reduce the cost of new housing

Everyone in our community benefits from more affordable housing options. Households with low or median incomes, young people wanting to move out and live close to family, a person on a pension, or key workers who need to live close to their job should have housing options in Port Stephens that suit their needs and budget.

Port Stephens is well placed to attract future residents looking for more affordable housing in comparison to other parts of NSW, particularly Sydney. Port Stephens can offer an attractive 'sea change' or 'tree change' for people moving to the area including 'regional returners' who grew up here and are looking to move back.

House and land affordability can impact on the quality of life, with households suffering from housing stress when they pay more than 30% of their income in housing costs (rent or mortgage). A ratio of 30/40 is often used as a benchmark—that is, if households that fall in the bottom 40% by income spend more than 30% of their income on housing, they are defined as being in housing stress. The consequences of housing stress can include:

- living with unmanageable levels of debt
- working longer hours to pay for housing
- travelling long distances to work or to access essential services
- living in overcrowded or substandard housing
- going without essentials such as adequate food, heating, medication or education

The challenge for Port Stephens is to provide a sustainable supply of affordable housing choices at the right price and in the right locations. Many factors can influence property and rental prices, however there are opportunities for Council to plan for more affordable housing by reducing direct and indirect housing costs. This can be done through the local planning system and in partnership with developers, including community housing providers.

Priority 2.1 Respond to housing stress

Sales data indicates that Port Stephens is an affordable option within the Hunter region, particularly when compared to Lake Macquarie and Newcastle which offer similar coastal lifestyle opportunities. However, in comparison to sales data in Maitland and Cessnock, Port Stephens is considered less affordable.

Port Stephens comprises a higher proportion of very low-income households when compared to the Hunter region and New South Wales, which is reflective of the high proportion of the population that are of retirement age.

The Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report shows 14.1% of total households in Port Stephens experienced housing stress in 2016, compared to 13.7% of households in NSW. Of the total rented dwellings in Port Stephens, 41.4% were considered to be experiencing housing stress compared to 14.2% of households with mortgaged dwellings in 2016.

In 2011, there were 4365 available affordable rental properties in Port Stephens (i.e. affordable for low income renters), representing two thirds of all rental properties in the LGA. By 2016, this supply decreased to 4099 properties.

Rent in Port Stephens is becoming increasingly unaffordable for low income earners with flats and units currently representing the most affordable housing options in Port Stephens at a median rent of \$340 per week (December 2018).

On the demand side, single and couple households are the dominant household size in Port Stephens and recent survey data indicates a preference for some existing residents to downsize, either to a smaller home or homes on smaller blocks.



Outcome 3 summarises the results of the Housing Preferences Report which indicates a preference towards downsizing and remaining in Port Stephens.

Downsizing is perceived as moving from a larger to a smaller dwelling, generally with less bedrooms. However, some older households can prefer to move to a smaller home with the same number of bedrooms, but with fewer or smaller living areas and/or smaller outdoor areas or backyard.

Opportunities to improve housing affordability in Port Stephens may be directed towards these housing preferences by aiming to increase the supply of smaller lots as well as lower-cost dwellings, including duplexes or townhouses.

Satisfying the demand for downsizing can positively impact the supply of larger homes on larger blocks for families looking to buy or rent in the area. If existing residents in large properties are able to downsize and stay in Port Stephens, more dwellings would become available for people moving to the area looking for larger properties.

In areas with households on very low incomes or where mortgage or rental stress is identified, there may also be opportunities for developers and affordable housing providers to better meet demand by providing higher density dwellings such as townhouses and terraces.⁵

Whilst ensuring an adequate supply of new housing can address housing stress, other measures can include making more efficient use of existing housing. The 2016 Census showed high rates of unoccupied dwellings in some coastal parts of Port Stephens and, on average, Port Stephens had nearly double the rate of unoccupied dwellings as Lake Macquarie. These figures reflect the popularity of short term rental housing in Port Stephens which supports our tourist and visitor economy. Unoccupied dwellings can however impact the long term rental market and monitoring the availability of long term rental housing stock across Port Stephens and the rate of short term rental housing will inform any future actions



Priority 2.2 Provide more affordable housing near jobs

The top employment sectors in Port Stephens are public administration (including defence), manufacturing, and construction. These types of jobs are closely linked to the major employment hubs of Raymond Terrace, Tomago, Williamtown and Heatherbrae. Significant job growth is expected around Newcastle Airport at Williamtown and Tomago industrial precinct which is likely to drive demand for housing in nearby areas. Other residents in Port Stephens work in employment centres in parts of Greater Newcastle such as Maitland and Newcastle City. To provide housing options near jobs, housing supply should be focused within centres that have convenient links to major employment areas, such as Raymond Terrace, Medowie and Fern Bay.



Outcome 1 aims to ensure future land supply is in locations with convenient access to jobs and town centres.

Other major employment sectors in Port Stephens include retail, visitor and tourist industries, service industries, health and aged care. These industries are predominant on the Tomaree Peninsula and may create a need for additional housing options in Anna Bay, Nelson Bay, and Salamander Bay.

Of the 27,346 people who work within the Port Stephens LGA, 56% live and work in Port Stephens, while 44% live elsewhere (primarily Newcastle, followed by Maitland and Lake Macquarie). The median distance

employed residents in Port Stephens travel to get to work is approximately 18km which is significantly higher than the median distance for other workers in the Hunter region (nearly 12km), and in New South Wales (11km). This demonstrates a need to focus housing supply in Port Stephens in areas that are closer to current and future jobs.

Given the wide range of industries and employment options available in and around Port Stephens, the housing types to satisfy the demand to live close to jobs is also likely to be diverse.



Outcome 3 aims to facilitate new housing within existing urban areas and to provide for a range of housing types to better cater for diverse lifestyles and needs.

Providing diverse housing types closer to jobs can boost productivity by reducing the cost of infrastructure, assisting local businesses in securing a workforce, and providing a resident population to support local jobs in Port Stephens.

Planning for more affordable housing choices includes planning for affordable living beyond the initial cost of buying or renting a property. Affordable living includes the costs of travelling to work and accessing services and facilities such as child care. For example, a home in an isolated location may be cheaper to buy, however the cost of living further from shops, schools, and other services may offset this.



It's beautiful and still affordable.

Priority 2.3 Reduce the cost of new housing

Council plans, policies and processes can influence the cost of housing through planning controls, the timing of land release, planning for facilities and services, and through costs related to local planning and assessment such as fees and charges.

For some time, Port Stephens Council (PSC) has been committed to reducing the cost of new housing by reducing red tape in the assessment process for new housing.



In 2017, PSC was awarded the NSW Premier's Award for 'Making Housing More Affordable' recognising its work to reduce timeframes for housing approvals. The process improvements can save homeowners up to \$2000 per application, or around \$2 million per year.

New technology and integrated approaches to assessment can offer further opportunities to cut red tape and reduce timeframes. Online lodgement and other ePlanning initiatives for integrated assessments may have the capacity to offer faster approvals.

The Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory have found savings in process improvements that integrate zoning and application assessments. Reducing overall timeframes for new housing from identification of residential land to construction approvals can potentially drive down development costs.

Council policies and requirements, including fees and charges, can add to the cost of housing. Currently there are discounted fees for secondary dwellings (granny flats) to encourage this type of lower cost housing that offers growing households options and facilitates ageing in place.

Actions	Links to
7. Consult with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and consider opportunities for Council to partner with community housing providers to facilitate the supply of affordable housing for Aboriginal people, and low and very-low income households	Priority 2.1
8. Review local provisions to encourage more affordable dwellings within walking distance to town centres, including providing development controls for boarding houses and other categories of low cost housing	Priority 2.1
9. Encourage appropriate dwelling sizes in new developments in and around town centres and close to employment hubs	Priority 2.1 and 2.2
10. Consult with Fair Trading NSW to obtain data on short-term rental accommodation and to inform rental supply monitoring in Port Stephens	Priority 2.1
11. Advocate for better transport links from strategic centres to jobs and the region	Priority 2.2
12. Partner with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to ensure readiness to adopt ePlanning reforms for integrated assessments and other process improvements	Priority 2.3
13. Investigate process improvements to better streamline assessments and reduce the cost of housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A precinct based approach to water quality and more flexibility for infill development. • Clearer requirements and processes for local biodiversity offsets. • Integrated assessments for rezonings and development applications. 	Priority 2.3

Outcome 3

Increase diversity of housing choice



Priorities

- 3.1 Facilitate new housing within existing urban areas
- 3.2 Encourage a range of housing types and sizes
- 3.3 Enable better planning for diverse lifestyles

The future supply of housing needs to deliver homes that can respond to changing communities and places. People transitioning through life stages can require a diversity of housing types, sizes, locations, and price points. Housing that can adapt can be increasingly important as families grow or people choose to age in place.

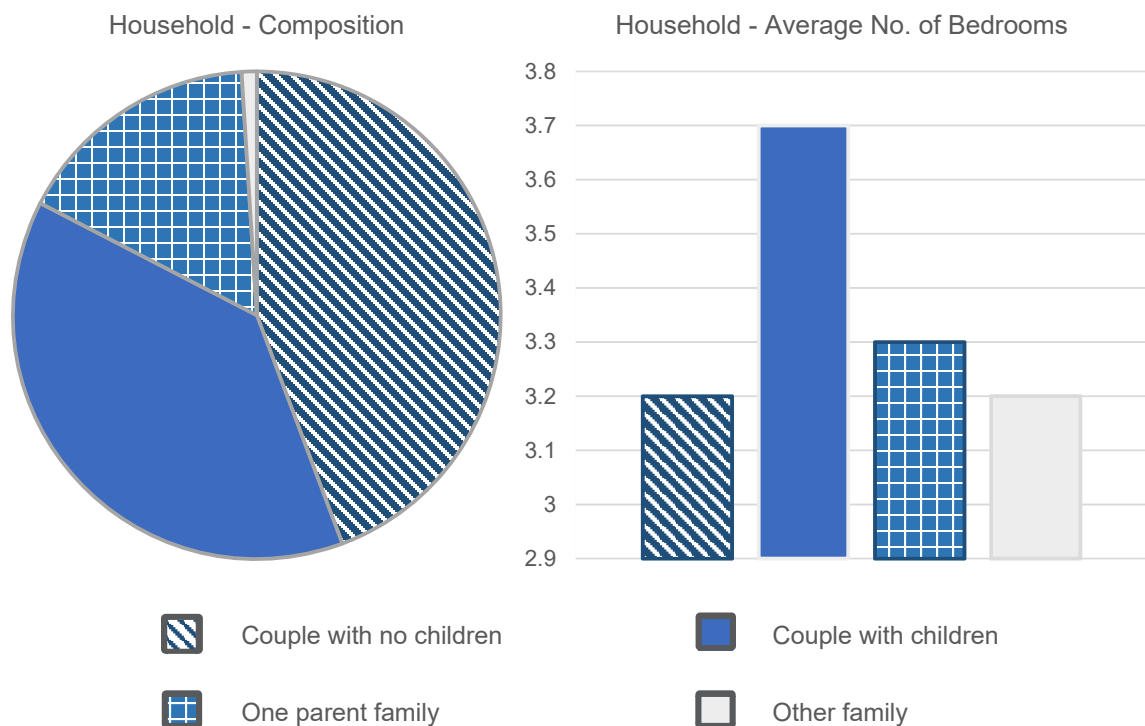
Diverse housing choices build more inclusive communities. Neighbourhoods with homes to accommodate families and households with varying needs and circumstances, sizes and compositions, income and health make stronger communities. It means that as people age they can stay in the same area, or young adults leaving home can still live close to their families and jobs.

Housing diversity means a range of housing types, sizes, tenures and price points are available to meet demand in the right locations. In Port Stephens, the current housing supply is dominated by separate houses on separate lots (74%). More than half of the new dwellings constructed between 2006 and 2016 were separate houses.

Census data shows 57% of households in Port Stephens consist of two or less people and the average number of bedrooms per dwelling in Port Stephens is 3.23.

Port Stephens is also home to an older population with 36.8% of people aged 55 years and over, and the proportion of older residents has increased over time.

Figure 3 Household composition and average number of bedrooms by Household in Port Stephens



Source: Remplan, 2019, Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report

The Housing Preferences in Port Stephens Report (Housing Preferences Report) polled some 300 residents to better understand why people move to Port Stephens and whether they are satisfied with the available housing choices.⁶ The survey found there was existing latent demand for more diverse housing types in Port Stephens, including houses on smaller lots, higher density housing types (such as a duplex, or terrace house) and seniors housing (See Table 2).

Projected future housing demand may also support increasing housing diversity in Port Stephens. DPIE have identified growing future demand for dwellings to accommodate smaller households in Port Stephens, projecting that an additional 5000 dwellings

will be required for single and 2 person households in Port Stephens by 2041¹.

To more accurately plan for future housing demand, a wider survey may be needed as net migration to the Hunter region is predicted to be around 97,000 people by 2040. Data from a wider sample could more accurately determine the housing needs of people choosing to move to the region and could assist in planning to provide future housing in Port Stephens that can meet the preferences of people moving to the Hunter for jobs or lifestyle changes.

Table 2 Housing preferences and demand for more diverse housing types

Housing type	Preferred housing within budget	Current housing	Difference	Demand
House on separate lot	72.8%	82.3%	-9.5%	
Small lot (under 250m ²)	12.6%	6.7%	5.9%	✓
Small/medium lot (250 to 500m ²)	20.7%	13.4%	7.3%	✓
Medium lot (500 to 800m ²)	36.9%	43.7%	-6.8%	
Large lot (over 800m ²)	15.3%	18.9%	-3.6%	
Rural block	14.4%	17.3%	-2.9%	
Semi-detached	6%	3.5%	2.5%	✓
Flat, unit of apartment	8.2%	3.5%	4.7%	✓
Seniors retirement village	7.6%	3.8%	3.8%	✓

Source: SGS Economics & Planning, 2019, Housing Preferences in Port Stephens Report

Priority 3.1 Facilitate new housing within existing urban areas

The GNMP has set a direction for Greater Newcastle councils to increase the proportion of dwellings provided within existing urban areas (infill housing).

Existing urban areas are more likely to provide access to the types of infrastructure and community facilities that are needed to support more diverse housing choices. For example living close to local shops, medical or other facilities can be important for older residents and proximity to schools, parks and sporting facilities may be important for young families.

Areas with established populations are more likely to attract and enjoy a higher level of services and facilities. Population density can impact private and public investment decisions such as public transport links and road upgrades and it can be more efficient to provide and maintain infrastructure and services in established areas.



Outcome 4 plans for communities with convenient access to essential services and infrastructure. Communities are more liveable when they are supported by infrastructure and services.

The Infill Housing Study identified opportunities for Council to encourage greater diversity of infill housing in the locations that will enhance liveability and cater for the changing needs of the growing population.

The Study investigated opportunities for new infill development in Port Stephens, i.e. the redevelopment of existing urban areas for additional housing such as duplexes, terraces, granny flats etc. It analysed forecast demand and housing supply and identified opportunities to encourage a greater diversity of housing in locations that promote liveable communities.

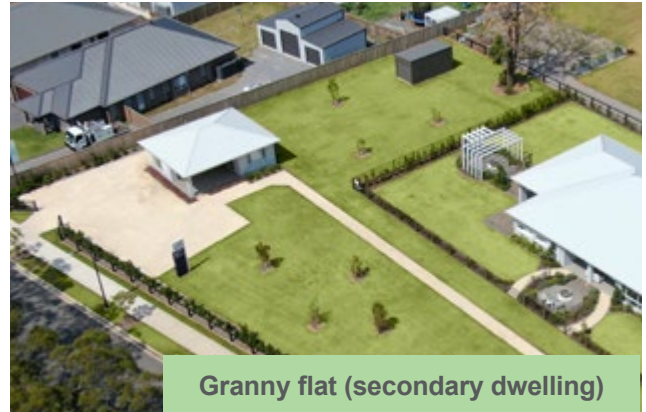
The sites identified in the Study were selected because of their proximity to local centres with the characteristics of liveable communities. Existing development constraints, including planning controls were tested and a financial feasibility assessment carried out to determine whether redevelopment is feasible and achievable.

Infill housing and higher housing densities can be perceived as imposing new developments with larger footprints and taller buildings. The Infill Housing Study has taken a place-based approach to ensure that proposed development types suit the existing local character of each suburb.

Building types that will increase density but will integrate with existing low rise streetscapes and neighbourhoods have been included in the Study.

The Infill Housing Study identified opportunities to make infill housing more achievable and makes recommendations to incentivise the consolidation of lots, invest in infrastructure in local centres such as parks and footpaths to support higher densities and make changes to planning controls to both make development more financially feasible as well as to promote design quality.

Figure 4 Housing typologies



Priority 3.2 Encourage a range of housing types and sizes

The GNMP requires 25% of lots in new housing areas to be capable of accommodating small lot housing or multi dwelling housing. Small lot housing typically refers to homes specifically designed to be accommodated on smaller lot sizes, generally between 200 to 450m². Multi dwelling housing includes three or more attached or detached townhouses and terraces.

In Port Stephens, new housing has generally been provided on lots of 500m² and above with 75% built as separate houses (rather than townhouses or other multi dwelling

housing). Whilst there is still demand for houses on larger lots and rural housing, some homeowners have been willing to trade traditional backyards and large lot sizes for location, convenience, and shared open space.



Outcome 1 identifies how future greenfield and rural residential housing opportunities can be identified

The data from the Housing Preferences Report also indicates there is current demand for a wider range of lot sizes, including lots less than 500m² and lots less than 250m² to

Case study: small lot housing in an urban release area at Pacific Dunes, Medowie

Pacific Dunes in Medowie is home to some of the smallest housing lots in Port Stephens, with some homes set on lots less than 300m².

Figure 5 Aerial views of Pacific Dunes, Medowie



This new housing area provides diverse housing in a landscape setting, close to a wide range of facilities, and a short distance from the Medowie town centre. The design of the Pacific Dunes development responds to changing housing needs and wants by providing easy to maintain homes, access to high quality facilities and services and a sense of community.

Figure 6 Homes in Pacific Dunes, Medowie



cater for different households⁶. There may be opportunities for redevelopment sites in existing urban areas to satisfy this demand as well as opportunities for new urban release areas to offer a range of housing types and sizes.

The way people live and use their homes is changing, as demonstrated by the survey responses in the Housing Preferences Report. Households with singles, or couples who both work may not have time to maintain large backyards synonymous with the traditional Australian dream of a house on a quarter acre block. Similarly, affordability is another key driver in this segment of the housing market, with smaller lots in the Pacific Dunes development selling for up to 30% less than larger lots in the estate.

Lifestyle also impacts the success of small lot housing, with precincts in Pacific Dunes offering residents access to a clubhouse with restaurant and bar, a swimming pool, tennis courts and a community garden. These facilities provide recreation and entertainment options as well as opportunities for socialising and building connections with neighbours.

Economies of scale in providing these facilities can reduce costs for homeowners and can also improve energy and water efficiency. At Pacific Dunes, renewable power generation and storage and other sustainability innovations demonstrate how small lot housing developments can result in a more environmentally sustainable form of development.

Priority 3.3 Enable better planning for diverse lifestyles

Almost 50% of the residents surveyed as part of the Housing Preferences Report nominated the environment and lifestyle as the main reasons for choosing to live in Port Stephens. A further 25% said they chose Port Stephens because they could live close to family, friends and work. Lifestyle factors can significantly influence housing choices and

planning for diverse types of future housing in locations where people want to live can ensure housing options in Port Stephens will meet future demand.

Housing types that suit particular needs and preferences include:

- **Rural residential housing** offers a rural outlook, peace and seclusion
- **Small lot housing** offers downsizers more convenient living or more affordable housing
- **Shop top housing** can provide residents convenient access to shops, medical services, restaurants, and jobs
- **Group homes** provide permanent accommodation for people with a disability
- **Lifestyle villages and communities** offer convenience and exclusive use of shared facilities and can connect residents of a similar age



Outcome 1 and appendix 2 includes criteria to better plan for new rural residential development.

Actions to better plan for some of these housing types have been listed in other Outcomes where a need has been identified.

One of the more popular types of housing development to occur in Port Stephens over the last decade has been lifestyle villages and communities, where residents share communal recreation and other facilities. Lifestyle villages and communities can offer residents convenient, attractive and potentially more affordable housing options.



Outcome 2 identifies actions that facilitate more affordable housing choices.

They can appeal to a wide variety of homeowners. Fly in and fly out workers and Williamstown RAAF workers can be attracted to the convenience and security of homes

they can lock up and leave for long periods. Some models of ownership offer significant financial benefits for residents that are retirees and they can enable independent living in close knit communities.

Lifestyle villages and communities can be subject to a range of different land tenures and ownership models, approval and assessment pathways and different regulatory frameworks. Lifestyle villages can be set up as community title developments (such as Pacific Dunes, Medowie), strata title multi-unit developments, or residential land lease communities (such as Latitude One, Anna Bay). Lifestyle villages can be marketed solely to seniors, down sizers or retirees, or can be suited to both families and couples (Seaside Estate, Fern Bay). Communities may be gated from passing traffic or include connections to surrounding streets and paths. Some communities can be almost self-sufficient with a high standard of facilities, shops and services located on-site such as a medical centre, supermarket and hairdresser.

A complex legal and State planning framework means local government can have a limited effect on policy changes to influence and shape where and how lifestyle villages and communities develop. In 2015, the State Government exhibited a discussion paper proposing reforms and identifying the changing nature of lifestyle villages and communities, recognising they can provide an important source of diverse housing stock⁷.



The State Government's Discussion Paper proposed changes to:

- support lifestyle villages in the right locations
- provide greater planning certainty and clarity
- promote a range of housing choices
- encourage ongoing innovation in housing choices

In advance of any State reforms, locational and other criteria can guide assessments of site suitability for proposed lifestyle villages. This criteria can be applied to relevant rezoning requests, assessments of site compatibility associated with seniors living developments and, where relevant, in the assessment of development applications.

Lifestyle villages and communities that are located close to centres that can satisfy walkability standards for liveable communities may be suitable, for example within:

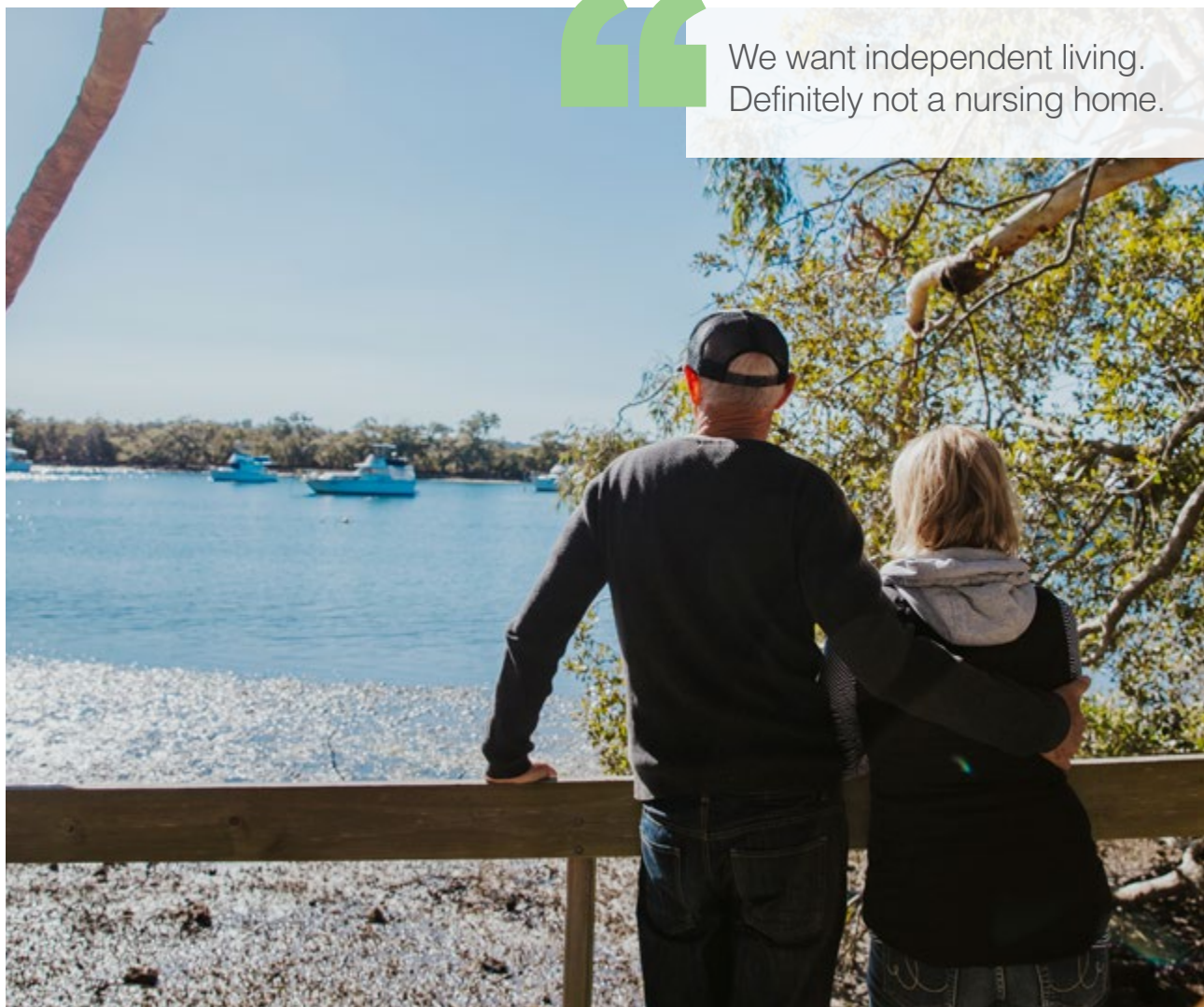
- 5 minute walk (400m) of a town or neighbourhood centre zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre, B2 Local Centre, B3 Commercial Core or B4 Mixed Use; or
- 5 minute walk (400m) of bus stops with frequent services to local centres; or
- 10 minute walk (800m) of local centres.

If this criteria cannot be met, lifestyle villages and communities may be located where the criteria in Appendix 1 has been addressed and where the village or community will have:

- reticulated water and sewer;
- indoor and outdoor recreation facilities adequate for the number of proposed residents such as bowling greens, tennis courts, golf course, swimming pool, or off leash dog park;
- community facilities that promote gathering and social connections such as a restaurant, community hall, or community garden; and
- access to bus services providing frequent trips to local centres and shops.

To ensure high quality design outcomes, development controls could also provide further guidance for some aspects of lifestyle villages, in particular to encourage place making and landscaping, or to address visual impacts, access, emergency management and other master planning principles.

Actions	Links to
14. Advocate for DPIE to co-ordinate housing preferences data for people moving to and within the Hunter to inform planning for future housing types to satisfy demand	Priority 3.1
15. Consider the recommendations of the Infill Housing Study and create opportunities for Council to encourage a greater diversity of infill housing around local centres, this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to encourage the amalgamation of sites. • Amendments to planning controls to improve development feasibility and maintain design quality and amenity. • Investment in local centre infrastructure such as shared paths, street trees and town centre renewal. 	Priority 3.1
16. Encourage provision of small lot housing to enable more efficient and sustainable development outcomes in urban release areas	Priority 3.2
17. Advocate for State reforms to assist councils in planning for lifestyle villages and communities	Priority 3.3
18. Review local provisions to better plan for lifestyle villages and provide controls to ensure high quality design outcomes and liveable communities are created	Priority 3.3



We want independent living.
Definitely not a nursing home.

Outcome 4

Facilitate liveable communities



Case study: Boomerang Park, Raymond Terrace

Boomerang Park has recently been transformed into a signature recreational hub and regional recreation destination. The skate park, playground, Men's Shed, croquet court, and dog exercise area provide activities and places for young and old to meet, interact and enjoy. It is also a successful community event location, hosting the Illuminate Festival in 2017.

It has become a vibrant community place that caters for everyone, increases social connections and is part of what makes Raymond Terrace a great place to live.

Figure 8 Lantern Parade at the Illuminate Boomerang Park Festival 2017



Local government can facilitate more liveable communities by planning for quality public spaces and built environments, providing sport, recreation, and community facilities, enhancing the natural environment, and supporting local economies and employment.

Council can directly contribute by creating parks, cycle ways, bus stops, street trees and gardens to enhance the quality of places and can support communities through events, community initiatives, capacity building, community grants and advocacy.

Measuring and monitoring the liveability of places can create a better understanding of the social, economic and environmental needs and values of a community and result in better informed decisions. Monitoring liveability can influence planning and infrastructure investment decisions and make real differences to improve the quality of life for residents.



Priority 4.1 Housing enhances local character

Local character is distinctive and differentiates one area from another. It includes all aspects of the built environment, as well as the sense of place, and how people respond to that place. Local character might reflect cultural or social identities and values, it can be shaped by history, landscape and location, or it might be aspirational and reflect desires and future priorities. Local character can create a sense of belonging and community.

Housing can have a significant impact in defining the local character of an area and can be planned and designed to contribute to and enhance the character of a place. The Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement includes actions to prepare local character statements to guide the delivery

of new housing in locations that promote liveable communities.

The Infill Housing Study⁴ identifies opportunities for Council to encourage greater diversity of housing types in locations that will enhance liveability and cater for the changing needs of a growing population. Local character statements for these areas can ensure new development contributes positively to streetscapes and amenity as these areas grow and change.

To support high quality urban design, Port Stephens Council has established an Urban Design Panel to provide independent design advice on significant developments. This Panel could also provide advice on planning to enhance local character during the development of local area strategic plans and other local plans.



Outcome 3 summarises the findings of the Infill Housing Study which takes a place based approach to identify housing types that can complement and enhance the existing local character of selected areas in Port Stephens.

Priority 4.2 Communities are connected

Strong communities have the capacity to meet people's needs as their families grow or circumstances change. Maintaining and improving liveability requires housing, infrastructure and services in the right locations to ensure residents remain connected to the facilities they need and value.

Providing housing with convenient access to essential services is an important influence on quality of life. Access to services, such as health and medical care, education and child care, is one of the key measures common to most liveability indexes and contributes to individual health and wellbeing and community cohesion.



Convenient access, including public transport and walking and cycling paths contributes to more active and vibrant communities. Facilities and public transport services provided within walking distance of housing can improve physical health and wellbeing, increase independence for older people, and promote sustainability by reducing traffic and pollution.⁹ The built environment can be designed to enable people to come together and use facilities within their local area through the provision of pathways, end of trip facilities for cyclists, and public transport facilities such as bus shelters. These facilities can connect people to employment or provide healthy environments for play.

Over the next 20 years digital infrastructure and innovation will also contribute to making communities in Port Stephens more liveable. Smart city infrastructure has the capacity to make communities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Council will have opportunities to invest in technology and data management to improve energy efficiency, road safety, responsible water consumption, health and wellbeing, and connectivity. There will be future opportunities to upgrade existing digital and physical infrastructure to facilitate community access to technology and training, sharing of information, and experiences.



Council will commence community consultation on a Smart City Blueprint in 2020 to map how data and innovation can support more liveable communities in Port Stephens.

Priority 4.3 Grow connections between people

A strong sense of belonging, to both place and people, sustains more vibrant and resilient communities. Mental and physical health, enjoyment, and wellbeing are supported when social connections are strong.

Our public spaces can be more important than private developments in defining the local character of a place and as platforms for building a sense of community and expressing community identity. Planning for the public domain, the spaces in our centres where people meet, gather, sit or pass through, impacts the feel of a neighbourhood and the connection residents have to their home and their community.

Collaboration in planning for improved public spaces can build social connections and empower communities to create places that support their needs, interests, and values. Community led placemaking, when a community chooses and makes

physical changes in their neighbourhood, can create strong connections between the people involved and more attractive and social spaces.

The 7 Day Anna Bay Makeover was a collaborative community initiative sponsored by Council, local businesses and community members. Volunteers from Anna Bay and surrounding neighbourhoods planned and executed projects to revitalise their public spaces and reflect the local character of their town. A hands on approach to placemaking can better connect people to place, strengthen communities and build long lasting friendships and connections.

In other town centres, civic pride groups participate in working bees, garden maintenance and other placemaking initiatives working with Council, community members and local business people to make their public spaces more welcoming, functional and attractive.

Figure 9 Volunteers during the 7 day Anna Bay Makeover



Community initiatives are placemaking activities that can engage residents to participate in community life, visit and explore community places and facilities. Events can bring people together, providing opportunities for neighbours to meet, connect, volunteer or

participate. They can also contribute to the culture and character of a place, they can reimagine or reinvent public spaces, or attract visitors to boost local economies.

Actions	Links to
19. Adopt a Liveability Index to map, measure and monitor liveability in Port Stephens	Priority 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3
20. Prepare local character statements to guide the delivery of new housing in Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay, Corlette, Anna Bay, Tanilba Bay, Lemon Tree Passage, Karuah and Medowie	Priority 4.1
21. Refer relevant strategic and local area plans to the Urban Design Panel for independent advice	Priority 4.1
22. Review opportunities to provide active transport facilities such as pathways and end of trip facilities for cyclists in centres and employment hubs	Priority 4.2
23. Review access to essential services in rural areas, such as child care centres	Priority 4.2

Implementation, monitoring and reporting

The timing for delivery and prioritisation of actions will be informed by community and stakeholder consultation. During the exhibition (20 February 2020 to 19 March 2020), community feedback was sought on a draft of Live Port Stephens. Consultation included drop-in information sessions, an online survey and submissions were able to be made.

An Implementation and Delivery Plan will be published to set out the timing of actions in Live Port Stephens. The Implementation and Delivery Plan will be informed by the submissions and feedback received during consultation on Live Port Stephens.

Some actions may be ongoing to reflect a change to a process and others will require funding from sources that could impact the timing of delivery, such as grants and local infrastructure contributions.

Some monitoring has been included in specific actions, for example adopting a tool to measure and monitor liveability in Port Stephens.

Monitoring of Outcome 1 ('Ensure suitable land supply') will involve maintaining annual data for zoned land and development approvals. This data will be shared with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Hunter Urban Development Program.



Council will review Live Port Stephens should an amended Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) identify a need to update the document to ensure it addresses community needs, Council priorities and relevant legislation.

The actions will be reviewed and updated if new data or new State plans and policies demonstrate a need to respond. For example, if new census data is released, new housing preferences data becomes available, employment projections change, or the Hunter region's strategic plans are updated.

Rezoning Requests

On 25 February 2020, Council adopted a Rezoning Request Policy which provides a framework for the process and assessment of requests to amend the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013. Rezoning

requests will be considered in accordance with the Policy and prior to preparing a draft planning proposal for housing, proponents will be provided with advice on whether the request is consistent with Live Port Stephens, including the Greenfield Housing Criteria (Appendix 1), Rural Residential Criteria (Appendix 2), infill housing priorities and the criteria for lifestyle villages where relevant. Advice will also be provided on whether a request is consistent with the priorities for housing in State, regional and local plans.

Current Planning Proposals

On adoption of Live Port Stephens, Council will contact and invite the proponents for selected existing proposals to provide additional information to support the further assessment of the planning proposal, including (where necessary) an amended planning proposal.



Appendix 1

— Greenfield Housing Criteria

The following criteria outlines key considerations for new urban housing areas (greenfield housing).

The criteria can be used to demonstrate that land is suitable for urban housing. Rezoning requests on constrained land will need to be lodged with additional supporting documentation to demonstrate the land is suitable for residential development.

The criteria are non-exhaustive and planning proposals will be subject to requirements of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's 'Guide to preparing planning proposals' including consideration of any relevant State and regional plans, State environmental planning policies and local planning directions issued under section 9.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

The land must meet the following locational criteria to be considered for a greenfield rezoning request:

- Land identified in a local area strategy; and/or
- Land that is currently zoned for non-residential purposes and is proposed to be zoned for urban housing (e.g. R1 General Residential, R2 Low Density Residential and R3 Medium Density Residential).

The criteria does not apply to rezoning requests for rural residential housing (refer to the Rural Residential Criteria in Appendix 2).

The criteria does not apply to rezoning requests for infill housing (Refer to Priority 1.3 of Live Port Stephens).

The criteria may apply to proposed lifestyle villages (Refer to Priority 3.3 of Live Port Stephens).

Note, land means the extent of land proposed to be used for residential purposes.

CONSTRAINTS CRITERIA

Aircraft Noise

The land is below the 25 Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) contour. Proposals on land affected by ANEF contour 25 or above are "unacceptable" for residential purposes under AS 2021 to 2015.

Bushfire

Rezoning requests on land identified as bush fire prone (on Council's Bush Fire Prone Land Map) must demonstrate consistency with the strategic principles contained within Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019.

Flooding

The land is not categorised as Flood Planning Area. Rezoning requests for land in a Flood Planning Area must be lodged with a flood study demonstrating the land is suitable for development.

Land Slope

The land has a slope of less than 18 degrees. Rezoning requests for land that has a slope greater than 18 degrees must be lodged with a bulk earthworks plan demonstrating that the final landform will not exceed 18 degrees, and a geotechnical report demonstrating that the final landform will achieve an appropriate level of stability.

Biodiversity

- The land is not identified as containing high biodiversity value, as per the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Biodiversity Values Map published on the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website. Rezoning requests for land

identified as containing high biodiversity value must be lodged with a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR).

- The proposal avoids land containing native vegetation. Rezoning requests for land containing 0.5 ha of native vegetation must be lodged with a Preliminary Flora and Fauna Assessment and commit to preparing a BDAR prior to public exhibition.

Mineral Resources

The land is greater than 500 metres from any known mineral resource (rezoning requests for land within 500 metres of a known mineral resource must be lodged with evidence of consultation with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and any relevant operator).

Non-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Rezoning requests that are likely to impact on an item of environmental heritage (identified in the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013) must submit a Statement of Heritage Impact that considers the impact on heritage values, including the setting of the items and any archaeological remains.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Rezoning requests should include an initial assessment of the likelihood of Aboriginal cultural heritage values including:

- a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS);
- determination of whether the sites include landscape features that indicate the likely presence of aboriginal objects;
- site inspections; and
- consultation with the Aboriginal community.

Drinking Water Catchment

Rezoning requests on land within a drinking water catchment must be able to be connected to reticulated sewer or able to demonstrate a neutral or beneficial effect (NorBE) on water quality in accordance with Hunter Water Corporation requirements.

Infrastructure and Services

The land is able to be serviced by essential infrastructure. Rezoning requests must be lodged with evidence demonstrating that infrastructure is:

- currently available; or
- scheduled to be available (must be confirmed in writing from service providers).

Rezoning requests must be lodged with evidence demonstrating the connection of essential services to the land is economically feasible. On land remote from existing essential infrastructure, an infrastructure delivery strategy is to be submitted.

PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances)

- Rezoning requests for land in the PFAS Management Zones identified on the Williamstown Management Area Map on the [EPA website](#) will need to demonstrate that likely future development would be compatible with the detected levels of PFAS in the area and on the site.

NEXT STEPS

Proponents are required to submit a 'Rezoning Request Meeting Form' and include details of the proposal, benefits of the proposal and alternative options in accordance with Council's Rezoning Request Policy and Rezoning Request Guide.

Appendix 2

— Rural Residential Criteria

The following criteria outlines the key requirements and constraints that require consideration in the preparation of rezoning requests for rural residential development.

The criteria is non-exhaustive and rezoning requests for rural residential development must address the Port Stephens Rural Residential Strategy (2015)⁹ including any matters for investigation that have been identified relevant to the proposed land.

Planning proposals will be subject to the requirements of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's 'Guide to preparing planning proposals' including consideration of any relevant State and regional plans, State environmental planning policies and local planning directions issued under section 9.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

There are three (3) types of criteria:

- **Locational Criteria** – where land is appropriately located to be considered for a rural residential rezoning request. Rezoning requests for land that is inconsistent with this criteria will require extensive justification to be lodged with any proposal;
- **Exclusionary Criteria** – where land is considered not suitable for development. Rezoning requests for land that is inconsistent with this criteria will require extensive justification to be lodged with any proposal; and
- **Management Criteria** – where land is constrained and additional supporting documentation is required to be lodged with a rezoning request to determine whether development is appropriate.

Note, land means the extent of land proposed to be used for rural residential purposes.

LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

The land must meet the following locational criteria to be considered for a rural residential rezoning request:

- Zoned RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, E3 Environmental Management, E4 Environmental Living;
- Located a minimum of 800 metres from existing RU5 Rural Village, R1 General Residential or R2 Low Density Residential zoned land; and
- Any part of the landholding is located within 800 metres of existing R5 Large Lot Residential zoned land. Proposals not within 800 metres of an R5 zone must consider all land within the relevant investigation area identified in the Port Stephens Rural Residential Strategy (2015).

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA

Land that is subject to any of the following criteria will require extensive justification to be lodged with a rezoning request:

- Areas identified by, or in proximity to an area identified by, a local, regional or State strategic plan for potential urban housing, including land that demonstrates consistency with the criteria in Appendix 1.
- Land within a 2km distance from existing or planned major employment areas.
- Slopes greater than 18 degrees slope instability and clearing of vegetation is restricted under State legislation.
- Class 1 and 2 acid sulphate soils, because of the high risk of exposing acid soils during dwelling and infrastructure construction.
- Land within the Flood Planning Area as defined in the Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014.

- High biodiversity value land including coastal wetlands or any coastal lakes identified under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018.
- Noise exposure areas within an ANEF 25 or greater.
- Land identified as Important Agricultural Land as defined by the Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) mapping prepared by the State Government for the purposes of Strategic Regional Land Use Planning.
- Land located within 500 metres of known extractive industries, quarrying or mining.
- Land identified by the State Government as having known mineral resource potential.
- Rezoning requests on land that includes koala habitat areas and/or corridors, significant native vegetation, endangered ecological communities, threatened species or habitats must submit a Preliminary Ecological Assessment unless the proposed disturbance area requires the lodgement of a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report.
- Rezoning requests subject to the above must demonstrate how the proposal will contribute to the conservation of important biodiversity values or the establishment of important biodiversity corridor linkages.

MANAGEMENT CRITERIA

Additional supporting documentation is required to be lodged with a rezoning request if any of the following criteria applies.

Flooding

Rezoning requests on land that has the potential to be isolated in flood events, must demonstrate access to evacuation facilities via a public road that is given 24 hours warning of flood isolation.

Bushfire

Rezoning requests on land identified as bush fire prone (on Council's Bush Fire Prone Land Map) must demonstrate consistency with the strategic principles contained within Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019.

Environmentally Sensitive Land

- Rezoning requests on land identified in coastal management areas, defined in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018, must be justified by a study or strategy prepared to demonstrate consistency with the SEPP.

Non-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Rezoning requests that are likely to impact on an item of environmental heritage (identified in the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013) must submit a Statement of Heritage Impact that considers the impact on heritage values, including the setting of the items and any archaeological remains.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Rezoning requests should include an initial assessment of the likelihood of Aboriginal cultural heritage values including:

- a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS);
- determination of whether the sites include landscape features that indicate the likely presence of aboriginal objects;
- site inspections; and
- consultation with the Aboriginal community.

Drinking Water Catchment

Rezoning requests on land within a drinking water catchment must be able to be connected to reticulated sewer or able to demonstrate a neutral or beneficial effect (NorBE) on water quality in accordance with Hunter Water Corporation requirements.

Rural Land Resources

Rezoning requests on land within a 1km buffer from existing agricultural industries (e.g. poultry farms, aquaculture) measured from property boundary to property boundary are required to provide expert reports to establish appropriate setbacks. These reports may relate to, but not be limited to, noise, odour, visual amenity and biosecurity risks

Scenic Amenity

- Rezoning requests on land within a high or very high landscape area, as defined in the Port Stephens Rural Lands Study (2011), must submit a visual impact assessment.
- Rezoning requests are to identify an appropriate buffer zone between housing and existing road corridors to prevent clearing and protect scenic qualities

Infrastructure and Services

Rezoning requests must demonstrate that the land:

- will be accessed via a sealed road;
- will not result in the creation of direct access to a State road;
- will not create additional demand for unplanned State infrastructure upgrades;

- will be connected to reticulated power supply; and
- is able to dispose of on-site sewage in accordance with Council's Development Assessment Framework (DAF) for the management of on-site sewage management, which includes performance standards and recommendations about appropriate areas.

PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances)

- Rezoning requests for land in the PFAS Management Zones identified on the Williamstown Management Area Map on the [EPA website](#) will need to demonstrate that likely future development would be compatible with the detected levels of PFAS in the area and on the site.

NEXT STEPS

Proponents are required to submit a 'Rezoning Request Meeting Form' and include details of the proposal, benefits of the proposal and alternative options in accordance with Council's Rezoning Request Policy and Rezoning Request Guide.

Appendix 3

— Rezoning Request process





7 Council assessment

Council assesses the rezoning request

- ✓ Review proposal
- ✓ Prepare Gateway determination request to DPIE



8 Gateway determination

Gateway determination issued by DPIE

- ✓ Respond to any Gateway conditions



9 Payment of stage two fees

Council issues invoice for Stage two fees

- ✓ Pay by card, over the phone, cheque by mail or in person



10 Consultation

Planning proposal exhibition

- ✓ Public authorities and State agencies comment
- ✓ Respond to community submissions and agency comments
- ✓ Council will advise if proposal can progress if a significant issue arises after Gateway
- ✓ Planning proposal reported to Council



11 Payment of stage three fees

Council issues invoice for stage three fees

- ✓ Pay by card, over the phone, cheque by mail or in person
- ✓ Provide survey accurate mapping if necessary



12 Gazettal

Council makes the plan

- ✓ Draft Local Environmental Plan prepared
- ✓ Plan notified and comes into effect

Need more help?

We're here to help you throughout the Rezoning Request process to ensure we get the best outcome for our community. If you need any assistance, please call the Strategic Planning Unit on 02 4988 0255 or email council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

End notes

1. NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2019, NSW population and household projections
2. Remplan, 2019, Port Stephens Demographic and Housing Overview Report (Available on Port Stephens Council website)
3. Heart Foundation, 2011, Good for Busine\$\$
4. Tract, 2019, Port Stephens Infill Housing Study (Available on Port Stephens Council website)
5. Charter Keck Cramer, 2019, Part 1 – Local Housing Market Analysis
6. SGS Economics & Planning, 2019, Housing Preferences in Port Stephens Report (Available on Port Stephens Council website)
7. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, Improving the Regulation of Manufactured Homes, Caravan Parks, Manufactured Home Estates and Camping Grounds – Discussion Paper
8. Hunter New England Population Health, 2012, Liveability Assessment Tool
9. CityPlan, 2015, draft Port Stephens Rural Residential Strategy (Available on Port Stephens Council Website)



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