



# CULTURAL PRECINCTS

FOR EVENTS, THE ARTS AND  
CULTURE IN PORT STEPHENS

**PORT STEPHENS**  
*~Incredible by Nature~*

# CULTURAL PRECINCTS PLAN



## **The initial community consultation for Cultural Precincts was an objective in the Port Stephens Cultural Plan 2015-2018.**

Cultural Precincts have been developed to identify broader areas for future planning of arts, culture and events. A key action item in the Events and Cultural Strategy will be to highlight the strategic and local centres of the LGA. Within these will be the identification of;

- Current Cultural facilities and events (e.g Libraries, community halls)
- Sites of significance (Aboriginal, Heritage, Environmental)
- Opportunity places and spaces (places needing revitalisation or places to be enhanced)

The precinct sites will change over time and will be updated and reviewed regularly. They are not intended to be comprehensive in their identification of all cultural and event sites or potential spaces within Port Stephens.

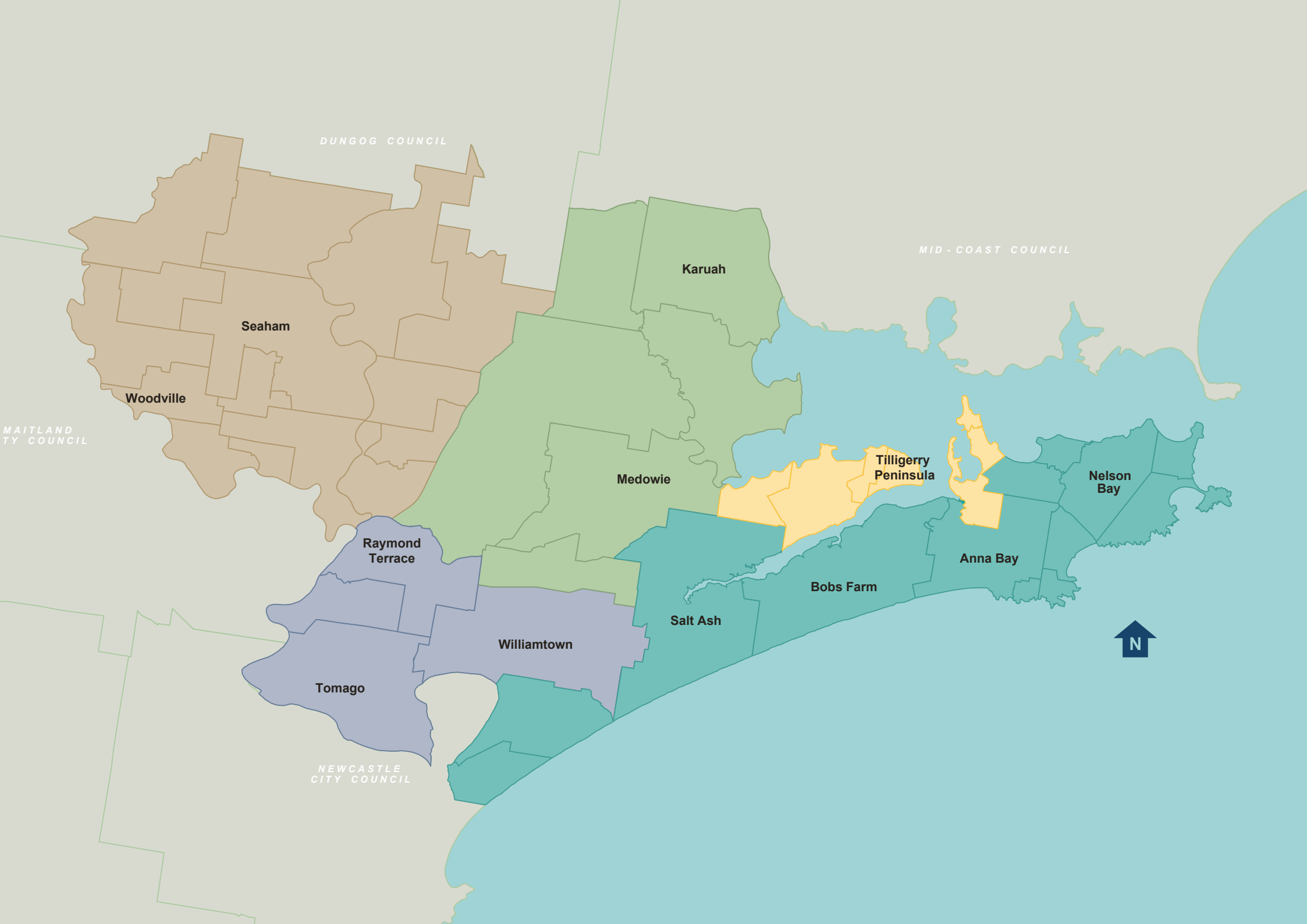
We know Port Stephens is made up of many local identities and cultures, spanning across a large area. The mapping of precincts is designed to celebrate uniqueness of place and acknowledge local culture and historical significance.

The Cultural Precincts break the LGA into 5 areas for the purposes of defining the character and local identity of each individual area. They are;

- Where three rivers meet
- Ready. Set. Grow!
- Innovation In Industry
- Bayside Serenity
- Vibrant Coastal

## **Cultural Precincts will;**

1. Inform a Council-led events, arts and cultural program.
2. Input into Council's asset design process (integration of culture and designing spaces for community events and activities).
3. Contribute to the development of Council's Strategic Plans .
4. Add value to the Public Art Policy and Guidelines. It is a requirement for public art to be site specific, having meaning toward a sense of identity for the community in which it is placed. The artist engaged will be guided by the information provided for each Cultural Precinct.
5. Guide the Strategic Arts Committee and the arts community when considering arts and cultural projects or assessing funding applications.
6. Be mapped on Council's GIS layering system.



DUNGOG COUNCIL

MID-COAST COUNCIL

MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL



**Seaham**

**Woodville**

**Karuah**

**Medowie**

**Tilligerry Peninsula**

**Nelson Bay**

**Anna Bay**

**Bobs Farm**

**Salt Ash**

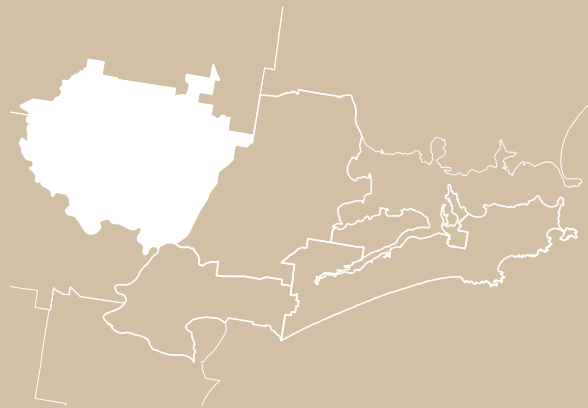
**Raymond Terrace**

**Williamtown**

**Tomago**

# PRECINCT 1: WHERE THREE RIVERS MEET

Eagleton, Kings Hill, Nelsons Plains, Osterley, Hinton, Seaham, Brandy Hill, Balickera, East Seaham, Glen Oak, Duns Creek, Butterwick, Woodville, Wallalong, Hinton.



Charming rural landscapes inspire a strong connection between land, river and community. This precinct personifies the historic heart of the rural Hunter Region and what makes this part of the country so unique. The Rural West has a quaint charm through the preservation of significant heritage buildings and structures, including Hinton Bridge and the School of Arts. Many residents like to think of the area as being 'Where the 3 rivers meet', and are intensely proud of the beautiful rural area where they live.

Places of interest and potential events and activities currently focus on Woodville shop, church and hall and Seaham Park. Opportunities exist for utilising the river for water orientated activities, be they creative or event based, and properties alongside the road for public art. Public access points to the river, however, remain a challenge without the permission and/or partnership with landholders.

The Woodville shop is the oldest shop in New South Wales operating since 1863. Local Makers populate the Rural West, with many utilising the artisan connections with Maitland and Morpeth as opposed to Port Stephens LGA.

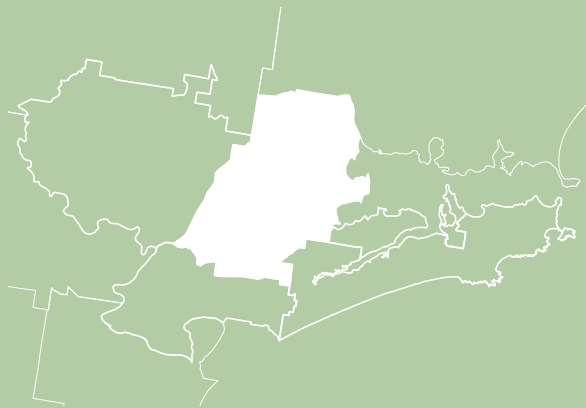
The historic nature of the Rural West lends itself to heritage trails, which can even be cross Council borders. Documentation of historical events has occurred, however, the Aboriginal Heritage of the area wasn't revealed in the community consultations. Further research and development of the Aboriginal heritage would be a great addition to any further historical work.

This precinct is the least disadvantaged area in the LGA (SEIFA 2011), with the majority of the population being middle aged couples living in separate houses on rural properties.



# PRECINCT 2: READY. SET. GROW!

Medowie, Ferodale,  
Campvale, Swan Bay,  
Karuah, Twelve Mile Creek.



Medowie and Karuah are local centres, that Council considers areas for activity and growth in this area. Ferodale's plethora of creeks running through National Parks makes for a culture of dirt bikes and 4-wheel driving, while for Karuah the focus is on the river. The bridge over the Karuah River marks the boundary of Port Stephens LGA. The previous Karuah Mission, where the Local Aboriginal Land Council is located, is a significant place, with Aboriginal stories told of growing up on the Mission.

With the main road being the old Pacific HWY, previous to the bypass, Karuah is now a quiet town, with a remarkable history and strong timber and oyster industries. The community has a strong connection with the magnificent wetlands, where you can walk along the boardwalks to enjoy. The wetlands have significance to the Aboriginal community with women's places where they would wash and bathe.

Medowie is one of the most in demand suburbs in the Hunter Valley, with tree changers moving from city areas for an acre or two to enjoy fruit trees or have free range chickens. It has many locals growing and selling their own produce, if not on the roadway, at their property or at local markets. It is also located in close proximity to key economic and innovation hubs within Williamstown.

While Karuah is destined for some residential developments, it may still suffer from barriers to social wellbeing through the lack of available public transport, access to internet and vulnerability in times of disaster due to its isolation from other towns. The market has driven smaller lot size developments with separate dwellings, with villages catering for the ageing population.

Residents of Swan Bay enjoy a quiet rural lifestyle, with those living on the foreshore feeling like they could live there forever. They usually access Medowie schools,

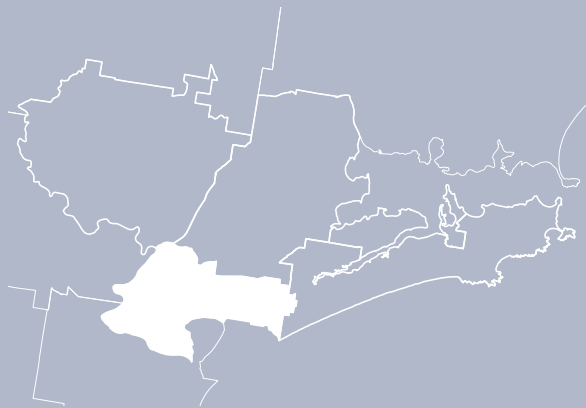
taking the short cut through the State Conservation Area to access Medowie Road. Karuah is their other option, for swimming and fishing. Perhaps at the heart of the community is the Karuah Bowling Club that transforms into the emergency relief evacuation centre in times of disaster, and demonstrates community spirit through fundraising and hosting many community events and activities.

Monthly markets occur at Medowie, an annual car show (Show & Shine), Christmas Carols and local sport. Locals in the past have demonstrated an eagerness to support local events, something that only looks to grow as the population grows. Karuah has the annual Timber and Oyster Festival. Opportunities also exist to link Karuah with Precinct 4: Bayside Serenity via the river.



# PRECINCT 3: INNOVATION IN INDUSTRY

Raymond Terrace, Heatherbrae,  
Williamstown, Tomago



Tomago and Heatherbrae are primarily industrial areas catering for both large scale through to medium and small scale industries and trade. There is a caravan park located at both Tomago and Heatherbrae that are low socio economic residential living, housing emergency and short and long term accommodation for people in need of housing. Heatherbrae and Tomago have been noted as significant employment clusters in the Hunter Regional Plan.

Raymond Terrace is identified as a strategic centre in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036, being the place that offers community and social support systems and infrastructure. The Council and the Police administration centres are located here, with the RAAF also having a large administration building in town. The town has Centrelink, Medicare, Service NSW offices and many other community service providers, banks and two small shopping centres. It is commonly accessed by people living in the town, from Where Three Rivers Meet, Medowie and well beyond the Council borders up the highway to the North, with some travelling up to an hour regularly.

Beyond the support services, Raymond Terrace has a significant rich heritage, in terms of places and spaces and in built form. King Street is the most historical significant place with a direct connection to the river, and existing historic homes and landmarks, including the 'Marriage Trees'.

The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens cover more than 130 hectares of beautiful themed gardens and preserved bushland. They are maintained, managed and developed by a non-profit company of volunteers.

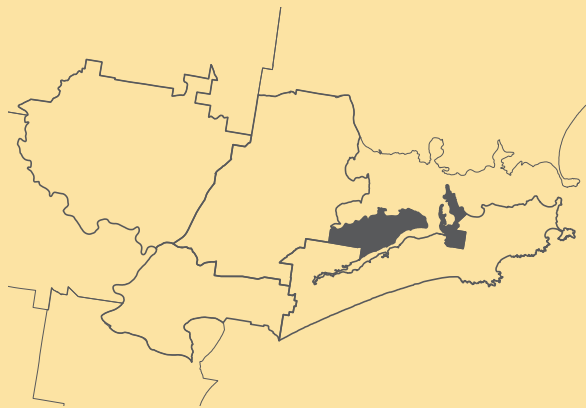
Raymond Terrace offers a significant portion of social housing, with a SEIFA index of disadvantage compared to other areas of the LGA, which presents both challenges and opportunities for community led and locally focussed cultural projects and events.

Williamstown residents have experienced many years of hardship due to the PFAS contamination. This proves a challenge in working with the community to rebuild their mental health and social wellbeing. On the other hand the Newcastle Airport is considered a global gateway in the Hunter Regional Plan. Council's Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2018-2020 states that over 1.2 million passengers per year travel via Newcastle airport. Investment from the NSW Government in the Williamstown Special Activation Precinct, and with the Newcastle airport and the RAAF, it is positioned to be Australia's leading national and international defence, aeronautics and aerospace hub. Employment opportunities will increase, prioritising the need for cultural integration and various accommodation, housing and transport options.



# PRECINCT 4: BAYSIDE SERENITY

Oyster Cove, Tanilba Bay,  
Mallabula, Lemon Tree Passage,  
Taylors Beach, Soldiers Point



Living in one of these bayside towns is like being on a permanent holiday in a small fishing village. Travelling to the Tilligerry Peninsula will take you through the small towns of Tanilba Bay and Mallabula, ending at the point of Lemon Tree Passage. The towns are known for their koala habitat, with the Tanilba Habitat and community groups constantly improving the experience of foreshore trails where you can walk or cycle. Fishing and crabbing is well known in these areas, particularly along the north and south of the Tilligerry creek system. The stone gates at the entrance to Tanilba Bay reflect the rich history of pioneers and 19th century hard working convicts. The staff member at the privately owned service station in Tanilba Bay will even trot out and put the petrol in your car for you!

The Peninsula offers affordable housing with waterfront living and services that mean you won't have to leave the peninsula very often. They are small towns, each with their own identity, and love for local community based volunteering and events and activities. Hop on a boat from Lemon Tree Passage and in a few minutes you will arrive at Taylors Beach where there is a girl guides accommodation camping facility and The Department of Primary Industries. People who live at Taylor's Beach say they would never live anywhere else.

Not far away is Soldiers Point; an area that has significant Aboriginal heritage. It has been gazetted an Aboriginal Place through the National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974. It is the only Aboriginal Place that has so many varied areas of land use and ownership.

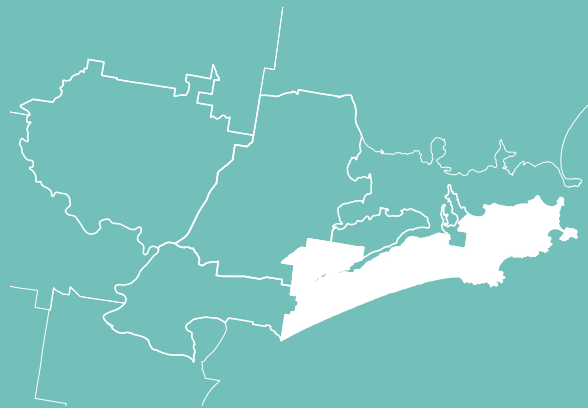
Like Birubi Aboriginal Place, Soldiers Point was where the Worimi would fish, bury their deceased, and live along the coast line that is now mostly developed. You will even find a midden preserved in the middle of a roundabout as you make your way to the Marina. Soldiers Point Marina has many sculptures and art to enjoy while eating at the

restaurants overlooking the moored boats. Soldiers Point is the most populated area of the Bayside Serenity Zone, with many large modern family houses built along the water's edge, as you are entering the town. The higher end market has taken over the older style units that once populated the area, with Council's provision of a large boat ramp and facilities being the main reason the general population travels to the area.



# PRECINCT 5: VIBRANT COASTAL

Fullerton Cove, Fern Bay,  
Salt Ash, Bob's Farm, Anna  
Bay, One Mile, Boat Harbour,  
Fishermans Bay, Salamander  
Bay, Corlette, Nelson Bay,  
Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay



The Aboriginal heritage of this area is treasured by both the local Worimi people, locals and visiting tourists who travel to discover and learn about the great Worimi Conservation Lands. Opportunities to travel by foot or by quad bike, with a guided tour from the Worimi Traditional Owners is a lifetime experience to tell your grand kids about. The massive shifting sands create the dunes that are the largest continuous mobile sand mass in eastern Australia and rise up to 30m above sea level. This is home to the Worimi people who would hunt and gather for fish and seafood for 60,000 years. They created masses of middens throughout the area, especially relishing on mullet when the 'mullet run' came about annually. From Birubi beach and Robinson Reserve you will travel throughout the Worimi Conservation Lands, which are managed by the Worimi Traditional Owners, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Council. Preservation and respect is key to the continuation of Worimi culture for all to enjoy, both locally, nationally and internationally. The area is now gazetted as an Aboriginal Place under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, protecting the land and the Aboriginal culture for future generations to experience. Perhaps it is appropriate that your mobile phone won't have any signal as soon as you start to drive from the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council and Murrook Cultural Centre in Williamstown to alongside the sand dunes through Bob's Farm; the gateway to the Coast.

The value of the environment as a cultural asset cannot be ignored in this precinct. Residents experience the walking trails, the beaches and under water life as their reason to be living in Vibrant Coastal. Koalas travel from Salamander Bay to Soldiers Point to breed, making a sighting in a suburban backyard not uncommon.

Nelson Bay, as a strategic centre, offers a varied independent and boutique small business shopping experience with unique gifts and original local art works.

Large events that attract overnight tourists occur in Precinct 5 including local seafood, game fishing, sailing and surfing competitions. Tourists stay at Vibrant Coastal places, especially during holiday periods. The challenge is to encourage visitor stay during the off-season.

There are many opportunities in Vibrant Coastal with the key being about integration of what's happening and promotion of that to both tourists and locals. The community have indicated they are eager to have more community based events, where people don't have to travel to experience their local place, and tourists are able to experience an authentic local flavour and identity.

More than 10% of residents living in social housing in Nelson Bay are over the age of 55 years. Accessibility and infrastructure built to cater for varied mobility needs, and events that offer disability transport would be advantageous. This will build on the integration of both locals and tourists experiencing arts culture and events in the Vibrant Coastal precinct.





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