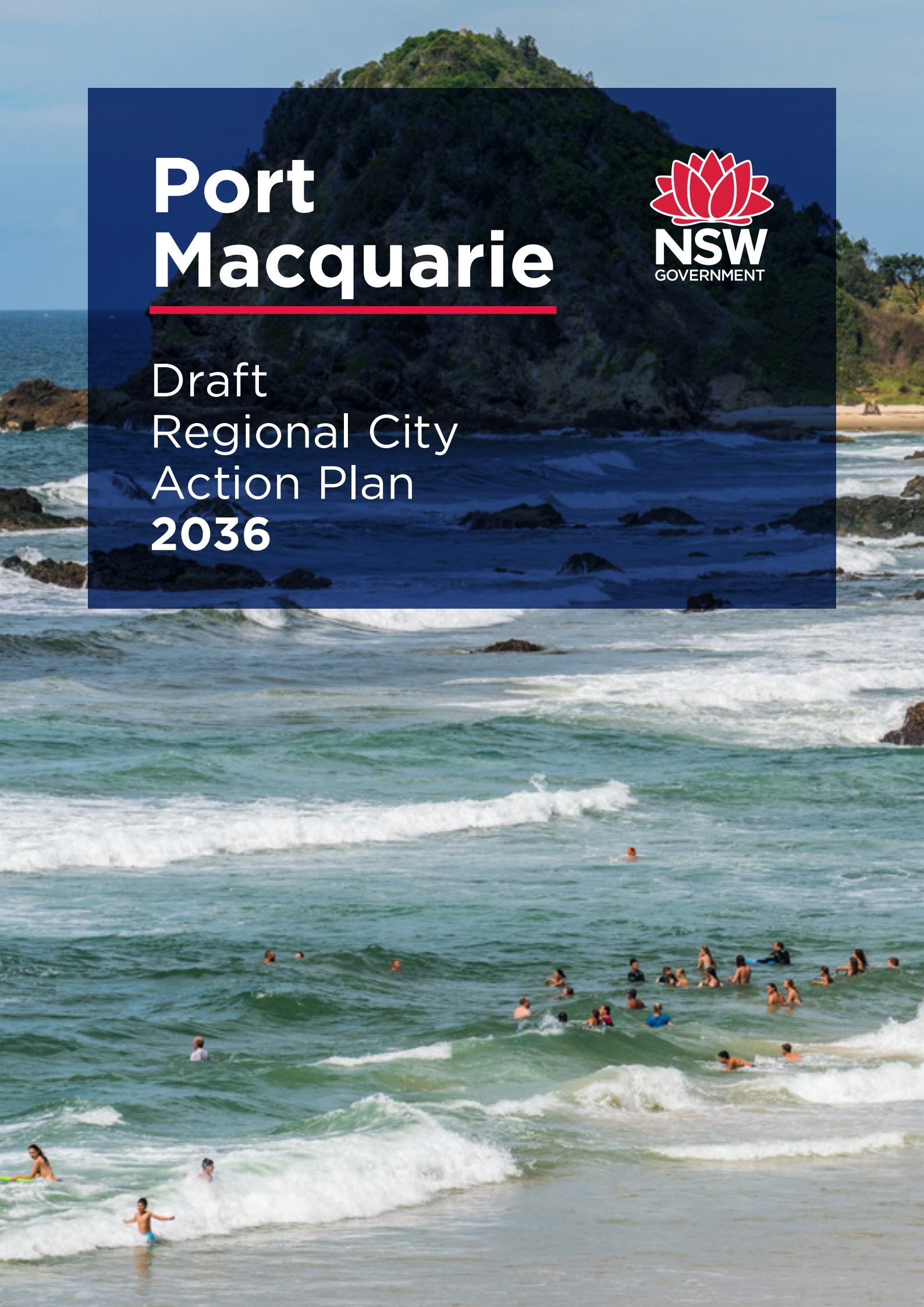


Port Macquarie



Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036



Acknowledgement

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Birpai, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. This draft Plan acknowledges a strong belief amongst Aboriginal people that if we care for country, it will care for us. This is supported by the knowledge that the health of a people and their community is reliant on a strong physical and emotional connection to place.

Conserving Aboriginal heritage and respecting the Aboriginal community's right to determine how it is identified and managed will preserve some of the world's longest standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values.

Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036

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Cover image: Nobby Head, Port Macquarie.
Left: *Credit Nikita Ridgeway*

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A Draft Regional City Action Plan for Port Macquarie

Port Macquarie is poised for big things. It is transitioning into a true Regional City.

Regional Cities provide high-level services and economic opportunities for their residents and surrounding areas. They are centres of business, governance and culture, and benefit from critical investments in major infrastructure.

The fast-growing health and education sectors, anchored by public and private hospitals and university campuses, will continue to attract students, investment, and innovators to the city.

A growing and vibrant city heart with an increasing focus on after hours activity will serve a growing community of inner city residents, visitors and workers.

This first ever draft Regional City Action Plan for Port Macquarie supports the Vision of the North Coast Regional Plan, by capitalising on Port Macquarie's spectacular environment, lifestyle and vibrant communities to help support the growth of the North Coast.

This Regional City Action Plan for Port Macquarie aims to capitalise on the opportunities that arise from this growth, while maintaining the special appeal of Port Macquarie.

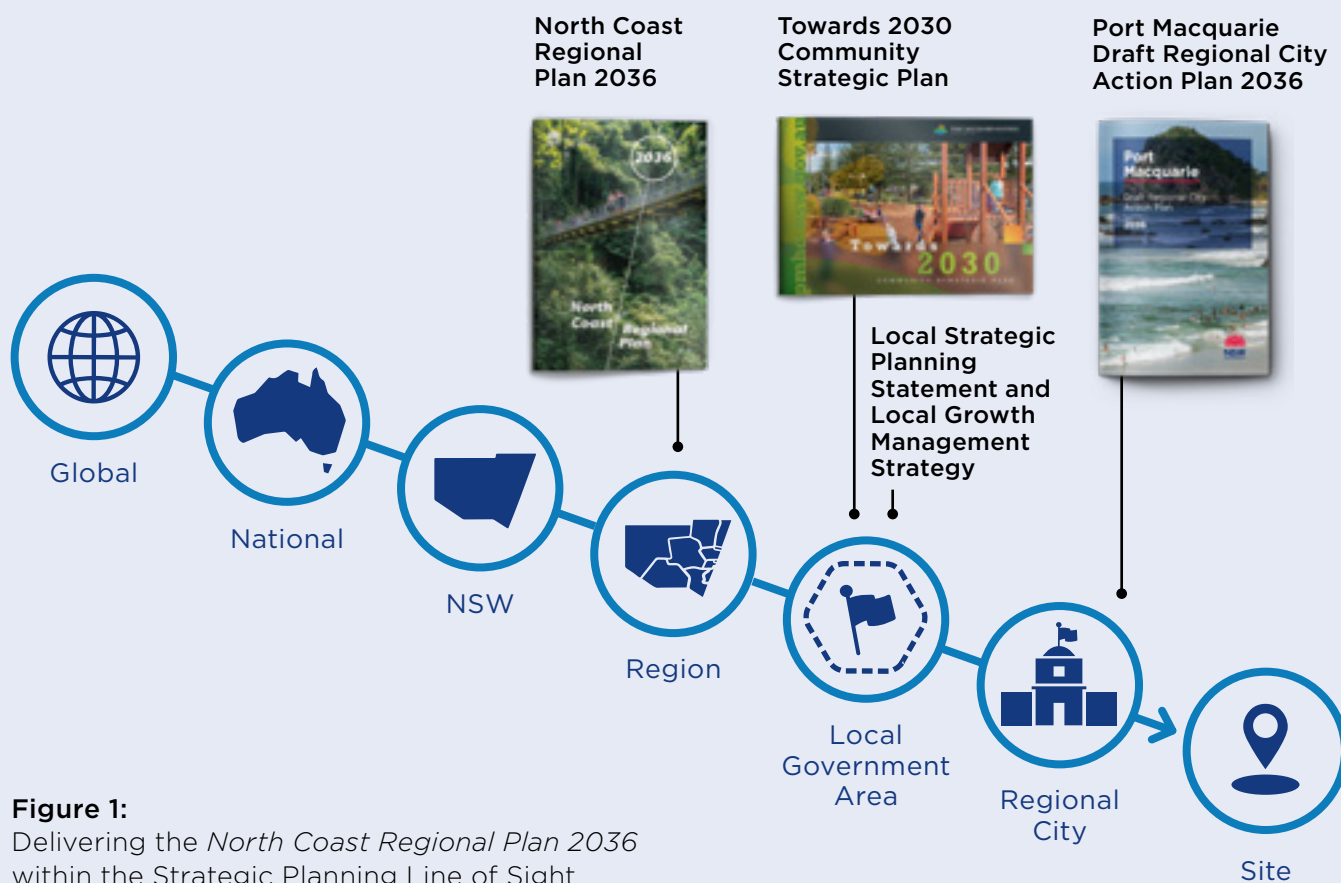
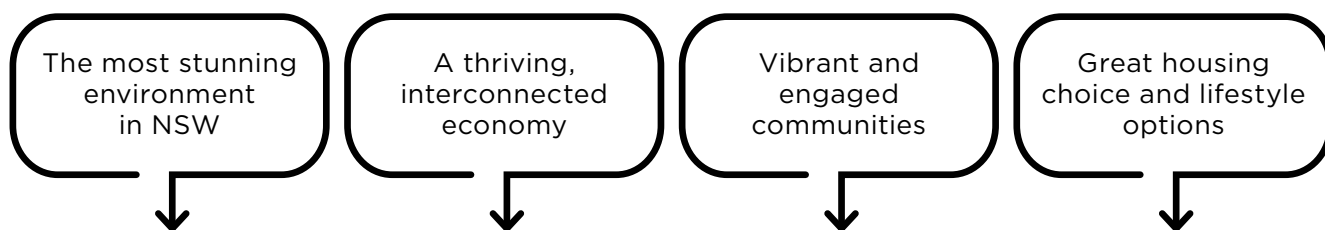
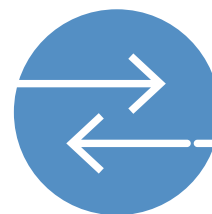
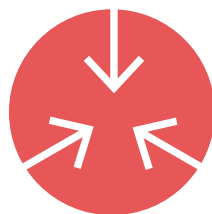


Figure 1:
Delivering the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036*
within the Strategic Planning Line of Sight

North Coast Regional Plan 2036



Draft Port Macquarie Regional City Action Plan



GOAL

Live

Port Macquarie is a blue and green compact city that sits in harmony with its environment and supports diverse communities with a range of housing choices.

OBJECTIVES

- 1** Deliver a compact city which provides housing diversity
- 2** Create a green and sustainable city
- 3** Deliver increased opportunities for affordable housing
- 4** Strengthen the city's resilience to natural hazards and climate change

Work

Port Macquarie is a regional economic leader with diverse and thriving business, industry and service hubs

- 5** Maximise Port Macquarie's regional specialisations in health and education
- 6** Grow Port Macquarie as the centre of a thriving and sustainable visitor economy
- 7** Deliver local jobs through the city's employment lands and industry sectors

Meet

Port Macquarie is an inclusive and welcoming city, with a network of local destinations, each with their own strong identity

- 8** Grow a creative, exciting and vibrant city heart
- 9** Respect, protect, embrace and celebrate the distinctive culture, character and heritage of Port Macquarie
- 10** Create a network of versatile, engaging and inclusive local hubs across the city
- 11** Promote Aboriginal cultural awareness, inclusion and place across Port Macquarie

Play

Port Macquarie is a lively city with an abundance of recreational opportunities supporting health and wellbeing for all

- 12** Maximise Port Macquarie's waterfront playground to attract residents and visitors
- 13** Create places that encourage healthy activities throughout the city
- 14** Create a youth-friendly city which engages young people and values their contribution

Move

Port Macquarie is a connected city that is easy and safe to traverse and explore via a range of movement and transport options

- 15** Develop an integrated place-based transport network that delivers a connected Port Macquarie
- 16** Optimise Port Macquarie's regional gateway infrastructure
- 17** Embrace advances in transport technology to increase community connectivity

City drivers

Four future city drivers will shape Port Macquarie as a city which is connected regionally and locally, with a distinctive city heart, green and blue landscapes and a strong economy which leverages its strengths



1

A sustainable green and blue city united with the natural environment

Port Macquarie is one of the most liveable cities in Australia. It is one of the few places where the city is interlinked with green spaces, bushland and waterways.

There are opportunities to further inter-connect the city with nature. Increasing the city's green canopy to create an accessible and attractive network of green spaces linked to the water will deliver important environmental outcomes such as enabling Port Macquarie's iconic koala population to thrive.

Port Macquarie's street network provides an opportunity to establish a green landscape through the city that links a variety of natural, recreational and waterfront areas. Work is also already underway to reconnect with the river and the beach, transforming the river's edge to an inviting asset as the foreshore is redeveloped.

A place that stitches the city centre to the water will attract residents, visitors, investment and economic opportunities while boosting the local lifestyle.



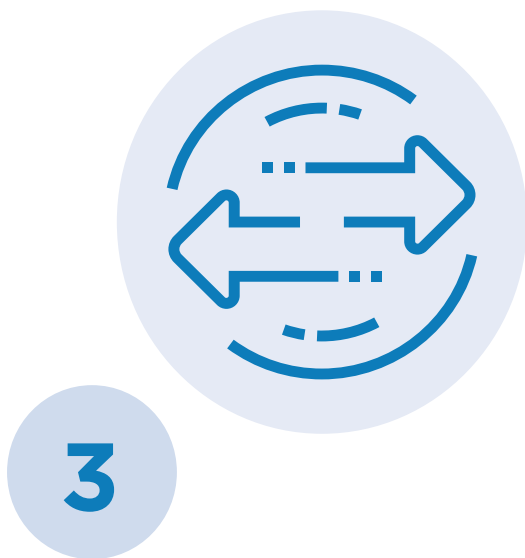
2

Leveraging our industry anchors

Health and education are the fastest growing employment sectors in Port Macquarie.

Port Macquarie's lifestyle and investments in health, education and aged care provide a strong basis for a thriving economy. Port Macquarie is serviced by a rich cluster of organisations within these industry sectors that includes the Port Macquarie Base Hospital, a private hospital, a diverse range of specialist and allied health practices, numerous public and private aged care facilities and four major tertiary institutions: Charles Sturt University, University of NSW, University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW.

Maximising the potential of these sectors and existing employment generators and creating an environment for new investment will individually and collaboratively drive innovation and industry excellence along with delivering the jobs and services needed for a growing population.

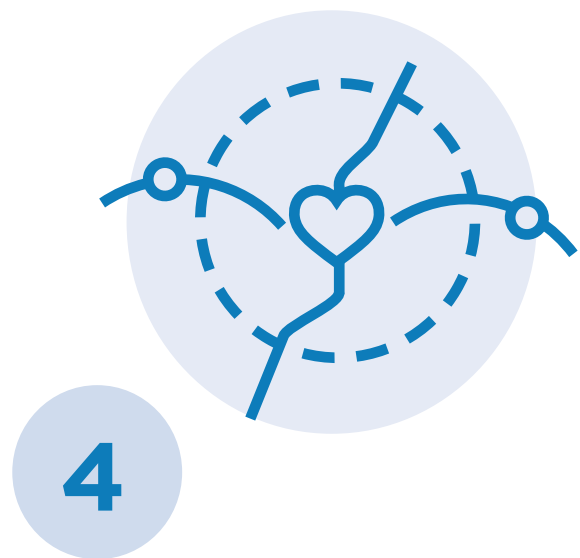


A key regional gateway

Port Macquarie is ideally situated at the southern entrance to the North Coast region and plays a key role as the gateway for the rapidly-growing Greater Sydney and Hunter regions to the south and the New England and North West regions to the west.

The Pacific and Oxley Highways, along with the Port Macquarie Airport, provide the key inter and intra-regional air and road connections that link Port Macquarie to these regions - delivering a source of significant economic development and opportunity.

The city's geographic location and the connectivity to outside regions provided by this gateway infrastructure will support ongoing economic development, access to services and liveability for residents and visitors.



A fully integrated city heart

Every great city has a heart. Port Macquarie's heart is focussed where the Hastings River meets the Pacific Ocean.

To grow Port Macquarie to its full potential it is important that this heart be accessible, distinct and vibrant. As the city grows, it is important that this area is not just recognised for its commercial and business contribution, but also for its role as a focal point for recreation, entertainment, culture and accommodation.

By delivering an integrated city heart which extends from Town Beach through to Settlement City, a number of opportunities will be available to develop a vibrant and connected network of places which integrates a full range of activities. Public and private investment will attract more people to the city's heart to live, work and play. Increased connectivity within the city, and improved access to and within the city heart, will be key to integrating this area with the rest of the city and the broader region.

Figure 2: Port Macquarie Vision Map

The map illustrates the Port Macquarie Vision Map, showing various zones and landmarks. The map includes a river, a coastline, and several colored areas: pink, purple, blue, and green. Numbered circles 1, 2, and 3 are placed on the map. Various icons are scattered throughout, including a hospital, a school, a shopping cart, a camera, a person, a building, a plane, and a car. A dashed line outlines a specific area on the right side of the map.

--- City Action Plan Area

Distinctive Place Network:

- ① City Heart
- ② Health and Education Precinct
- ③ Airport Precinct
- City Heart
- Main road
- Coastal Walking Track
- Environmental
- Parks and reserves
- Waterway
- Existing Urban Release Area
- Investigation Area Urban Land
- Employment Lands
- Investigation Employment Lands
- Commercial
- Waterfront Precinct
- Regional Gateway
- ✈ Airport
- 🏟 Sports & Entertainment Facility
- 🎓 TAFE/University
- 🏥 Medical
- 🏃 Sport - Leisure
- 🎭 Cultural and Entertainment Facilities
- 🐨 Koala Hospital
- 📷 Tourism

Vision

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Hastings River, on the traditional lands of the Birpai people, Port Macquarie is recognised as a smart, sustainable and vibrant city with a strong cultural and social heart.

The people of Port Macquarie protect and embrace the beauty and diversity of the natural environment and take pride in their cultural story and community connections.

As the southern gateway to the North Coast, Port Macquarie is economically strong and diverse and delivers on its potential as a welcoming city to visit, live, work and play.



Delivery framework

The NSW Government recognises the importance of strong regional cities in supporting the future prosperity of the entire North Coast.

The final *Port Macquarie Regional City Action Plan* will support the vision and goals of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* and build on State-wide and local strategic planning. It will inform strategic and operational decision making across NSW Government agencies and local government.

The *Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036* establishes the vision, goals, objectives, strategies and actions that will guide growth and change in the city towards 2036 (Figure 3).

The vision guides the five goals – live, work, meet, play and move. These goals shape the objectives for urban development and infrastructure investment that will inform decisions at State and local government levels. Targeted actions highlight areas for collaboration and future work across government.

This Plan will be implemented through the planning and delivery activities of Council and agencies. The collaboration of State and local governments, community groups,

industry groups and other stakeholders will be pivotal to the delivery of the Plan and the identified actions.

Key areas that will require collaboration are identified in Table 1. Key partners are identified for this work, however, other stakeholders will also be engaged where project needs require. Joint Organisations have been established to achieve shared outcomes across local government.

The preparation of local growth management strategies and local strategic planning statements will also need to be consistent with the vision and objectives.

Progress will be monitored in conjunction with the wider implementation of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* through the North Coast Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee.

Figure 3: Regional City Action Plan Structure

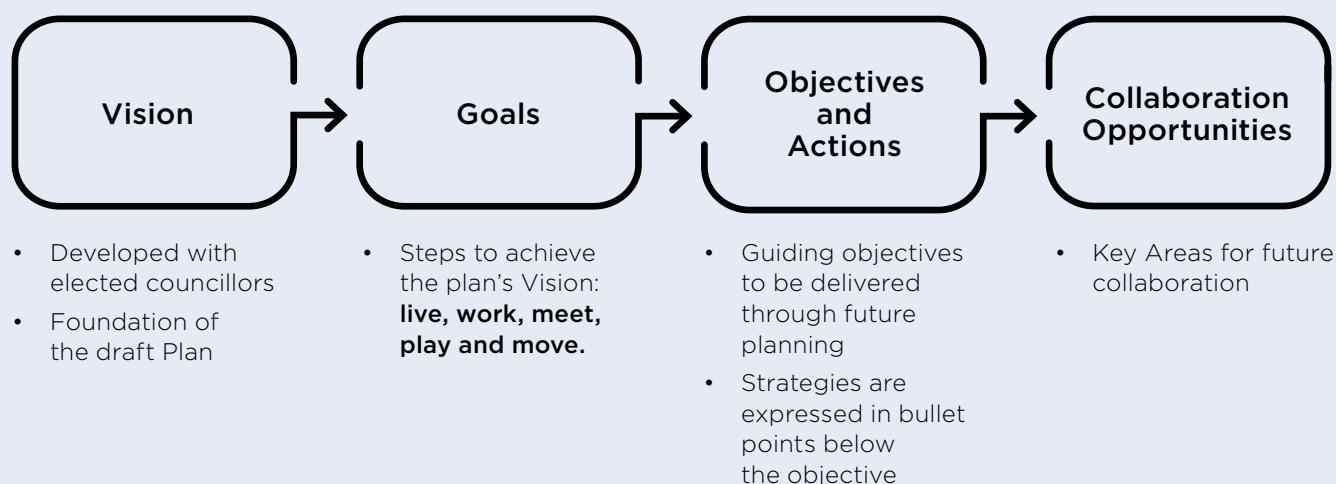


Table 1: Port Macquarie Regional City Collaboration Areas

| Collaboration area | Partners | Target outcomes |
|---|--|--|
| On-ground verification of Koala Corridors <i>Collaboration opportunity 1</i> | Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division | Verified mapping of existing koala corridors across Port Macquarie to inform the Koala Recovery Strategy and development of Port Macquarie's Green Grid |
| Affordable Housing Policy <i>Collaboration Opportunity 2</i> | Property NSW, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Community Housing | A co-ordinated State and local government approach to meet the current and future need for affordable housing in accessible locations in Port Macquarie |
| Sustainability Framework <i>Collaboration opportunity 3</i> | Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sustainability Advantage | A roadmap to achieve a sustainable future for Port Macquarie |
| Local Place and Design Guidelines <i>Collaboration Opportunity 4</i> | Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Crown Lands, GANSW, NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division. | A design framework incorporating land-use, building design and movement and place guidelines that maximises the opportunities for Port Macquarie using the design of the city centre precinct as a pilot design area |
| Port Macquarie Regional Integrated Transport Network <i>Collaboration opportunity 5</i> | Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Transport for NSW. | An integrated land use and transport network for the city's future movement and place needs. |

Figure 4:
Word Cloud
from visioning
workshops.

These words have been embedded throughout the plan.



Live



Coastline, Port Macquarie, courtesy of Destination NSW



Goal:

Port Macquarie is a blue and green compact city that sits in harmony with its environment and supports diverse communities with a range of housing choices



Objective 1

Deliver a compact city which provides housing diversity

Action

- 1.1 | Support Port Macquarie as a sustainable, compact city with a variety of housing in well-located precincts.
- 1.2 | Promote a mix of dwelling types that respect Port Macquarie's history, natural environment and character.

Port Macquarie is one of the most desirable places to live in Australia. Residents enjoy the sense of community, liveability and connection with the landscape and water. As more people move to Port Macquarie, innovative planning and urban design can help deliver thriving, attractive, compatible and sustainable urban areas. This plan envisions a city where growth helps to build stronger communities, heightens our stewardship of the environment, leads to enhanced sense of place, quality streetscapes and is accompanied by greater social equity.

New housing must be in the right places to meet demand for different housing types, tenure, price points, preferred locations and design. It is vital to ensure that new housing is delivered in a way that protects the unique character of places, promotes liveability and considers the cost of supplying infrastructure.

Port Macquarie has more people aged over 65 than the Australian average and its share of this age group is also growing faster than the national average. Older people should be able to stay in their local areas, and more young people should be able to enter the housing market.

A balanced approach to housing means accommodating more people close to the city centre or in locations where access to existing infrastructure and services support the delivery of greater housing choice. Low-rise medium density can provide housing choices in targeted locations such as areas serviced by small retail outlets, medical services or public transport within a 10-minute walk - meaning more people can carry out their day-to-day activities near where they live. This more sustainable urban form will then lead to better services, and more liveable and vibrant centres.

The delivery of infrastructure in alignment with population and housing growth is also critical to achieving a liveable city. Development and implementation of Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy, Regional Integrated Transport Strategy and Social Infrastructure Strategy will be key along with the implementation of Council's Smart Community Roadmap to improve local services, increase local opportunities and enhance economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Council's *Urban Growth Management Strategy 2017-2036* includes the development of a housing strategy to investigate targeted locations or precincts for various housing types that promote sensitive, innovative and contemporary designs. Ensuring a range of housing types are delivered will assist in achieving a supply of cost-efficient new dwellings.

Port Macquarie has one of the largest koala populations in NSW. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring koalas thrive in the wild for generations to come. The New South Wales Koala Strategy has been developed to support this vision. The most significant threat to koala distribution and abundance in Port Macquarie is habitat loss from residential areas. Directing growth to locations that do not compromise koala habitat or corridors will ease pressure on the natural environment and support the ability for koalas to thrive by protecting their habitat and movement corridors.

Collaboration opportunity 1

Council, in collaboration with relevant NSW Government agencies and local stakeholders, will map existing koala corridors across Port Macquarie to inform the Port Macquarie-Hastings' Koala Recovery Strategy and development of Port Macquarie's Green Grid

Timing: Short-term

Horton Street, Port Macquarie



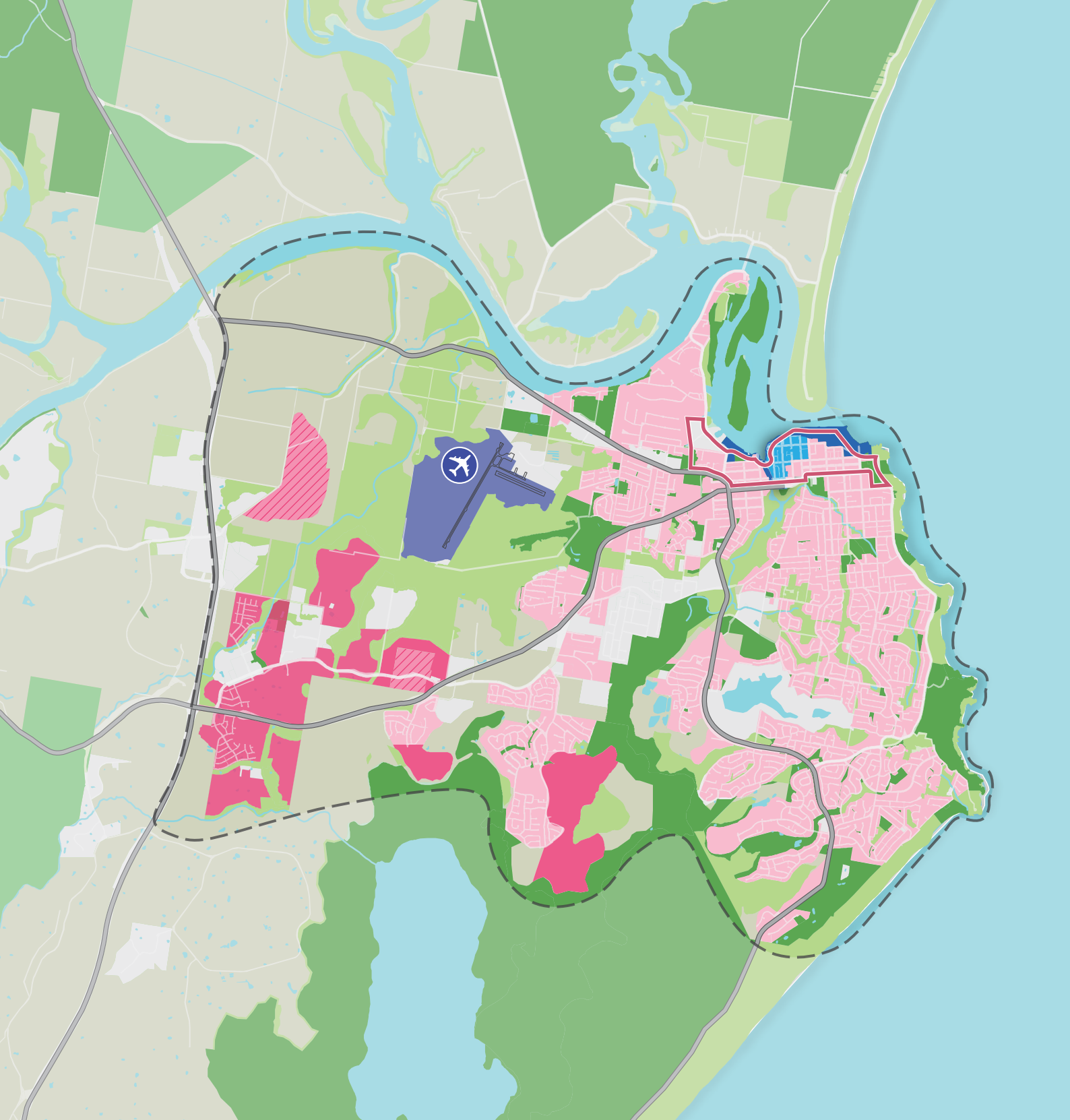
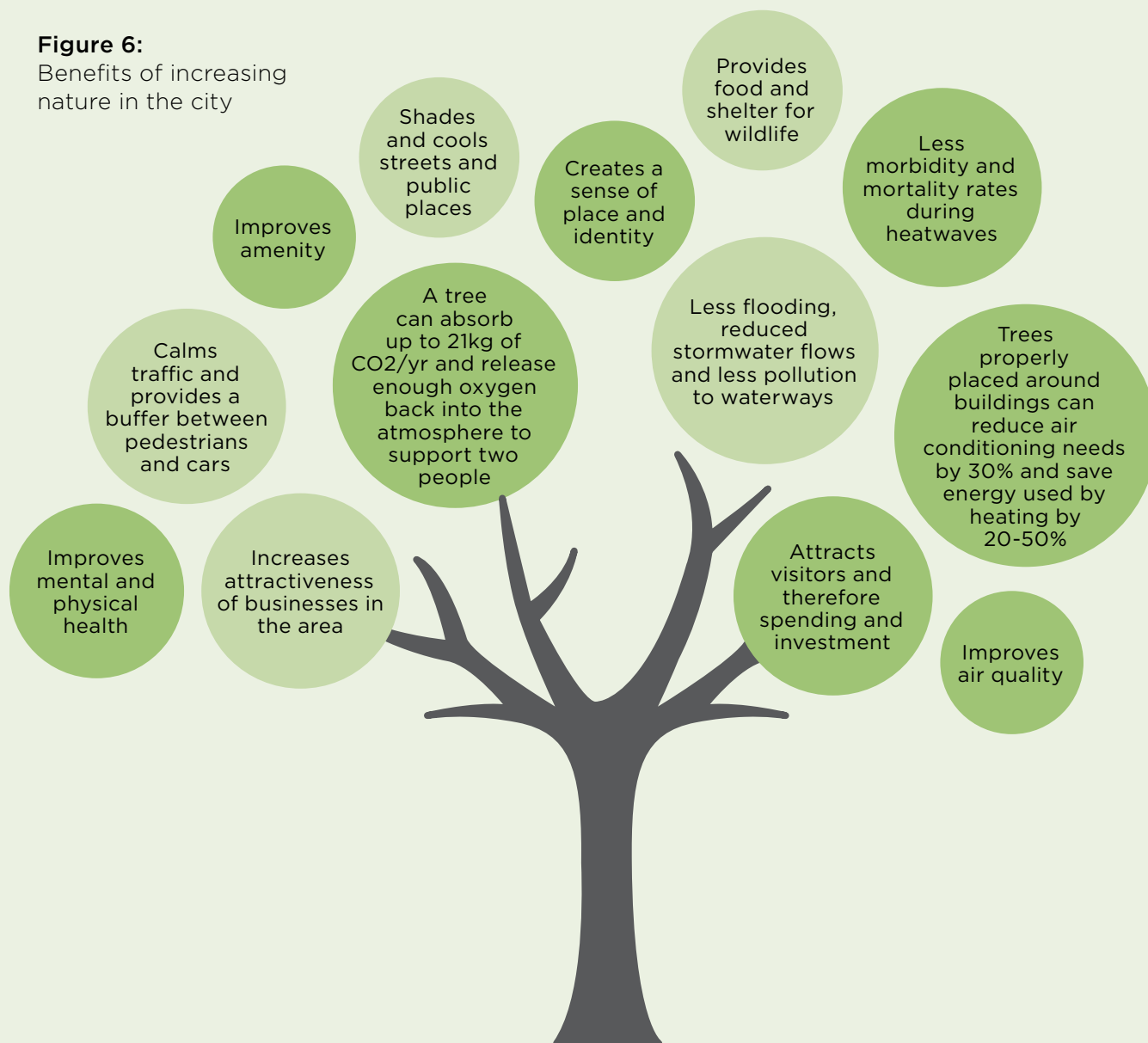


Figure 5: Port Macquarie Regional City residential areas

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| --- | City Action Plan Area | | Waterway | | Residential Areas | | Existing Urban Release Area |
| — | City Heart | | Environmental | | Investigation Areas Residential Land | | Waterfront Precinct |
| — | Main road | | Parks and reserves | | | | Airport |

Figure 6:
Benefits of increasing
nature in the city



Artist's impression of a green, liveable city



Objective 2

Create a green and sustainable city

Actions

- 2.1 | Increase the city's green infrastructure including tree canopy and green corridors.
- 2.2 | Manage urban development and urban bushland to support biodiversity conservation and the restoration of bushland corridors.
- 2.3 | Protect the city's scenic corridors and iconic natural landscape settings.
- 2.4 | Promote building design principles that respond to Port Macquarie's changing climate and support sustainable outcomes.

Port Macquarie is renowned for its wide streets, green open spaces and historic Norfolk Island pines. These characteristics help make Port Macquarie a green city that is attractive, healthy and a desirable place to live. Increasing the amount of green assets in the city helps:

- link the urban environment and natural areas.
- connect people with nature.
- support and enable flora and fauna to thrive, such as Port Macquarie's iconic koala population.
- cool the city.
- encourage walking and cycling, and a healthy lifestyle for residents.

Another way to improve green infrastructure is through innovative building designs that use garden walls and rooftop gardens. The NSW Apartment Design Guide and Greenfield Housing Code provide guidance for landscape areas that can support green infrastructure.

Biodiversity values help define Port Macquarie's identity, liveability and attractiveness as a place to play, work, live and meet. As the city grows, housing will increase around environmental assets, and these assets will need to be managed to continue to support a range of activities. These biodiversity values will be managed through wildlife agreements and through Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy.

The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 provides a framework and tools to avoid, minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity through the planning and development assessment process. Other tools to protect biodiversity include biodiversity stewardship agreements, conservation agreements and wildlife refuge agreements. In addition, national parks and reserves and other sensitive environmental areas are protected under Council's planning instruments.

A strategic approach to protecting biodiversity should include investing in connected bushland corridors and protecting larger pockets of remnant vegetation, to enable the city's wildlife, especially the koala population, to thrive. Selected species of trees and understorey plants for parks and street planting in targeted areas will support the movement of wildlife and strengthen connections between areas of habitat. Council is currently mapping opportunities to identify, restore and reconnect areas of habitat in established urban areas.

Across the city there are landscapes that are valued for scenic quality, natural conservation values, cultural values and the attractive vistas they provide from public places. It is important to identify the location and particular values of these landscapes so that they can be protected into the future.

Urban Design for Regional NSW - A guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW includes building design principles that can be integrated into urban areas to embrace Port Macquarie's changing climate and incorporate energy and water efficiency measures. These measures include keeping people comfortable with minimal auxiliary heating or cooling and incorporating innovative elements such as garden walls and rooftop gardens.

Canopy trees lining transport corridors or residential streets, or within parks, waterway corridors, and utility easements, bring shade and can interact with vegetation on private properties to increase the city's green infrastructure.

Low density housing in suburban Port Macquarie





Koala in Port Macquarie
Photo: Rebecca Montague-Drake

Artist's impression of subtropical building design

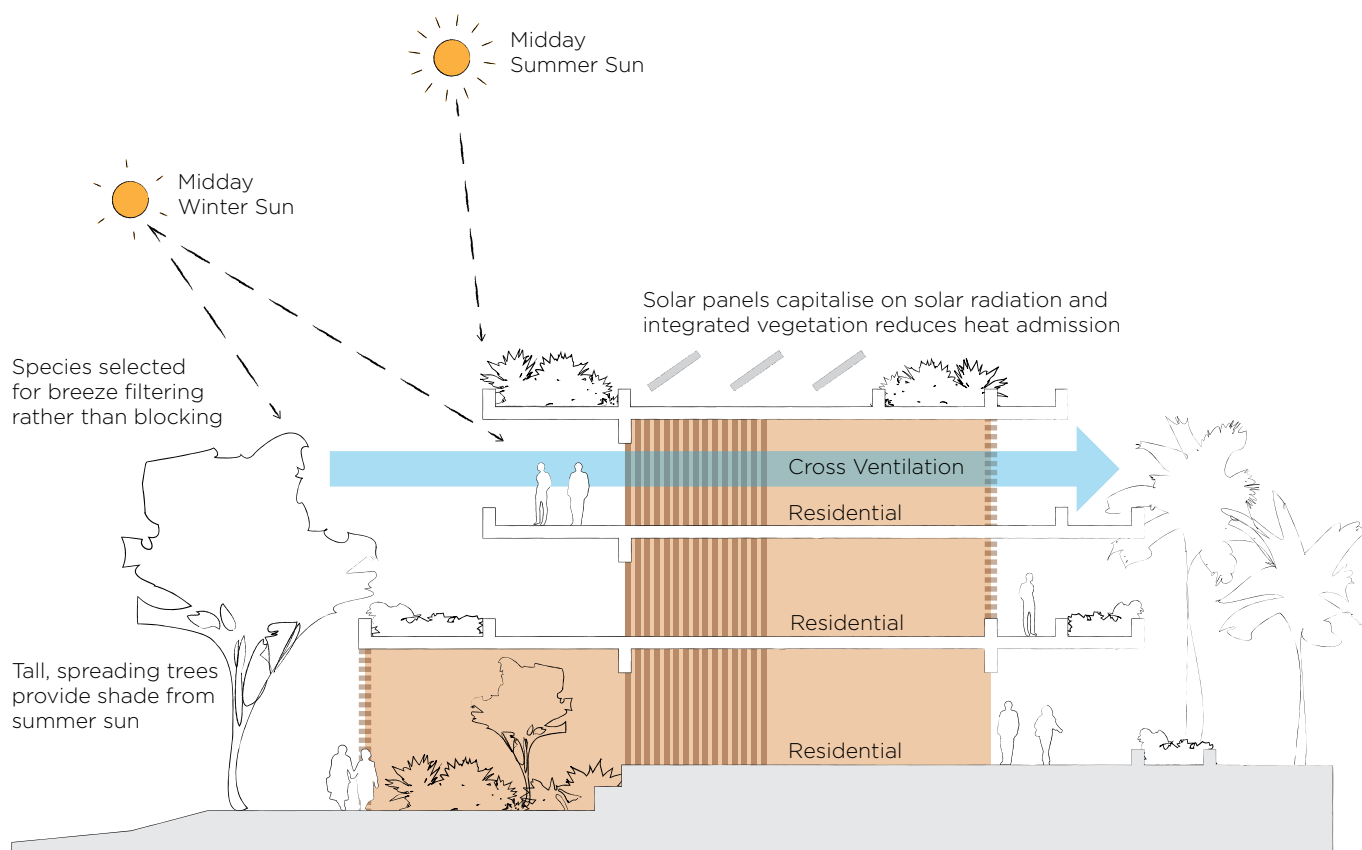


Table 2: Subtropical design principles

| Optimising the natural surrounds | |
|--|---|
| 1 | Orientate the building to minimise exposure to the harsh western sun, capture easterly breezes in summer, and embrace the northern sun in winter. |
| 2 | Understand the location of the sun at different times of the year to influence the arrangement of the rooms. |
| 3 | Plan for cross ventilation through the building. |
| Using vegetation for climate control | |
| 4 | Provide street and private plantings for shade, and to direct breeze through the building. Understand the location of the sun at different times of the year to inform where to include vegetation on the site. |
| 5 | Reduce hard surfaces around the building that absorb and radiant heat. Replace any hard surfaces with vegetation which results in cooler buildings. Use deep soil areas to establish trees. |
| 6 | Give urban trees the space they need to thrive so that the community may benefit from the microclimatic and other ecosystem benefits they provide. |
| 7 | Develop a vegetated roof or green roof or a green wall as part of the design for a cooling affect, and to reduce stormwater, provide natural insulation and prolong the life of a roof. |
| Embracing the breeze | |
| 8 | Design the building to encourage natural convection flow. Avoid inter-allotment retaining walls or high fences or retaining walls that block breezes. Locate and orient fully opening windows to capture cooling breezes, facilitate cross-ventilation and allow the passage of daylight while reducing unwanted heat transfer. |
| 9 | Ventilate roof spaces to allow hot air to release and be replaced with cool air. Use low wall vents or grills to help draw cool air into the building. Install controls to stop ventilation during the cooler months if necessary. |
| Creating outdoor space for the climate and lifestyle | |
| 10 | When creating outdoor areas, provide a shade structure to create cool spaces to use all year round. Locate outdoor spaces to respond to the sun and prevailing breezes. |
| 11 | Create a seamless transition between outdoor living areas to indoor spaces to capture breezes inside the house. |
| 12 | Use shade structures such as pergolas covered with vegetation (fixed or free standing) to reduce heat from walls that are exposed to the sun. |
| Capturing the detail in the design | |
| 13 | Use lightweight construction materials with low thermal mass, particularly on walls exposed to the sun, as materials such as timber respond quickly to cooling breezes allowing the building to cool faster. |
| 14 | Consider lighter colours on the roof and generally where the buildings have direct sunlight, as the darker the roof or wall the more heat is absorbed or conversely, the lighter the roof the more heat is reflected. Use insulating paints to reduce heat. |
| 15 | Consider wider roof eaves and other shading devices to better shield the building from the sun. Use adjustable shade structures to provide a variation of shade during different times of the year. |

Objective 3

Deliver increased opportunities for affordable housing

Action

- 3.1 | Provide support and guidance for housing affordability.

Over the next 20 years an estimated additional 11,950 new homes will be needed to house Port Macquarie's growing population. Council has enough existing zoned land to cater for the expected housing needs until 2036.

Future provision of new greenfield housing areas should consider the cost of supply of infrastructure in the long term. Poorly managed releases of land can result in higher living costs for residents.

Urban renewal opportunities in and around the city heart and neighbourhood hubs will create downward pressure on prices and help affordability. Rising house prices can lead to stronger demand for rental properties, increasing rental costs and the displacement of lower income households from more affordable accommodation. A shortage of affordable rental properties can also increase demand for social housing and housing support services.

The Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) provides incentives for development projects to include a 10-year term for affordable rental housing dwellings for very low to moderate income households.

The provision of rental housing for lower income households, aged care and options for older people to stay in their local areas, as well as affordable and social housing for the most vulnerable should be near services, public transport and shops. Housing diversity and choice will improve affordability, help meet the needs of older people and meet the needs of smaller households.

Facilitating affordable housing, necessitates strong partnerships in order to reduce the gap between housing supply and current and future demand. Partnerships to provide affordable housing is an emerging trend in Australia. This includes partnerships between all levels of government as well as working with the community housing sector and private developers to boost the availability of affordable housing.

Collaboration opportunity 2

Council, in collaboration with key State agency stakeholders, will explore opportunities to meet the current and future need for affordable housing in accessible locations in Port Macquarie.

Timing: Medium-term

Residential apartments in Port Macquarie



Objective 4

Strengthen the city's resilience to natural hazards and climate change

Actions

- 4.1 | Apply risk-responsive land use controls in local plans to avoid new development in high risk areas.
- 4.2 | Mitigate natural hazards and incorporate resilience measures with quadruple bottom line benefits.
- 4.3 | Consider sea level rise, flooding and coastal hazards when planning for infrastructure.

Climate modelling shows that the Mid North Coast is projected to experience an increase in the number of high temperature days, with more autumn and spring rainfall. Severe fire weather days are projected to increase in summer and spring.¹ A changing climate is influencing the severity and occurrence of storms, floods, drought, and coastal erosion and inundation. Adapting to a changing climate requires deliberate steps to manage and mitigate these potential impacts.

Current planning mechanisms in Port Macquarie are designed to encourage resilience to negative impacts and contain a range of responses to risks.

The planning and design of new development and infrastructure must reduce exposure to natural and urban hazards and build resilience to a changing climate at both local and regional levels. Incorporation of evacuation planning into strategic land use planning and development control can minimise risks and reduce the burden on emergency management personnel during and following natural hazard events, including flood events. Future planning for new major urban release areas should account for evacuation processes.

Collaboration opportunity 3

Council, in collaboration with stakeholders will develop a Sustainability Framework and supporting strategies to deliver a resilient and sustainable Port Macquarie

Timing: Short-term

Nobby Head, Port Macquarie



Work



*Ricardoes Tomatoes and Strawberries, Port Macquarie,
courtesy of Destination NSW*



Goal:

Port Macquarie is a regional economic leader with diverse and thriving business, industry and service hubs



Objective 5

Maximise Port Macquarie's regional specialisations in health and education

Action

- 5.1 | Leverage and maximise the opportunities associated with the Port Macquarie Health and Education Precinct.
- 5.2 | Establish Port Macquarie as a Centre of Excellence for Healthy Ageing and Wellbeing.

Health and education are the fastest growing employment sectors in Port Macquarie, supported by public and private hospitals, along with four tertiary level education institutions, including the Charles Sturt University campus at Major Innes Road expected to accommodate 5,000 students by 2030.²

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council is currently working with government and community stakeholders to develop a Health and Education Precinct at the Innes Peninsula. The Precinct will be an active community hub that supports a mix of uses that increases jobs, delivers key services and attracts younger workers.

The co-location of education, research, health, industry and community facilities in the Health and Education Precinct is a foundation for sustainable employment for Port Macquarie.³ To support the growth of associated businesses and industries within and surrounding the Precinct will require the co-ordinated delivery of better connections, future expansion opportunities, local infrastructure, walking and cycling paths, and improvements to public areas to attract businesses and workers.

The overall cluster of high-quality health and education facilities within Port Macquarie provides significant collaboration opportunities. For example, Port Macquarie's ageing population coupled with its high quality health and education services, provide a strong basis for developing the city's reputation as a Centre of Excellence in Healthy Ageing and Wellbeing. Opportunities exist to:

- Build robust aged care industry partnerships that allow the co-creation of new flexible education programs and workforce opportunities.
- Create new cross-vertical programs in business, hospitality, education and design that will capitalise on the new opportunities from the "era of ageing".
- Undertake industry-based research to develop education and business products and services for the aged-care and wellbeing market.
- Encourage the development of ageing in place through appropriate building design.
- Ensure the supply of aged care residential facilities close to services.

Port Macquarie Base Hospital





Above: Charles Sturt University Accommodation, Port Macquarie

Below: UNSW's Shared Health, Research and Education Campus (SHREC), Port Macquarie



Objective 6

Grow Port Macquarie as the centre of a thriving and sustainable visitor economy

Actions

- 6.1 | Provide high-quality public recreational, cultural and entertainment hubs in locations that visitors can access.
- 6.2 | Facilitate a broad range of visitor accommodation and experiences.
- 6.3 | Continue and encourage partnerships and tourism opportunities with Local Aboriginal Land Councils.
- 6.4 | Work with key stakeholders to improve understanding and skills in digital marketing, sustainable business best practice, story-telling, cross-selling and packaging, and international-ready product development.

With more than 1.6 million people visiting Port Macquarie each year, tourism is a vital part of the Port Macquarie economy. The challenge is to encourage visitors to stay longer and enjoy more of what Port Macquarie has to offer. Port Macquarie's Destination Management Plan identifies seven experience platforms to guide tourism product and experience development and marketing and visitor information strategies. Nature is central to the delivery of each platform and the appeal of Port Macquarie as a destination.

Visitor experiences can be enhanced through a high quality public domain, along with activated recreational, cultural and entertainment precincts, in highly visible and accessible locations.

Events over 2019 and 2020 have demonstrated the need to develop a visitor economy that can respond to the effects of climate change and human-related threats (such as the Covid-19 pandemic). It is important that the city's tourism operators are provided with information, education and links to help them adopt more sustainable business practices to adapt to a change in environmental circumstances, and at the same time adopt practices that reduce their own environmental impact.

Port Macquarie has the infrastructure to accommodate regional conferences and large events. The business conference sector in regional NSW can generate expenditure of \$290 million to the State by delegates attending business events.⁴ Destination NSW's Regional Conferencing Unit and Destination North Coast can help to target opportunities, identify capacity and promote Port Macquarie to the conferencing market.

Building the competitive digital capability of the visitor economy will improve how Port Macquarie is marketed, and tourism products will maintain a competitive advantage. Visitors are increasingly using digital applications, websites and social media to research, book and rate their travel. Continued investment in digital channels and marketing by local tourism bodies and industry will ensure a thriving local visitor economy.



Over
1.6M
People Visit
Port Macquarie-
Hastings
each Year



Spending Over
\$469M⁵
Annually

Objective 7

Deliver local jobs through the city's employment lands and industry sectors

Action

- 7.1 | Maintain an adequate supply of employment lands in appropriate locations to support jobs growth.
- 7.2 | Support existing employment sectors and facilitate the development of emerging and future-focused industries for the city.
- 7.3 | Protect employment land from encroachment of residential and other non-compatible uses that would adversely affect commercial viability.

Port Macquarie has an existing strong supply of employment lands (including industrial land) across the city to support jobs growth.

Future planning will facilitate industry growth, new infrastructure, services and amenity improvements. Appropriate precinct planning for areas such the Health and Education Precinct and the Airport Business Park will attract and agglomerate businesses with complementary purposes and stimulate growth.

A focus on the design and enhancement of Port Macquarie's industrial/employment lands will be achieved through an increase in convenience services, improved pedestrian connections and softening the boundaries between residential areas and industrial areas. For instance, the introduction of established gateways to industrial/commercial estates can help with the branding of these areas and provide welcoming, defined entry points and enhanced way finding.

As a regional gateway, Port Macquarie is well-situated to develop future-focused industries which serve both local requirements and also those of the region. For example a range of opportunities exist to develop industries which support Port Macquarie's vision of being smart and sustainable. Large-scale renewable energy projects, the development of a circular economy and innovative approaches to waste management are examples of industry development that Port Macquarie can encourage and which can serve the city's regional neighbours.

Sancrox Industrial Area



Meet



Glasshouse, Port Macquarie, courtesy of Destination NSW



Goal:

Port Macquarie is an inclusive and welcoming city, with a network of local destinations, each with their own strong identity



Objective 8

Grow a creative, exciting and vibrant city heart

Actions

- 8.1 | Support the city heart as the principal activity centre for business, retail, culture, entertainment and prestige events.
- 8.2 | Promote the city heart as a location for high and medium residential and tourism accommodation development that caters for a large and diverse living and working population.
- 8.3 | Encourage night-time, out-of-hours and out-of-season activation of the city heart through arts, culture and events.

Every city needs a heart, a central gathering place where events and festivals can be held. It's a place to meet for residents, visitors and workers, with shops, commercial enterprises, cafes and restaurants and a thriving incubator of arts and culture with the Glasshouse—the home of the city's theatre, regional gallery, conference and meeting facilities—and the Port Macquarie Museum and Courthouse.

Council has recognised the importance of the foreshore and public areas to the city, and the potential to integrate the area from Town Beach to Settlement City to create a fully-connected commercial, entertainment, residential and recreational city heart that offers a complete range of mixed and complementary uses.

Residential uses in particular will help to bring activity and economic benefits with more people likely to use the streets at all times of the day and night, creating a family-friendly environment. People are also less likely to use their car, as activities and services are within easy reach.

Council's planning controls should ensure that the city heart will support and fuse economic, social and cultural pursuits to enrich and enliven all who live, work and visit. Public domain works, connections and sympathetic development of strategic sites within this area will be required. This will help to bring vibrancy to the city heart by supporting the reuse and refurbishment of upper levels of buildings for office, accommodation and residential use, and promoting new development. It will also promote a greater diversity of uses in retail centres, including housing and recreation to provide for changing retail activities and lifestyle choices.

*Town Centre Master Plan Area.
Source: Town Centre Master Plan*



Objective 9

Respect, protect, embrace and celebrate the distinctive culture, character and heritage of Port Macquarie

Actions

- 9.1 | Development is to respond to and reinforce the local character of places by contributing positively to local values.
- 9.2 | Apply innovative approaches to engage with heritage values and re-use of heritage places.
- 9.3 | Support the development of a cultural and heritage precinct within Port Macquarie's city centre.

Many areas across Port Macquarie have a strong 'sense of place' with a clear identity that is deeply felt by residents and visitors. This includes the unique combination of tangible elements such as geology, geography, built form and landscapes, and less tangible factors such as social culture, historical associations, sense of belonging and memories.

This acts as a platform for design solutions that reflect and enhance the sense of place.

Port Macquarie has a strong Aboriginal cultural heritage, well-preserved European heritage buildings and a strong and distinctive character that increases amenity, functionality and attractiveness. Well-designed developments must respond to the surrounding environmental conditions and create more liveable, unique and beautiful buildings.

The recognition and celebration of Port Macquarie-Hastings' Aboriginal cultural heritage and the conservation of the city's European heritage will continue to be one of its competitive strengths. Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings will lead to unique and exciting places while increasing opportunities for new investment and jobs. Innovative approaches to creative re-use can preserve and renew historical buildings.

Preserving the local distinctiveness of each unique locality through place making strategies will bring together economic development, urban design and the environment. Discovering and enhancing these unique localities will create people-focused places that reflect shared community values and culture.

Port Macquarie's commitment to the intrinsic value of art, culture and creativity is also well recognised and is highlighted by the Glasshouse, cultural festivals and events such as ArtWalk along with historic and archaeological sites including the Port Macquarie Museum and the original 1869 courthouse.

The work of artists and creative industries will be supported by activating public and private spaces for creative expression. The establishment of a cultural and heritage precinct within Port Macquarie's city centre, including a co-working hub for creative start-ups and access to space for community participation in culture, will help to encourage people of all ages to stay and thrive in Port Macquarie and build new pathways for the local creative economy.

Port Macquarie city centre and surrounds



Objective 10

Create a network of versatile, engaging and inclusive local hubs across the city

Actions

- 10.1 | Develop place planning to strengthen local hubs including the design quality of public spaces, accessibility and the interfaces between private development and public areas.
- 10.2 | Encourage spaces for neighbourhood meeting places, community centres for public events.
- 10.3 | Support the development of social infrastructure to meet population growth and demographic changes.

Port Macquarie is a mosaic of diverse urban places including leafy historic precincts, family-focused suburbs, sporting and retail area. These hubs provide an array of retail, housing choice, service offerings, recreation opportunities and local jobs across the city.

Enhancing the local distinctiveness of each hub through place-planning strategies and design guidelines can bring together economic development, urban design and environment, culture and community engagement. This will create different opportunities, for example, hubs dominated by an enclosed shopping centre

surrounded by parking will have very different opportunities and constraints to more traditional neighbourhood shops. Discovering and enhancing these local hubs will create people-focused places that reflect shared community values.

The NSW Government Architect has prepared *Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment in NSW* and *Urban Design for Regional NSW - A guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW*. Adoption of these documents can help ensure a place-based design approach to the city's planning framework.

Fostering community wellbeing and socially inclusive communities will be one of Port Macquarie's strengths and will help deliver a liveable, inclusive and diverse community. This includes planning for the right infrastructure and services to support growth, taking advantage of areas with high levels of existing infrastructure and services, while also responding to changing demands over time and in different places. Place-planning can also contribute to positive social outcomes.

Collaboration opportunity 4

Council, in conjunction with relevant NSW Government agencies and local stakeholders will develop a design framework incorporating land-use, building design and movement and place guidelines that maximise the opportunities for local hubs

Timing: Medium-term

*Hello Koalas Festival 2017, Port Macquarie.
Courtesy of Destination NSW*



Objective 11

Promote Aboriginal cultural awareness, inclusion and place across Port Macquarie

Actions

- 11.1 | Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal culture.
- 11.2 | Engage Local Aboriginal Land Councils early in planning and decision-making processes in a genuine and respectful manner.

Aboriginal cultural values have been an intrinsic part of the landscape and environment for tens of thousands of years. The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's *Cultural Plan 2018-2021* includes strategies to use the Birpai language in interpretive destination and public signage as well as incorporation in public art. This will help to better promote and integrate this history into Port Macquarie.

The number of cultural sites and artefacts makes the active involvement of Aboriginal people in planning and decision-making important. The culture of Aboriginal people is unique and offers many economic and cultural advantages. Similarly, the importance of connection to Country underpins the wellbeing of Aboriginal communities. When Country is well, people are likely to be well.

Local Aboriginal Land Council landholdings can be investigated for economic development opportunities. Already, private or public partnerships with Local Aboriginal Land Councils have assisted business development opportunities and will further support Aboriginal people to connect with their history and provide resources to ensure ongoing recognition.

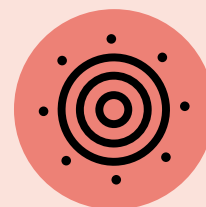
Music, art, dance, laws/lore and creation stories help to retain a living culture. The National Aboriginal Design Agency can assist Aboriginal people through skills and enterprise development and by bringing history to life. Aboriginal experiences must be woven into the promotion of Port Macquarie as an integral part of what makes Port Macquarie special. This includes opportunities to integrate Aboriginal culture and product into events.

The Birpai People

The Birpai people land includes the watersheds of the Maria, Wilson, Hastings, Forbes, Cells, Doyles, Mummel, Camden Haven, Stewarts, Lansdowne and Manning Rivers. Birpai Country commences in the west at the Great Dividing Range.

Australia's first recorded surf lifesaving rescue was performed by Birpai men in 1828. A pilot boat capsized off Port Macquarie and seven Birpai men rescued seven sailors in very dangerous surf conditions. The Birpai men were awarded medals for the rescue.

3.9%
of the
Port Macquarie
population
identify as
aboriginal



Play



Lady Nelson Wharf, Port Macquarie



Goal:

Port Macquarie is a lively city with an abundance of recreational opportunities supporting health and wellbeing for all



Objective 12

Maximise Port Macquarie's waterfront playground to attract residents and visitors

Actions

- 12.1 | Recognise the river and ocean waterfronts as a key connector for the city by incorporating opportunities for walking and cycling.
- 12.2 | Activate the waterfront through public domain improvements that incorporate recreational areas.
- 12.3 | Promote events that celebrate the waterfront and local communities.
- 12.4 | Manage the health of Port Macquarie's waterways.

The water is a defining feature in Port Macquarie as a place to play and gather within a network of adjacent parks, pathways and the urban environment.

Port Macquarie has 84 kilometres of coastline⁶ and the Hastings River forms part of the city's identity, history and natural landscape. The ocean and river were the focus for Indigenous life and has influenced every feature of the city.

Council is delivering greater connection with the river and coastline. The Coastal Walk with its boardwalks, pathways, beaches, ramps and stairs brings people close to the water and is one of the city's most valuable assets.

Focusing on land use opportunities along the water's edge, will build on Port Macquarie's character and amenity. Strategic sites can be identified to ensure the waterfront is a connected place for public open space and place making opportunities.

New development must ensure that the range of transport, tourism, recreation and economic opportunities to activate this natural playground are considered.

Legislation, policies and plans are in place to improve the health of waterways and to manage water resources. For example, the *Coastal Management Act 2016* integrates coastal management and land use planning and the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* protects aquatic biodiversity. The NSW Water Quality and River Flow Objectives identify the high-level goals for several catchments in Port Macquarie. State agencies and Council also manage the health of Port Macquarie's waterways through planning and development decisions, environmental programs and the management of public land via the Coastal Management Program.

Lady Nelson Wharf, Port Macquarie and river foreshore



Objective 13

Create places that encourage healthy activities throughout the city

Actions

- 13.1 | Create a network of diverse, accessible, high quality open spaces and recreational areas that respond to the needs and values of the community.
- 13.2 | Provide inclusive open space and recreational areas for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds.

Sportsgrounds, parks and reserves play an important role in the health and wellbeing of a community.

Council provides a wide range of important open space and recreation facilities in Port Macquarie ranging from pocket parks through to large-scale sporting fields and facilities. The community values these areas as a place to play.

Open space also provides opportunities for unique and at-risk biodiversity. Selected trees and shrubs provide habitat and food sources for native wildlife and it reinforces Port Macquarie's identity.

Population growth and change may shift the community's recreational requirements, and the quality, quantity and distribution of Port Macquarie's open space will need to inform planning decisions. For instance, some areas in existing parks or underutilised urban spaces can be used for outdoor sport and exercise zones. Place-based planning can identify opportunities to improve the quality, management and use of existing open space, and to provide new open space.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has developed *Everyone Can Play - Let's Create Inclusive Play Spaces* to guide the creation of world-class, inclusive and accessible play spaces for all people, including disabled and able-bodied children and their carers.



Port Macquarie has
89 Recreational Parks
+92,756 HA

of National Parks
and Nature Reserves



+512 HA
Public recreation



+274 HA
Private recreation

Objective 14

Create a youth-friendly city which engages young people and values their contribution

Action

- 14.1 | Create a youth-friendly place that offers lifestyle opportunities for youth through education facilities, youth-friendly festivals, events, cultural and recreational spaces and opportunities.

By 2040, the proportion of Port Macquarie's population aged over 65 is expected to increase by 66% with only a marginal increase of people aged 15-29. The age disparity is increasing.

Attracting and retaining a young working population is important for the economy and community wellbeing of the city. More diverse housing, employment opportunities and increased liveability will be important to attract and retain young people. Promoting education facilities, youth-friendly festivals, events, street theatre, public art and more green and accessible play spaces will attract a younger demographic to Port Macquarie.

Certain strategies that make use of technology will also attract younger people to Port Macquarie.⁷ Many millennials are either looking to settle down or begin their careers and are starting the search for where to live. They see where they live as a lifestyle choice. Local hubs and creative industries such as microbrewers will attract a younger population, as will a prominent music and entertainment scene. Catering for the needs of young people and the social and environmental trends they love, will help attract and retain more young people in Port Macquarie.



With more than
1,200 people
aged between
18 and 24
leaving the
area in 2016,
an age disparity
is continuing.

Move

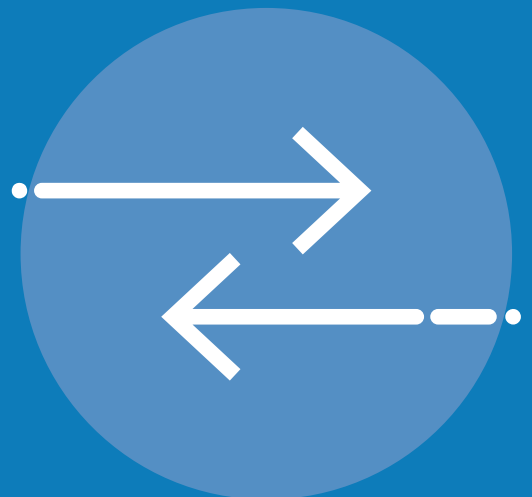


Port Macquarie CBS Shared Pathway



Goal:

Port Macquarie is a connected city that is easy and safe to traverse and explore via a range of movement and transport options



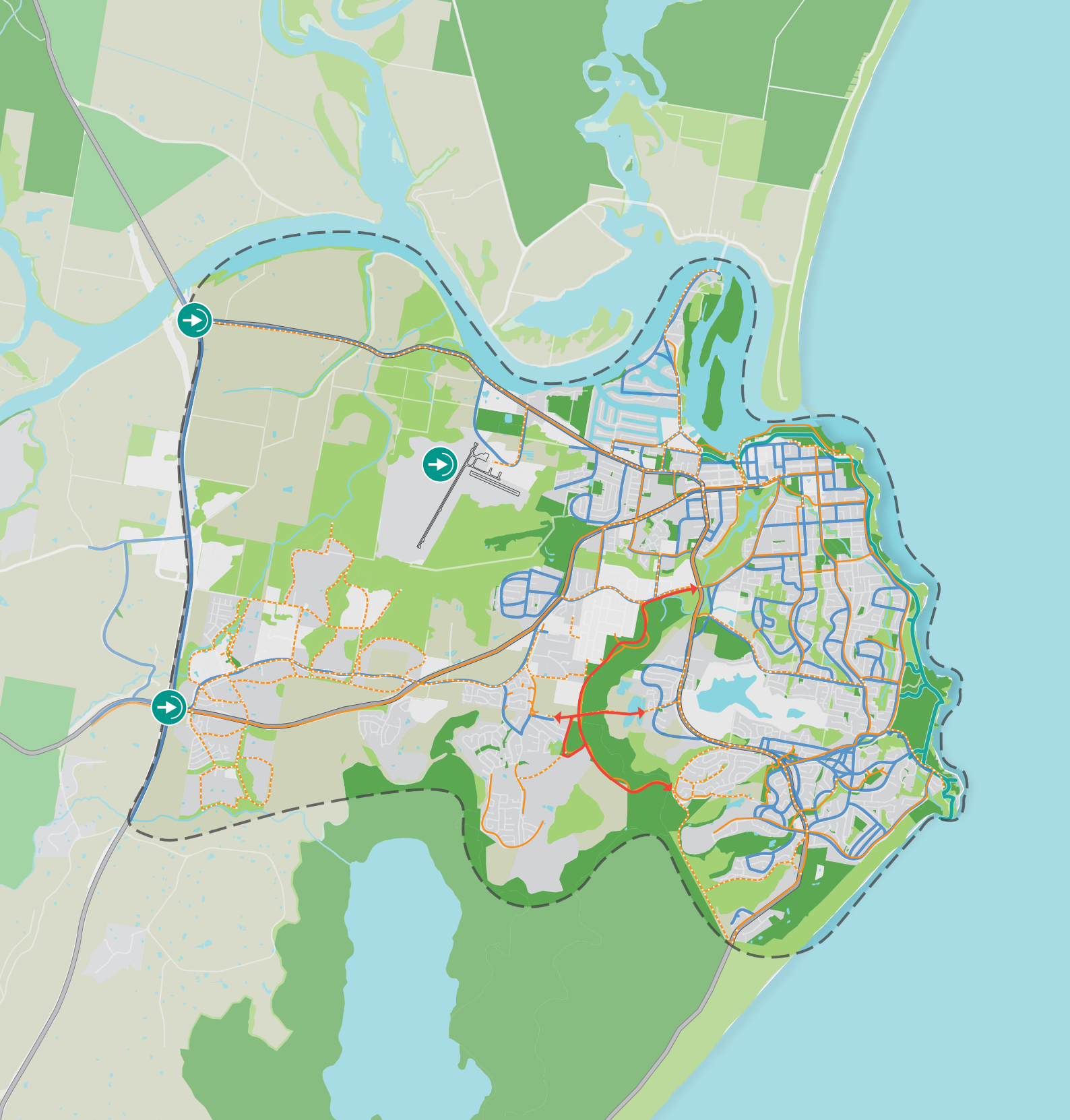













Figure 7: Port Macquarie Transport Network

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|---------------|---|--------------------|
|  | City Action Plan Area |  | Bus Route |  | Main road |  | Parks and Reserves |
|  | Kooloonbung Creek Track |  | Existing Bicycle Network |  | Waterway |  | Regional Gateway |
|  | Coastal Walking Track |  | Proposed Bicycle Network |  | Environmental | | |

Objective 15

Develop an integrated place-based transport network that delivers a connected Port Macquarie

Actions

- 15.1 | Integrate transport systems to deliver accessibility across the city and increase connectivity within existing systems such as the pedestrian and cycling network.
- 15.2 | Pedestrian and cycling paths, and public transport stops and interchanges, are accessible and convenient.

Transport networks link people to jobs and businesses to markets—making places like Port Macquarie creative, productive and liveable. A place-based network will provide a sustainable transport framework for Port Macquarie that gives the community more convenient options for how they move, considering their personal needs and circumstances.

Transport for NSW's *Future Transport 2056* establishes a movement and place framework that can balance growth with safe, efficient and reliable journeys for people and freight. Transport for NSW will develop a regional transport plan for the North Coast that will provide further local context to the *Future Transport 2056* and *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* by offering strategic guidance for the region's transport network.

Providing a connected city with a range of transport network upgrades, including new links to areas such as the airport and the health and education precinct will support and sustain future growth. Strong public transport networks and strategically located and

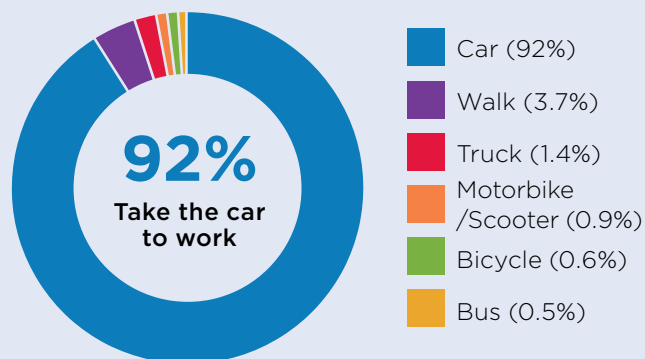
connected cycleways and pathways will also increase positive community and social outcomes. In this regard it is important that Council review and continues to implement its Pedestrian Access and Mobility and Bike Plans as a priority to delivery greater connectivity.

Collaboration opportunity 5

Council, in collaboration with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders, will deliver an integrated transport network for Port Macquarie that supports a connected city. Preparation of a regional integrated land use and transport strategy to identify key network connections and improvements is to be completed in the short term.

Timing: Short-term

Figure 8: Journey to work (one method), 2016



Clarence Street, Port Macquarie



Objective 16

Optimise Port Macquarie's regional gateway infrastructure

Action

- 16.1 | Maximise the potential of the Pacific and Oxley Highways and the Port Macquarie Airport as key regional gateways to Port Macquarie.
- 16.2 | Deliver new transport connections between the airport, the Health and Education Precinct and the wider city

The Pacific and Oxley Highways link Port Macquarie and the North Coast to surrounding areas. The Port Macquarie highway interchange has become a key transit hub and regional gateway.

The Pacific Highway connects south to Newcastle and Sydney, and north to Brisbane and the remainder of the North Coast, while the Oxley Highway provides an east-west connection to agricultural producing areas and to centres, such as Wauchope and further afield to the New England North West. The Oxley Highway also flows through the city from the housing areas of Thrumster and north to the city centre.

The management of these highways is essential as they support business, trade and investment within the city and to support the general liveability for residents.

The *Future Transport Strategy 2056* will guide future transport planning for these highway corridors.

Safe and efficient transport corridors and last-mile delivery options will influence competitiveness and contribute to the State and national freight task. The efficiency of accessing markets and receiving goods influences the competitiveness of doing business from and with Port Macquarie. This includes the location of freight transport facilities and using functioning connections and road networks to efficiently move goods and services in and out of the city.

Port Macquarie Airport provides access to local, national and international markets, tourism opportunities and is a key area for employment and economic activity.

The NSW air freight task is a strategically and economically significant part of the economy. Port Macquarie Airport will require land for employment purposes and the increased freight movements from the highways. Council will continue to monitor the long-term potential of the airport to enable the city to be responsive to changing future demands. Effective integrated transport planning within the city and to the Pacific and Oxley Highways will support the airport's growth and the benefits it can deliver to the city and the region.

Objective 17

Embrace advances in transport technology to increase community connectivity

Action

- 17.1 | Adopt changing transport technology to promote greater accessibility and connectivity.

Transportation technology is evolving, from glow in the dark bike lanes to sensors that alert drivers to the position of other vehicles on the road to prevent collisions. Technology presents opportunities and new ways to travel.

Future Transport 2056 aims to harness technology to improve customer and network outcomes.

As a major growth area in the North Coast, with an active and ageing population, Port Macquarie is an ideal location to trial automated buses, shared connected and automated vehicles, e-bikes and mobility-service platforms. River transport could also be investigated as a viable alternative to travel to the central business district for commuters or visitors, providing easy access to riverfront parks and cultural facilities and neighbourhoods.

Above: Expressway Spares, Sancrox, Horton
Below: Street, Port Macquarie



Glossary

Affordable housing

Housing for very low and low-income households where rent or mortgage payments are below 30 per cent of gross household income or the household is eligible to occupy rental accommodation under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

Biodiversity

'Biodiversity' or 'biological diversity' describes the variety of life on Earth – the life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form. It is usually considered at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.

Climate change

A change in the state of climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer (Garnaut Review, 2008).

Employment lands

Land zoned for industrial or similar purposes (i.e. land zoned B5 Business Development or B7 Business Park in planning instruments). These are generally lower density employment areas containing concentrations of businesses involved in manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research and development; and urban services and utilities.

Greenfield housing

A new housing development area that has not been previously developed or used for other urban purposes.

Growth management strategy

A plan prepared to support effective and integrated planning across a local government area. Prepared as a single, whole of local government area document, or a series of related components, a local growth management strategy guides the development of new local environmental plans and development control plans to implement policy.

Housing choice

The types of housing available to meet the current or future needs of the community. Housing choice is driven by factors such as the make-up of the population, affordability and lifestyle trends.

Housing types

Forms of housing, such as single dwellings, boarding houses, dual occupancies, group homes, hostels, multi-dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, secondary dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, seniors housing and shop top housing.

Local plans

Statutory and non-statutory plans prepared by council for a local government area to guide planning decisions by local councils. Through the use of land zoning and other development controls, a local plan is typically the main mechanism for determining the type and amount of development which can occur on each parcel of land in NSW. Local plans are the main planning tool that shapes the future of communities and ensures local development is appropriate.

Local incentives

The financial and planning incentives offered by local government to support the delivery of target development outcomes.

Infill development

Development in areas already used for urban purposes. Specifically, the re-use of a site within the existing urban footprint for new housing, businesses or other urban development.

Nature-based tourism

Tourism based on the natural attractions of an area. Examples include birdwatching, photography, stargazing, camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, scuba diving, mountain biking, wakeboard and water skiing.

North Coast region

The Local Government Areas of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Endnotes

Precinct planning

The preparation of a blueprint for an area which involves investigations into appropriate land use and built form options, physical environment constraints, infrastructure requirements, community values and expectations and tenure arrangements.

Public realm/domain

Public spaces, used with little or no restriction each day by the community, including parks, plazas, streets and public infrastructure.

Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs.

1. Office of Environment and Heritage, North Coast Climate Change Snapshot, 2014
2. <https://about.csu.edu.au/locations/campuses/port-macquarie>
3. Hill PDA, "Port Macquarie Regional City Employment Anchors." 2018
4. Destination NSW, "The NSW Regional Conference Strategy & Action Plan 2017-2021", 2017
5. PMH Council, "Urban Growth Management Strategy 2017-2036" 2018
6. Ross Planning, "Port Macquarie Recreational Needs Study," 2014
7. U. o. I. Extension, "Five Strategies for retaining and Attracting Youth to Rural Communities," March 2015



dpie.nsw.gov.au