

Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy



This strategy was developed in consultation with the community and sets the strategic direction for future housing growth across Port Stephens.



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

GUUDJI YIIGU

(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

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

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

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

Artwork by Regan Lilley.





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Executive summary



The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy presents Council's vision for the future of land use and housing development in Port Stephens. The strategy sets a framework for where housing can be delivered to ensure we meet the needs of our community now and in the years to come.

Initially adopted in 2020, the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy aimed to shape the housing landscape over two decades. The intervening years, marked significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic, have altered living and working patterns, highlighted new priorities, and spurred regional migration. This migration has brought opportunities but also challenges, including increased demand for housing, services, and infrastructure.

In 2022, the NSW Government identified the need for an additional 11,100 dwellings in Port Stephens to accommodate an estimated 20,000 new residents over the next 20 years. With limited opportunity for new housing developments, Port

Stephens, like many parts of regional Australia, has experienced rising housing costs which has impacted social and economic stability.

In responding to the housing supply challenges, this Housing Strategy considers recent policy developments, including the Australian Government's Housing Australia Future Fund and National Housing Accord, along with actions from the NSW Housing Strategy 2041 and the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.

The revised Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy provides the framework for land use planning for new housing projects and promoting diverse housing solutions. It emphasizes the development of townhouses and apartments near town centres, encouraging a mix of housing types to boost supply, affordability, liveability, and community wellbeing.

Planning Hierarchy

The Local Housing Strategy is set within a State planning framework as shown in the following diagram.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (HRP 2041) provides the strategic framework for the region. It is a 20 year land use plan which is updated every 5 years.

The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 (GNMP 2036) sets out strategies and actions to drive sustainable growth in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area and helps achieve the vision of the Hunter Regional Plan.

The HRP 2041 provides the projections for population growth which the LHS is required to aim to deliver.



State

Housing 2041
NSW Housing Strategy

Region

Hunter Regional Plan 2041
Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan

Local Government Area

Local Housing Strategy
Local Strategic Planning Statement

Port Stephens Snapshot

The Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA) spans 860 square kilometres and forms part of the Hunter region, Australia's largest regional economy. It's 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 76,672 people living in coastal communities, hinterland villages, rural retreats, or in the suburbs. It's expected approximately 20,000 additional people will call Port Stephens home within the next 20 years.

Identified as part of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, Raymond Terrace, Tomago and Williamtown are regionally significant employment centres. Tomago and Williamtown have been identified as 'Catalyst Areas' in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (GNMP 2036) and are earmarked for significant growth and investment over the next 20 years. Due to its proximity to Williamtown and Tomago, as well as 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.

These employment centres will be further boosted by the completion of the M1 extension. This transformational project will improve connections between the New England Highway, M1 Motorway and the Pacific Highway enhancing traffic flow, improving safety, creating more reliable freight corridors and linking important industrial precincts across the region.

The GNMP 2036 and Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (HRP 2041) earmark the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City district, which Port Stephens is a part of, as a likely area for the concentration of renewable energy industry, advanced manufacturing and military sustainment.

This will complement the already established and growing defence and aerospace industry.

Williamstown provides a global gateway for the Hunter region and is home to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base as well as associated aerospace and aviation support services. The arrival of the Joint Strike Fighter will require 3,000 direct and indirect jobs for civilian and defence workers to sustain it over its lifetime.

The Newcastle Airport runway and terminal upgrades will strengthen Newcastle's strategic importance as an international gateway. The runway upgrade will allow for long-range, wide bodied aircraft such as Boeing 777s and Airbus 330s, to land at the airport, opening the region up to direct flights to and from destinations like North America, Asia and the Middle East. The upgrades are expected to generate 4,410 direct new full time jobs whilst also benefiting a wide range of support and related industries across the Hunter Region.

Tomago also plays an important role as an established, expanding and changing major employment area. It comprises various industrial and manufacturing activities including mining support, heavy industrial uses and aluminium production. These key anchor industries are changing and being supported by focused investment in the renewables sector. The Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is currently in its early planning stages and will aim to deliver cheap, reliable, and clean electricity for homes and businesses.

Port Stephens is well positioned to attract advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and logistics industries into the future. The high amount of industry and employment will continue to drive demand for housing. As such, it's imperative this housing is near employment opportunities to sustain economic growth.

The beaches, iconic views, wildlife and our treasured natural environment are 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 existing and improved freight and logistics infrastructure.

Town centres at Raymond Terrace, Medowie, and Nelson Bay allow residents and visitors to live, shop, work, gather and be entertained. Coastal towns and villages provide diverse visitor experiences and support strong communities that enjoy living in a unique natural environment. The Port Stephens Hinterland 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. Areas of environmental significance shape our landscape, including National Parks, the Worimi Conservation Lands, 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.

Housing snapshot

POPULATION



76,672

(ABS ERP)



+4,500

Jobs at Williamtown by 2041

+13,000

New jobs by 2041

\$6.8bn

Gross Regional Product
(Open Data)



+6.5%

Population increase in past 5 years
(ABS ERP)



40%

Aged 55 and over and median age is 47

Housing affordability

\$820,000

Median house price
(increase 45% since 2018)

\$561

Average rent (30% increase since 2020)

212

families on the social housing wait list
(GYDE Consulting)



1 in 3

Households experiencing housing stress
(Shelter NSW 2023)

Housing diversity



82%

of all housing is separate detached



2.4

People per dwelling



45,637

Dwellings by 2041
(GYDE Consulting)

Liveability



81

Parks



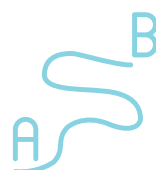
57

Playgrounds



86

Events and activations in 2023



227km

of pathways



200ha

of foreshore

Opportunities and constraints

Over the next 20 years, there will be significant investment in Port Stephens to support growth and boost the regional and local economy, driving the demand for new housing.

Investment in Newcastle Airport, new infrastructure to support urban development, town centre rejuvenation, renewable energy and education facilities will attract people looking to live near employment and in vibrant communities.

The M1 Pacific Highway upgrades and proposed Nelson Bay Road duplication will contribute to a more efficient road network to better improve travel times and safety for residents commuting.

Port Stephens is renowned for its scenic 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 region's diverse landscape and existing land uses in Port Stephens will shape where new housing can be located. Constraints such as flood and bushfire risk, biodiversity, drinking water catchments, aircraft noise, and agricultural land preservation will be taken into account.

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 like Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay, and the emerging strategic centre at Medowie will create vibrant communities and boost local economies.

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 the Lower Hunter such as Maitland and Newcastle.

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

New development and new housing in Port Stephens can contribute to the revitalisation of existing communities and fund local infrastructure investment such as 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, and Karuah. 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.

Beyond this, Council will continue to advocate and partner with State Government and agencies to address the needs of the community. Council's Community Advocacy Priorities provide a road map for how Council will seek funding for the health, education and transport upgrades that the community needs to sustain the planned growth.

Our achievements

The 2020 Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy was structured around three main components: four key outcomes defining our objectives, twelve priorities outlining our strategy for achieving these goals, and twenty-three actions specifying our immediate steps. These components were designed to align with State planning strategies for the Hunter region, detailing priority actions for implementation.

Since its adoption, Council has successfully implemented a number of actions identified in the strategy. This progress report details these achievements and integrates ongoing actions into the revised Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy, ensuring continued alignment with our long-term housing and land use goals.

We use the icons below to indicate the status of the actions from the 2020 Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy.



Complete



Ongoing



Not started

Outcome: Ensure suitable land supply

1



Action: Prioritise rezoning requests for future greenfield and rural housing that are consistent with adopted planning strategies and meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1 and 2.

Progress: An internal priority list was developed to enable the removal of a backlog of planning proposals. The proposals consistent with the criteria were prioritised. Others were de-prioritised.

2



Action: Prepare an annual report of land supply and dwelling production.

Progress: Council prepared a report detailing Port Stephens land supply and dwelling production for publication via REMPLAN and the DPHI Urban Development Program (UDP).

3



Action: Undertake an audit to identify the barriers preventing existing identified land supply from being developed.

Progress: An external report, the Housing Diversity and Supply Delivery program, was undertaken.

The prime barriers to land supply are environmental, fragmented ownership and market demand.

4



Action: Consider opportunities for Council to lead actions to unlock potential land supply.

Progress: To date, Council has been successful in gaining grants to look at unlocking housing in Raymond Terrace and Shoal Bay. Council is continuing to work on opportunities to unlock more housing in Karuah by addressing current infrastructure constraints.









5



Action: Consider recommendations in the Infill Housing Study to facilitate infill housing in centres, including considering incentives to encourage selected types of infill.

Progress: Council has taken the ideas/concepts that were considered in the Infill Housing Study and sought to introduce those to projects across the LGA. This includes reviewing height limits within the Raymond Terrace CBD, as well as reviewing the suitability of current design standards.

Outcome: Improve housing affordability

6		<p>Action: Review the rezoning request process to align with the outcomes and priorities of the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Progress: The process was reviewed and an updated rezoning request form is available for proponents on Council's website.</p>
7		<p>Action: Consult with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (now DPPI) 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.</p> <p>Progress: Consultation has occurred with Housing NSW and Hume Housing who are seeking to redevelop more affordable housing within Raymond Terrace. Initial discussions have also been held with Worimi Aboriginal Land Council about opportunities on their land.</p>
8		<p>Action: 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.</p> <p>Progress: Council is continuing to review opportunities to help facilitate more affordable housing including process improvements and advocating for additional improved public transport through express bus services and improved frequency on key routes.</p>
9		<p>Action: Encourage appropriate dwelling sizes in new developments in and around town centres and close to employment hubs.</p> <p>Progress: This will be actioned within this version of the strategy through policy changes to encourage diversity in planning proposals and demonstrated alignment with the HRP 2041.</p>
10		<p>Action: Consult with NSW Fair Trading to obtain data on short-term rental accommodation and to inform rental supply monitoring in Port Stephens.</p> <p>Progress: Council is able to obtain the data and as a future action will report this annually via the Council website.</p>
11		<p>Action: Regular meetings and collaboration with TfNSW to advocate for Port Stephens transport improvements.</p> <p>Progress: Council has been liaising with TfNSW as they begin reviewing the Hunter Integrated Service Plan (ISP). This is TfNSW's 10 year plan for public transport across the Hunter.</p>
12		<p>Action: Partner with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to ensure readiness to adopt ePlanning reforms for integrated assessments and other process improvements.</p> <p>Progress: Council has made submissions on the implementation and use of the Planning Portal and continues to do so.</p>
13		<p>Action: Investigate process improvements to better streamline assessments and reduce the cost of housing, including:</p> <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. <p>Progress: Updated controls regarding water quality and biodiversity were included in the Development Control Plan (DCP). The process of assessing planning proposals and development applications simultaneously proved difficult within the existing planning framework and has not been further progressed.</p>



Outcome: Increase diversity of housing choice

14



Action: Advocate for Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to co-ordinate housing preferences data for people moving within and to the Hunter, to inform planning for future housing types to satisfy demand.

Progress: This action has not been completed, and will be pursued with DPHI in the future.

15



Action: 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:

- 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.

Progress: Council has initiated amendments to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to require larger lot sizes for medium-higher density development to ensure better built form outcomes. Ongoing works are undertaken by council to provide these facilities. Council is also undertaking a review of its Pathways Plan to look at additional opportunities across the LGA.

16



Action: Encourage provision of small lot housing to enable more efficient and sustainable development outcomes in urban release areas.

Progress: Council has encouraged developers undergoing rezonings for land subdivision to include smaller lots to provide more diversity. e.g. Brocklesby Road, Medowie

17



Action: Advocate for State reforms to assist Councils in planning for lifestyle villages and communities.

Progress: Council has been involved in discussions with DPHI in regard to proposed State reforms in this area.

18



Action: Review local provisions to better plan for lifestyle villages and provide controls to ensure high quality design outcomes and liveable communities are created.

Progress: Council has been involved in discussions with DPHI in regard to proposed State reforms in this area.



Outcome: Facilitate liveable communities

		<p>Action: Adopt a Liveability Index to map, measure and monitor liveability in Port Stephens.</p>
19	✓	<p>Progress: In September 2020, Council teamed up with Place Score to complete its first ever place census. Over 3,700 people told Council what they value and how they rate their neighbourhood. The results have allowed Council to focus on the things most valuable to the community. This information is being used when Place Plans are being developed.</p>
20	✗	<p>Action: 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.</p> <p>Progress: It's proposed this action will be carried out as part of this revision of the Local Housing Strategy, refining the areas to focus on and the suburbs expected to undergo the most change.</p>
21	✗	<p>Action: Refer relevant strategic and local area plans to the Urban Design Panel for independent advice.</p> <p>Progress: The Urban Design Panel has not been used for this function to date, however, this action will remain ongoing and used as necessary.</p>
22	✗	<p>Action: Review opportunities to provide active transport facilities such as pathways and end of trip facilities for cyclists in centres and employment hubs.</p> <p>Progress: The adopted Pathway Plan continues to be implemented while consideration is being given to develop additional requirements for end of trip facilities as part of a future DCP amendment. This is currently under review.</p>
23	✓	<p>Action: Review access to essential services, such as childcare centres, in rural areas.</p> <p>Progress: This was implemented through an amendment to the LEP (PP-2021-3689) which was made on the 11 March 2022. This amended the land use table in the RU2 Rural Landscape zone to allow 'centre-based childcare facilities' and 'respite day care centres' to be permitted with consent. The amendment will provide opportunities for more accessible and convenient locations for childcare, in particular in the western parts of Port Stephens.</p>

Engagement



We undertook a phased and targeted engagement approach to the review of the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy.

Phase 1: Data review

The first phase included a review of the existing data available about housing in Port Stephens found in key documents and associated community engagement findings.

These documents include the Liveability Index, various Place Plans, Port Stephens Housing Strategy 2020, Port Stephens Housing Supply Plan, Raymond Terrace Sub-precinct Masterplan and findings from the Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group.

Phase 2: Housing Forum

The second phase featured a targeted engagement approach to discuss the housing crisis as well as share ideas and perspectives on how we as a community can address the crisis.

The Housing Forum was the primary community engagement method for this phase and was held on 10 November 2023 at Pacific Dunes, Medowie.

Key housing stakeholders were invited, including local community groups, businesses, industry groups, developers, real estates, and individual community members. Over 60 invitations were issued, with over 50 acceptances received.



Following consultation with the Communications and Engagement Advisory Group in September 2023, as well as targeting key stakeholders, Council called for community EOIs to ensure a cross-section of interested people had the opportunity to attend the forum.

This EOI was open from 18 October 2023 to 6 November 2023, with 31 submissions. Following a selection process, 12 additional invites were issued.

To form a foundation for the workshop, the forum began with a presentation from Gyde Consulting, who provided an overview of the current and projected population, employment and housing trends for NSW, the Hunter Region, and Port Stephens.

During the workshop component, attendees were presented with 4 questions to discuss, and conversations were captured via an online mapping tool.

The information from the Housing Forum has been reviewed and used to help guide the revised Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy.

An Engagement Report was prepared following the forum, outlining the information and responses from the day. This has been published on Council's website.

Key messages that came out of the Housing Forum:



A need to balance greenfield development in rural areas, particularly in response to known environmental constraints.



There is a lack of diversity in housing choice. We need more units, townhouses, and smaller homes.



People are drawn to the area because of the scenic quality and environment.



There is a real homelessness crisis impacting the LGA that is putting a lot of pressure on community housing and support services.



Businesses are struggling to attract and retain staff due to low rental availabilities and high rental prices.



Key workers often cannot live near their workplace particularly on the Tomaree Peninsula due to the high house and rental prices.



The frequency and reliability of public transport services needs to be improved.



The community can see PSC has tried to encourage more housing.

Housing vision



In 2041, Port Stephens will offer homes in diverse neighbourhoods and centres that enable people to live close to work, raise their families in healthy neighbourhoods, surrounded by picturesque landscapes, or enjoy retirement in active communities. People will be able to age in place, allowing them the flexibility of the housing types that suit their stage of life, and ability to retain connection to their community throughout their lifetime. New and existing residents will be spoilt for choice when it comes to choosing their dream home.

Local centres will be the hub of community life and provide spaces for people to gather, celebrate and explore. Our natural and cultural heritage will help shape our places and can be seen in the local character of our neighbourhoods and centres.

Port Stephens residents will be more connected than ever with local, regional and global transport networks providing easy access to jobs, interstate and overseas travel, education, and health services. Networks of paths and cycleways will provide residents and visitors with active transport options for convenient access local shops, schools, parks and sporting facilities within their communities.

New areas will be 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. A mixture of housing types and densities will be on offer within established and new areas to cater for the changing needs of all.

Raymond Terrace will be an attractive, affordable and vibrant centre with homes for people seeking shorter work commutes to Heatherbrae,

Williamstown, and Tomago, as well as easy access to other centres in Greater Newcastle. A revitalised town centre will provide homes close to shopping, dining, and entertainment. Residents will be connected via cycleways and paths to surrounding suburbs, schools, parks, and sports fields.

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 will be concentrated within existing urban areas between natural areas and the waters of Port Stephens, with strong local communities enjoying convenient and active lifestyles.

Port Stephens will attract new residents and provide housing that meets their needs. It will be the destination of choice for people looking to live in bright, connected and convenient places, supported by a natural environment that is valued for both its beauty and liveability.

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 the period of 2020-2021 to 2021-2022, Port Stephens was the fourth fastest growing local government area in the Hunter (behind neighbouring Maitland, Cessnock and Dungog). Port Stephens also had the eighth largest population growth of all regional NSW LGAs.

The biggest contributor of population growth in Port Stephens is people moving from other parts of NSW, particularly neighbouring LGAs. Five years ago, the top three sources of migration to Port Stephens were from Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. In the past year this migration has been from Maitland, Lake Macquarie and Mid-Coast.



Major economic stimulus and committed investment in Port Stephens is likely to continue this trend, due to planned economic growth around the Newcastle Airport at Williamtown, the 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 Williamtown will create an additional 3000 jobs by 2036. The runway and terminal upgrades at Newcastle Airport are expected to deliver 850,000 additional visitors to the Hunter Region and a \$12.7billion stimulus to the economy over the next 20 years.

Proximity to these job markets makes living locally an attractive option, with most housing opportunities in Port Stephens located within 15 minutes of an identified 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 Williamtown, Tomago, Maitland, Broadmeadow, and the 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 amount of direct international flights are increasing due to the runway upgrades, making Port Stephens even more connected internationally.

Since the last population projections, the population has grown faster than expected from 0.5% to 1.1% (HRP 2041). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) determined there was a 1.7% increase in population between 2020-2021 to 2021-2022. There is a clear increase in people migrating to Port Stephens, which is driving housing demand.

In the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, DPHI projected that Port Stephens would require an additional 11,100 dwellings by 2041 to cater for this growing population. At present, the current projected dwelling supply will not meet this need.

Table 1 shows the projected supply of new dwellings in Port Stephens to 2041, based on the current existing land supply and information available to Council at this point in time. This supply includes undeveloped land already zoned for residential development or sites that have been conditionally approved by the DPHI for rezoning as of December 2023.

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 will fall significantly below the identified need. The current shortfall now exceeds 4,000 dwellings over the next 20 years.

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.

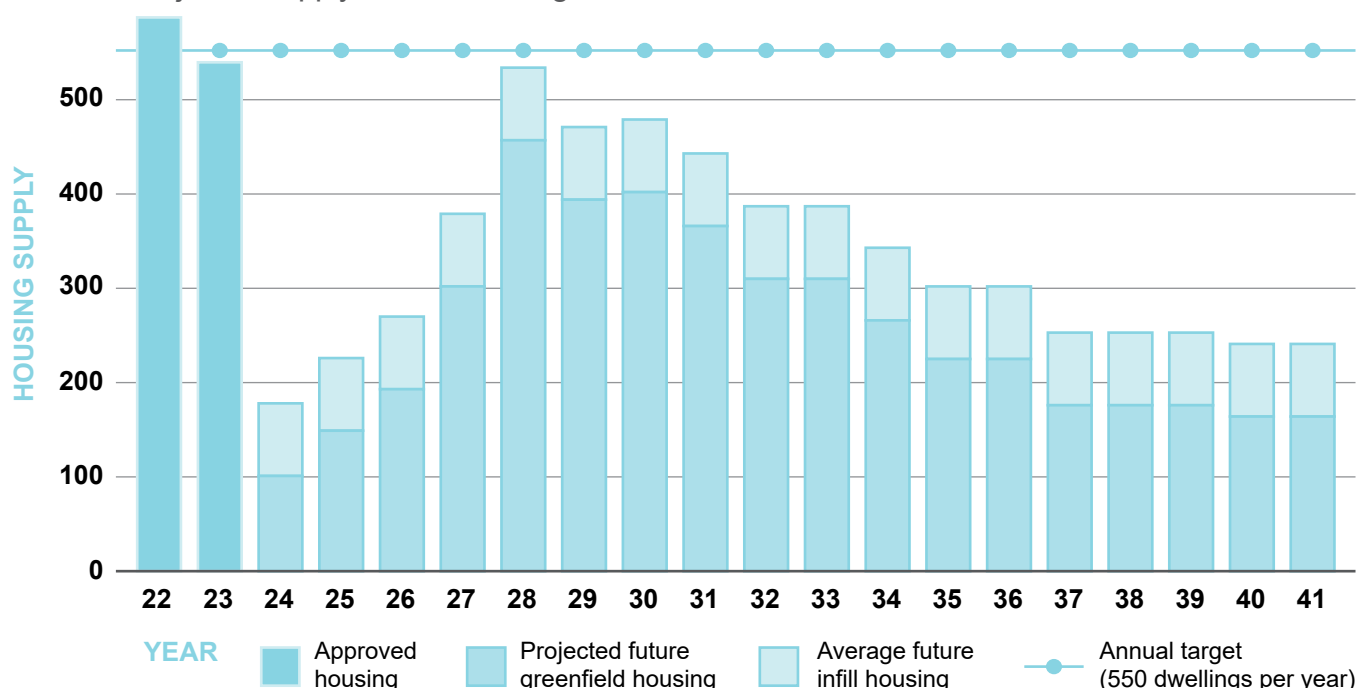
Currently only 56% of people working in Port Stephens live within the LGA and it's important Council delivers housing close to jobs. To shift this statistic over the next 20 years, Port Stephens can provide homes for people moving to the area for these new jobs.

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. This is evident with median age of residents continuing to increase (2016: 45yo, 2021: 47yo). Demand for homes suited to older persons is likely to continue. Lifestyle villages, villas, and townhouses are a form of housing which can meet this demand but are typically in low supply throughout the LGA.

Other key trends that are likely to impact future demand for new housing include '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 opportunities in Port Stephens. Facilitating an appropriate supply of housing provides opportunities to retain younger people with strong connections to our LGA, with housing that is close to family, centres, and employment.

The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy contains the actions to identify additional housing opportunities, create more diversity and housing choice, and to support housing affordability in Port Stephens.

Table 1. Projected supply of new dwellings in 2041



Priority 1.1 Ensure adequate supply of new housing

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

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

Various other constraints, such as flood and bushfire risk, biodiversity corridors, slope, and proximity to conflicting land uses will also impact new housing opportunities in Port Stephens. These constraints can greatly impact the suitability of land for development and the amount of housing that can be delivered.

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. Planning proposals for greenfield housing will need to demonstrate how they connect to existing residential areas and provide for the everyday needs of the neighbourhood. Isolated residential developments will not be supported.

New rezoning requests will be assessed against the relevant criteria in **Appendix 1** (Greenfield Housing Criteria) and **Appendix 2** (Rural Housing Criteria), as well as Council's local strategies.

The **Housing Supply Plan** has been developed to map areas that have potential for infill or greenfield development and demonstrate the pipeline of development that is needed to meet our communities future housing needs.

The **Housing Supply Plan** is not exhaustive, and will require an applicant to conduct the relevant preliminary studies to determine the feasibility of rezoning or developing an area.

The criteria in **Appendix 1** (Greenfield Housing Criteria) and **Appendix 2** (Rural Housing Criteria), will guide the requirements when lodging a rezoning request, however, they also outline locational criteria that may allow sites not outlined in the Housing Supply Plan to be considered for rezoning.

To plan for the coordinated 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 DPHI.

Rezoning requests will be prioritised to ensure the objectives of State, regional and local plans (including the Local Housing Strategy) 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.

The Housing Supply Plan will also help provide an important feedback loop that allows Council to both forecast expected housing development but also to monitor growth within the LGA.

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 land 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, such as the timely provision of roads, sewer and water infrastructure, can also be a barrier for housing development. In the Port Stephens LGA, sewer and water infrastructure is provided and

managed by Hunter Water Corporation (HWC). The annual Hunter Water Growth Plan provides detailed maps with the likely time frames for servicing new development. HWC also supports developer delivered infrastructure ahead of schedule through funding deeds. From July 2024, HWC will be introducing developer charges to help recover costs of providing infrastructure to new developments. Council has advocated for a review of how these charges are determined in an effort to ensure any new charges introduced do not negatively burden new developments.

Council will play a role in solving suburb and catchment wide infrastructure issues such as roads and drainage, to avoid a piecemeal approach to unlocking land for housing.

The monitoring and reporting on the Housing Supply Plan provides a mechanism to ensure that the forecast demand is being met and where sites are failing to be developed, the opportunity exists to identify the constraints and work with all relevant stake holders to address this.



Priority 1.3 Increase the proportion of infill housing

Infill housing is the redevelopment of existing urban areas for additional housing which utilise connections to existing services such as public roads, electricity, sewer and water.

Infill housing can be 1 to 2 storeys tall such as duplexes, dual occupancies, or granny flats (secondary dwellings). It can be up to 6 storeys tall such as multi dwelling housing, shop top housing or low scale residential flat buildings, or 6+ storeys in the form of residential flat buildings.

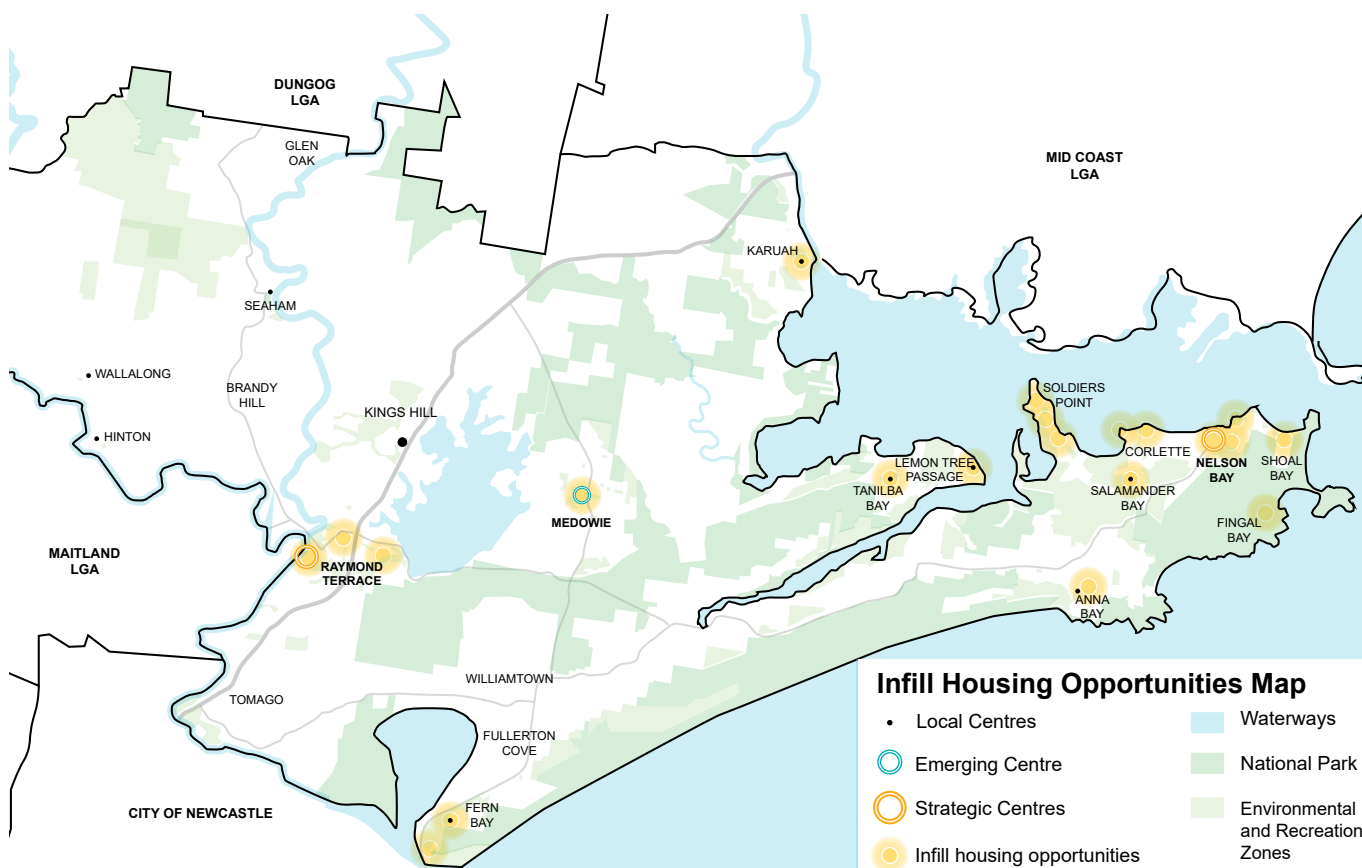
The HRP 2041 has set a target for new dwellings to be 80% infill and 20% greenfield. Infill housing within Port Stephens currently only provides for approximately 25% of new housing annually.

The current housing supply in Port Stephens is

predominantly greenfield housing with 75% being houses on separate lots. Table 1 on page 20 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 2041. The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy 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 1. 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 sustainable. 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.






Previous work undertaken by Council through the Infill Housing Study (Tract 2020) identified opportunities for new housing in liveable communities within walking distance to existing centres. Based on the study, Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay, and Shoal Bay 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. New greenfield areas such as Medowie and Karuah have limited 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.

The data from the Infill Housing Supply Study has been considered in the development of the Housing Supply Plan.

Actions	Links to priority
1.1 Support rezoning requests for future greenfield and rural housing, that are consistent with adopted planning strategies, the Housing Supply Plan and/or meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1 and 2.	
1.2 Report on land supply and dwelling production by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing an annual report to be provided to Council • Provide data to be published on the Hunter UDP Dashboard. • Review and/or update the Housing Supply Plan if housing supply targets aren't being achieved. 	 
1.3 Identify opportunities for Council to lead actions to unlock potential land supply through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for grants for items such as infrastructure or environmental assessments • Review existing strategies for opportunities for additional greenfield and small lot housing • Housing Productivity Contribution applications • Place Strategy process • Place Plans 	 

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

House and land affordability can impact quality of life, with households considered to suffer from housing stress when they pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs (rent or mortgage).



A human perspective on affordability

Aaron and Cassandra

- **married**
- **2 young children**
- **gross weekly income: \$1,714**
- **preferred housing: 3 bedroom house**
- **rental budget: \$515 a week**
- **\$100,000 saved for a house deposit**
- **Borrowing capacity: \$311,914**



Rental: Aaron and Cassandra can afford to rent 8 of the 40 available 3 bedroom houses available for rent.

Purchase: There are 84 properties available with 3 bedrooms. Based on interest rate of 5.94% and repayment of \$515 a week, they can only consider homes around \$411,000. This constraint provides no options in their buying area.

There are homes available at \$430,000 to \$450,000, which may cause financial stress if they consider purchasing.

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 how to improve housing affordability while ensuring housing is developed in the right locations. Many factors can influence property and rental prices, however there are opportunities for Council to reduce direct and indirect housing costs in an effort to improve housing affordability. This can be achieved through the local planning system and in partnership with developers, including community housing providers.

Matilda

- **single, aged 25 years**
- **2nd year registered nurse**
- **gross weekly income: \$1,360**
- **preferred housing: 1 bedroom apartment**
- **rental budget: \$408 a week**



Rental: There are five 1 bedroom apartments available in the area. There's only 1 that is Matilda's preferred housing type and within her budget. It's highly competitive for a single person to secure rental accommodation in Port Stephens, which is forcing Matilda to consider less desirable options, like a share house or other locations, which means a longer commute to work and increased costs.



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 as well as the proportion of social housing in the LGA.

In 2016, 6.4% of households paid more than 30% of household income for their mortgage. In 2021, that has increased to 14.5% according to the ABS. In 2016, 10.8% of renters paid more than 30% of their household income in rent, compared to 40.8% in 2021.

Rental availability is becoming an increasing issue. The rental residential vacancy rate in a balanced market is 3%. In January 2020, the rate was 1.5% with a high in April 2020 of 2.8%.

This reached a low in March 2022 at 0.2% and as of September 2023 sits at 1.07%. The past 3 years have consistently been well below the 3% rental vacancy rate required.

Rent in Port Stephens is becoming increasingly unaffordable for low income earners with flats and units currently representing the most affordable housing option in Port Stephens at a median rent of \$583 per week (September 2023).

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.

Downsizing is perceived as moving from a larger to a smaller dwelling, generally with less bedrooms. However, some older households may 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.

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 Port Stephens at 18.1% (ABS). In 2021, it has decreased to 15.4%.

These figures are still relatively high in comparison to NSW and Australia. This may reflect the popularity of short term rental housing in Port Stephens, which supports our tourist and visitor economy. However the data also indicates that Port Stephens has a high level of unoccupied

dwellings which are holiday or secondary homes which don't contribute to the long term rental market or tourist and visitor economy

Unoccupied dwellings can impact the long term rental market, so 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.

In an initiative to understand and address housing stress, Council has developed a Homelessness Stakeholder Advisory Group (HSAG) to:

- Provide Council with strategic advice on homelessness and related issues that can be dealt with at a Local Government level.
- Work with Council to address local issues, develop options and assist in identifying preferred solutions as part of Council's decision-making process.
- Advocate community views on homelessness issues.

Council will also develop an Affordable Housing Action Plan to determine key actions to undertake, as well as identify opportunities to encourage more affordable housing to be delivered within the LGA.

Consequences of housing stress



Unmanageable levels of **debt**



Working **longer hours**



Travelling long **distances**

Going without essentials such as **food, heating, medication, or education**



Living in **overcrowded or substandard living**

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. 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, Fullerton Cove and Fern Bay.

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

In 2021, of people who work within the Port Stephens LGA, 60% live and work in Port Stephens, while 40% live elsewhere (primarily Newcastle, followed by Maitland and Lake Macquarie). The median distance Port Stephens residents travel to get to work is 18km, which is significantly higher than the median distance for other workers in the Hunter region (nearly 12km), and the New South Wales median (11km). This demonstrates a need to focus housing supply in areas of Port Stephens that are closer to current and future jobs.

According to the 2021 Census, of Port Stephens residents who were employed, 18.4% worked from home, 58.2% used a car to get to work and 1% used public transport.

There's a substantial increase in the amount of residents working from home, with 18.4% working from home in 2021, compared to 4.8% in 2016. It's difficult to determine if this trend will continue to rise, remain steady, or decrease, however, it's expected hybrid work models (between home and office) will remain popular into the future.

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

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 the Port Stephens economy. At the time of writing, there are only 36 affordable housing dwellings/units in the Port Stephens LGA (November 2023).

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 childcare, medical, education, leisure etc. 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.

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, Council has been committed to reducing the cost of new housing by reducing 'red tape' in the assessment process.

Investigating new technology and integrated approaches to assessment can offer further opportunities to cut red tape and reduce time frames. Since the introduction of the NSW Planning Portal, Council staff have undergone training to use the system and have advocated to find efficiencies to speed up the lodgement process.

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

Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) is introducing location specific developer charges that will apply to developments from 1 July 2024. The purpose of these charges is to recover the costs of providing and upgrading infrastructure provided by HWC. Council will be advocating for the spending of this money to be aligned with supporting the release of areas suitable for residential housing, currently constrained by infrastructure.

The NSW State Government has also introduced the Housing and Productivity Contribution (HAP) which applies to residential, commercial and industrial development. The purpose of the contribution is to fund essential State infrastructure. Grants will be available for Councils to access these funds, and Port Stephens Council will actively apply for grants to support the community's growth.

Council policies and requirements, including fees and charges, can add to the cost of housing. Currently, at Port Stephens Council discounted fees are available 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 priority
2.1 Engage with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Landcom, and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and consider opportunities for Council to partner with community housing providers to facilitate the supply of affordable and low cost housing.	2.1
2.2 Develop an affordable housing action plan.	2.1
2.3 Obtain data from NSW Fair Trading on short-term rental accommodation to inform rental supply monitoring in Port Stephens. Provide an annual overview of data on Council's website.	2.1
2.4 Advocate for better transport links from strategic centres to jobs and the region by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with Transport for NSW and requesting increased bus services 	2.2
2.5 Implement process improvements to better streamline assessments and reduce the cost of housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for reforms to the NSW Planning Portal Investigate opportunities for technological advances to improve assessment and application processing timeframes 	2.3

OUTCOME 3

Increase diversity of housing choice



The future supply of housing needs to consider 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 will be increasingly important as families grow or people choose to age in place.

Diverse housing choices build more inclusive communities. Neighbourhoods with homes that accommodate households with varying needs and circumstances, sizes and compositions 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, tenure options, and price points. In Port Stephens, the current housing supply is dominated by separate houses on separate lots (82%). This is compared to 14% semi-detached/townhouse and 4% apartments. There are more freestanding houses with 5 bedrooms than the entire apartment stock across Port Stephens. In both 2016 and 2021, the average number of bedrooms per dwelling was 3.3 and average number of people per household was 2.5 in 2016, with a slight reduction to 2.4 in 2021.

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



Port Stephens is also home to an older population with a median age of 47. 40.2% of the Port Stephens population is aged 55 years and over. This is forecast to continue to increase over time.

The lack of housing diversity makes it difficult for those who are looking for an apartment or smaller house, as stock is unavailable.

The Housing Preferences in Port Stephens Report (Housing Preferences Report 2019) surveyed residents to better understand why people move to Port Stephens and whether they're satisfied with the available housing choices – The survey found a demand to

purchase more diverse housing types in Port Stephens, including houses on smaller lots, higher density housing types (such as a duplexes, apartments or terrace houses) and seniors housing (See Table 2), but these options are limited.

Projected future housing demand may also support increasing housing diversity in Port Stephens. DPHI have identified growing future demand for dwellings to accommodate smaller households in Port Stephens, projecting that an additional 5,000 dwellings will be required for single and 2 person households in Port Stephens by 2041.

Housing diversity in Port Stephens



82%

Separate houses on separate lots



14%

Semi-detached/townhouses



4%

Apartments

Priority 3.1 Facilitate new housing within existing urban areas

The GNMP 2036 and HRP 2041 have set a directive for 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 already established areas.

Infill housing and higher housing densities can be perceived as imposing new developments with larger footprints and taller buildings. By taking

a place-based approach to planning, Council intends to work with community and business to ensure that proposed development types and scale suit the existing local character of each suburb. This builds on the concept of planning densities that align with how a place functions, the availability of public transport available, provision of open spaces, and the establishment of more flexible land uses, allowing communities to evolve.

Council has a significant role to play in terms of working with the community to make changes to planning controls to identify suitable locations, promote design quality, and make development more financially feasible. Council will also need to invest in infrastructure in local centres such as parks and footpaths to support higher densities.

Council's **Housing Supply Plan** (page 52) is the first step in this process, and the plan aims to demonstrate how Council will facilitate the provision of housing to meet the needs of our growing community. This includes nominated areas for infill housing and higher housing densities.

Table 2. Housing preferences

Housing type	Preferred housing within budget	Current housing	Difference	Demand
Separate 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

Housing typologies

As outlined in the **Housing Supply Plan** (page 52), it's predicted that low-rise and mid-rise housing types will be the most appropriate and commonly taken up forms of development for infill housing.



Detached housing

Detached housing refers to a dwelling that doesn't share walls with another dwelling. This includes housing on smaller lots as well as housing in lifestyle communities.



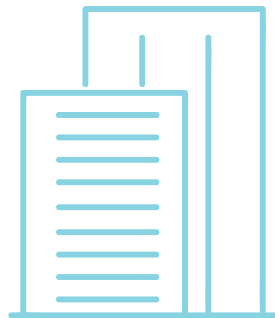
1-2 storeys

1 to 2 storey (low-rise housing) includes dual occupancy, multi-dwelling housing (such as terraces and townhouses) and manor houses (2 storey apartment buildings).



3-6 storeys

3 to 6 storey (mid-rise housing) refers to apartment buildings that can be freestanding buildings or part of a mixed-use development.



7+ storeys

7+ storey (high-rise housing) refers to apartment buildings that can be freestanding buildings or part of a mixed-use development.

Priority 3.2 Encourage a range of housing types and sizes

To align with the HRP 2041, Council will seek opportunities to increase densities in new housing areas. This will require areas being designed to accommodate small lot housing or multi dwelling housing. Small lot housing typically refers to homes specifically designed for smaller lot sizes, generally between 200 to 450m². Multi dwelling housing includes 3 or more attached or detached townhouses and terraces.

In Port Stephens, new housing has generally been provided on lots of 500m² and above, with 82% built as separate houses (rather than townhouses or other multi dwelling housing). While there's 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.

The data from the Housing Preferences Report indicates there's current demand for a wider range of lot sizes, including lots less than 500m² as well as lots less than 250m² to cater for different households. 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 broader 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. Similarly, affordability is another key driver in this segment of the housing market, with smaller lots in the Pacific Dunes development in Medowie, selling for up to 30% less than larger lots in the estate.

Lifestyle also impacts the success of small lot housing, with precincts such as Pacific Dunes and over 55's lifestyle villages offering residents access to restaurants, swimming pools, tennis courts and a community gardens. 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. This is consistent with the top community values captured in the Liveability Index carried out in September 2020.

Lifestyle factors can significantly influence housing choices, so planning for diverse types of housing in locations where people want to live, ensures housing options in Port Stephens can meet future demand.

Housing types that suit particular needs and preferences include:

- Rural residential housing offering a rural outlook, peace and seclusion
- Small lot housing offering those who want to downsize more convenient living or more affordable housing

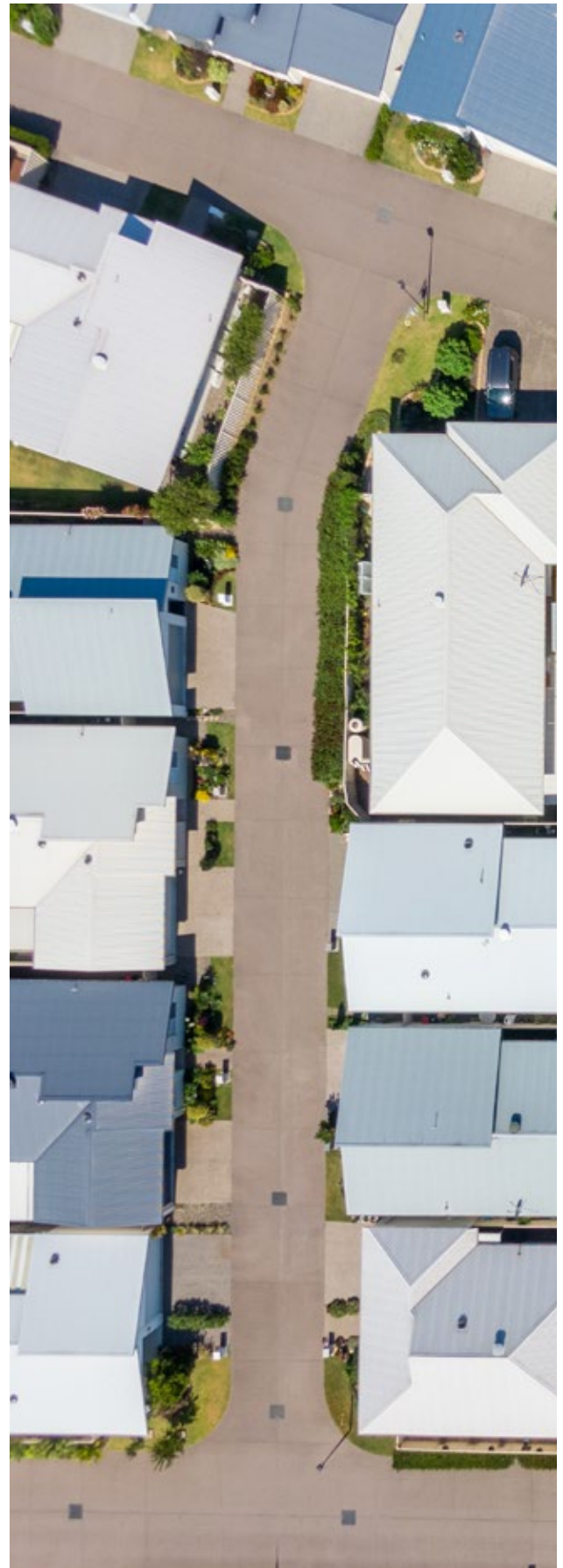
- Shop top housing, providing residents convenient access to shops, medical services, restaurants and jobs
- Group homes providing permanent accommodation for people with a disability
- Lifestyle villages and communities offering convenience and exclusive use of shared facilities and connection with residents of a similar age.

One of the more popular types of housing development to occur in Port Stephens over the last decade has been lifestyle villages where residents share communal recreation and other facilities.

Lifestyle villages can offer residents convenient, attractive and potentially more affordable housing options.

Some models of ownership offer significant financial benefits for residents that are retirees and they enable independent living in close knit communities.

Lifestyle villages 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 families and couples (such as 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 centres, supermarkets and hairdressers.





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 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 stock. Throughout 2023, the State looked into reforms which could impact this type of development and how we may be able to deliver it within the current NSW planning system.

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

- a 5 minute walk (400m) of a town or neighbourhood centre zoned, E1 Local Centre, E2 Commercial Centre or MU1 Mixed Use
- a 5 minute walk (400m) of bus stops with










frequent services to local centres

- a 10 minute walk (800m) of local centres.

If this criteria can't 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, a 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
- access to bus services providing frequent trips to local centres and shops.

To ensure high quality design outcomes, development controls can 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 priority
<p>3.1 Investigate housing preferences data about who wants to live in Port Stephens and what type of housing they seek. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for DPHI to co-ordinate housing preferences data for people moving to and within the Hunter to inform planning for future housing types to satisfy demand. • Interrogate data to keep the Housing Supply Plan up to date. 	
<p>3.2 Council to encourage a greater diversity of infill housing around local centres, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to Infill Housing Study. • Amendments to encourage the amalgamation of sites to allow for increased density and improved design outcomes. • Amendments to planning controls to improve priority development feasibility and maintain design quality and amenity. • Investment in local centre infrastructure through the development of Place Plans and Public Domain Plans. 	 
<p>3.3 Enable more efficient and sustainable development outcomes for new greenfield housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging provision of small lot housing through policies or controls. • Requiring DCPs for greenfield subdivisions where determined necessary. 	
<p>3.4 Advocate for alternate development typologies where suitable, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for State reforms to assist councils in planning for lifestyle villages. • Review local provisions to better plan for lifestyle villages and provide controls to ensure high quality design outcomes and liveable communities are created. 	
<p>3.5 Plan for density done well, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the creation of a Pattern Book to guide development in Raymond Terrace CBD. • Consider development controls for Residential Flat Buildings, serviced apartments, shop top housing to be included in the DCP which reflect the specific context of the area. • Investigate broad scale height increases on residential and commercial zoned land. • Investigate incorporating public domain plans and master planning for areas undergoing character change due to increase in infill housing. 	 
<p>3.6 Advocate for, and provide materials on diverse housing choices for the public, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tiny homes • caravans on private properties • secondary dwellings 	 

OUTCOME 4

Facilitate liveable communities



A liveable community provides an attractive, safe and sustainable environment. Residents have housing and transport options that meet their needs, and they're supported by community infrastructure and services.

Liveable places support diverse communities and provide opportunities for friendships to grow. Our natural and built environments have the capacity to influence our health and wellbeing, social connections, and quality of life.

The concepts that make up 'liveability' are strongly reflected in the responses gathered from the survey undertaken as part of the Housing Preferences Report. The survey shows people currently living in Port Stephens value the unique environment and diverse lifestyles on offer. The main reasons provided for moving into the area include family, work, and retirement. Other reasons focused on the natural features of the area and the convenience of the location. These liveability concepts can help define the local character of an area and contribute to a sense of place and belonging, which promotes individual health, enjoyment and wellbeing.

PRIORITIES

4.1

Housing enhances local character

4.2

Communities are connected

4.3

Sustainable and resilient communities



Place Plans

Local government, communities and businesses can create more liveable communities by creating Place Plans for specific areas. These plans provide quality public spaces and built environments, opportunities for recreation, events, and community facilities, enhancing the natural environment, and supporting local businesses.

Place plans are a proven tool for planning for the unique towns and characteristic villages across Port Stephens. They put a local filter on the Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan and other important planning documents such as the Local Housing Strategy.

For example, a Local Housing Strategy may set the vision for future housing in a place, which can be further detailed in collaboration with the local community through a Place Plan.

A Place Plan can contribute to creating desirable neighbourhoods and increased liveability. For example, the character of a place can be enhanced through a local area Development

Control Plan to guide the design of new developments through a wide range of provisions for landscaping, design and articulation, car parking, storm water and drainage infrastructure, and floor space ratios.

Most importantly, the specific local actions in a place plan respond to the community's aspirations, values and priorities. They aim to improve the liveability and wellbeing of our communities into the future and enable collaborative partnerships between residents, business and Council.

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.

Council will continue to develop Place Plans with the community to create strong community connections with the place around them.



CASE STUDY



Karuah Place Plan

In September 2020, Council teamed up with Place Score to complete Port Stephens first ever place census. Over 3,700 people across the LGA told Council what they value and how they rate their neighbourhood. The Karuah Place Plan (KPP) was the first Place Plan developed and was adopted by Council in March 2022.

The KPP was created using data collected from the community through a Liveability Index as well as a targeted community engagement program with residents, businesses, Council, state agencies, community groups, developers, Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council, workers and visitors.

The KPP is focused on driving social wellbeing, creating a more connected town centre, better accessibility to the waterfront, enhancing and protecting the natural environment, and providing additional housing and improved community facilities for all to enjoy.

By implementing small-scale, community-led projects, the community are seeing the benefits of collaborating more effectively with Council and each other to enhance their place.



Link to read more pscouncil.info/KaruahPlacePlan

Liveability

Liveability is simply what a place is like to live in. Liveability is influenced by safety, the natural environment, infrastructure, accessibility, things to do, attractiveness and inclusiveness.

As part of the Place Score place census in 2020, Port Stephens received an average score of 66/100, which is one point lower than the national average. The neighborhoods located on the Tomaree Peninsula had the highest liveability scores.

The key community values that came out of the report were:

- Neighbourhoods should feature locally owned and operated businesses that provide the community with their daily needs.
- Neighbourhoods should offer shared community amenities, like local shops within walking or cycling distance.
- Neighbourhoods should have well maintained and managed public domain; footpaths, parks, roads and other public assets.

The data uncovered through the surveys and assessment is valuable for Council to ensure focus is placed on the right issues when providing services and infrastructure for the community. Council will continue to survey livability every 5 years and reflect the findings in its Place Plans and strategies.

Lower scoring parts of the LGA such as Karuah, Medowie and the Hinterland have already had place plans developed with actions focus on improving the livability of these communities.

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. Local character statements will be prioritised for areas likely to undergo significant change by way of infill and diverse housing types.

The Infill Housing Study 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 development applications. This Panel could also provide advice regarding local character during the assessment of planning proposals, and development of local area strategic plans and other local plans.



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 childcare, 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. 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. 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'll be future opportunities to upgrade existing digital and physical infrastructure to facilitate community access to technology and training, sharing of information, and experiences.



CASE STUDY



Medowie 7 Day Makeover

In 2021, Medowie's town centre was transformed thanks to the people-powered 7 Day Makeover. With a budget of \$65,000 donated by sponsors and Council, more than 200 community volunteers came together to make amazing improvements, bringing life and vibrancy to the town centre.

The park next to the Medowie Community Centre was completely transformed – with a fairy garden, sensory trail and a new reading stage for the Mobile Library. Relaxed wave seating is scattered throughout the town, while artistic leaves and an 80 metre long mural show off Medowie's creative side.

Medowie set a new record for the most volunteers in a single day at 201 and a new record for the highest number of sponsors of any town that has done a 7 Day Makeover. Many local businesses also took time off to donate their services.

Community-led initiatives like this create more people-friendly town centres across Port Stephens and create a strong sense of belonging, to both place and people, sustaining more vibrant and resilient communities.



Link to read more pscouncil.info/medowie-makeover

Priority 4.3 Sustainable and resilient communities

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 and more attractive and social spaces. It's important sustainable choices be incorporated within placemaking to support the longevity of the improvements made and where possible reduce their impact on the natural environment.

The 7 Day Anna Bay and Medowie Makeovers were collaborative community initiatives sponsored by Council, local businesses and

community members. Volunteers from these suburbs 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 alongside Council, community members, and local businesses to make their public spaces more welcoming, functional and attractive.

Community initiatives are placemaking activities that can engage residents to participate in community life 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 re-imagine or reinvent public spaces, or attract visitors to boost local economies.

A greater emphasis will be placed on sustainability and resilience in our developing communities. Urban Heat Islands are an emerging issue that Council can take steps to avoid through planning. This can include investigating ways to increase green cover and vegetation in urban environments, or improved building material selection.

Actions	Links to priority
4.1 Prepare local character statements for key areas which are anticipated to increase in infill and diverse housing.	4.1
4.2 Review opportunities to provide active transport facilities such as pathways and end of trip facilities for cyclists in centres and employment hubs.	4.2
4.3 Investigate strategies or policies which will contribute to sustainable outcomes in the community, such as urban heat, tree planting and green streets.	3.2



Actions and implementation plan





Actions and implementation plan

The actions included in the strategy have been assessed for whether they will be delivered in the short, medium or long term, or ongoing.

A report on the delivery of this strategy's actions will be provided to Council annually.

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. Any changes will be reflected in the annual reporting and updated in the strategy as needed.

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.

Strategy Actions

Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
1 Year	2 to 5 years	5+ years	Ongoing

Outcome 1: Ensure suitable land supply	Timeframe
1.1 Support rezoning requests for future greenfield and rural housing that are consistent with adopted planning strategies, the Housing Supply Plan and/or meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1 and 2.	Ongoing
1.2 Report on land supply and dwelling production by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing an annual report to be provided to Council • Provide data to be published on the Hunter UDP Dashboard • Review and/or update the Housing Supply Plan if housing supply targets aren't being achieved. 	Short
1.3 Identify opportunities for Council to lead actions to unlock potential land supply through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for grants for items such as infrastructure or environmental assessment • Reviewing existing strategies for opportunities for additional greenfield and small lot housing • Hunter Productivity Contribution applications • Place Strategy process • Place Plans. 	Ongoing

Outcome 2: Improve housing affordability	Timeframe
2.1 Engage with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Landcom and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and consider opportunities for Council to partner with community housing providers to facilitate the supply of affordable and low cost housing.	Ongoing
2.2 Develop an Affordable Housing Action Plan.	Short

Outcome 2: Improve housing affordability	Timeframe
2.3 Obtain data from NSW Fair Trading on short-term rental accommodation and to inform rental supply monitoring in Port Stephens. Provide an annual overview of data on Council's website	Ongoing
2.4 Advocate for better transport links from strategic centres to jobs and the region by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with Transport for NSW and requesting increased bus services 	Ongoing
2.5 Implement process improvements to better streamline assessments and reduce the cost of housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for reforms to the NSW Planning Portal • Investigate opportunities for technological advances to improve assessment and application processing timeframes 	Medium

Outcome 3: Increase diversity of housing choices	Timeframe
<p>3.1 Investigate housing preferences data about who wants to live in Port Stephens and what type of housing they seek. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for DPHI to co-ordinate housing preferences data for people moving to and within the Hunter to inform planning for future housing types to satisfy demand • Interrogate data to keep the Housing Supply Plan up to date. 	Short to Medium
<p>3.2 Council to encourage a greater diversity of infill housing around local centres, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to Infill Housing Study • Amendments to encourage the amalgamation of sites to allow for increased density and improved design outcomes • Amendments to planning controls to improve priority development feasibility and maintain design quality and amenity • Investment in local centre infrastructure through the development of Place Plans and Public Domain Plans. 	Medium
<p>3.3 Enable more efficient and sustainable development outcomes for new greenfield housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the provision of small lot housing through policies or controls • DCPs required for greenfield subdivisions where determined necessary. 	Medium
<p>3.4 Advocate for alternate development typologies where suitable, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for State reforms to assist councils in planning for lifestyle villages and communities. • Review local provisions to better plan for lifestyle villages and provide controls to ensure high quality design outcomes and liveable communities are created. 	Ongoing
<p>3.5 Plan for density done well, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the creation of a Pattern Book to guide development in the Raymond Terrace CBD • Consider development controls for Residential Flat Buildings, serviced apartments, shop top housing to be included in the DCP which reflect the specific context of the area • Investigate broad scale height increases on residential and commercial zoned land • Investigate incorporating public domain plans and master planning for areas undergoing character change due to an increase in infill housing. 	Medium
<p>3.6 Advocate for, and provide materials on diverse housing choices for the public, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tiny homes • caravans on private properties • secondary dwellings 	Short

Actions	Timeframes
4.1 Prepare local character statements for key areas which are anticipated to increase in infill and diverse housing.	Medium
4.2 Review opportunities to provide active transport facilities such as pathways and end of trip facilities for cyclists in centres and employment hubs.	Medium to Long
<p>4.3 Investigate strategies or policies which will contribute to sustainable outcomes in the community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban heat • tree planting • green streets 	Medium to Long

Housing Supply Plan



Housing Supply Plan

The Housing Supply Plan (HSP) forms part of Council's response to the current housing crisis.

The aim of this plan is to take the strategic framework that has been established by the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and the Local Housing Strategy (LIVE Port Stephens) to demonstrate how Council will facilitate the provision of housing to meet the needs of our growing community.

Council plays an important role in facilitating, shaping and managing housing growth across the state. Well planned and considered development must meet the needs of our community and be consistent with their vision for living a great lifestyle in a treasured environment. It is important to also be mindful that Port Stephens is a diverse community that has a range of needs and expectations with respect to housing. The response to the needs/demands for housing cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach.

Port Stephens is forecast to grow by almost 20,000 people over the next 20 years. To accommodate this growth, the Hunter Regional Plan has estimated the need for 11,100 new dwellings in Port Stephens. This equates to delivering in excess of 550 dwellings per year to meet the forecast demand.

This Plan demonstrates how and where the required housing can be developed over the next 20 years. The HSP takes a holistic approach to reviewing the need, and forms of housing that will be developed, and seeks to meet the needs of the community. This includes considering the individual characteristics, capacity and character of an area in estimating its future capacity.

Over time there will be a need to continue to update and refine the HSP to ensure that it accurately reflects the external factors that will change.

Recent history has shown that underlying assumptions of growth are no longer self-evident. The HSP needs to respond to this uncertainty by providing flexibility and capacity to respond to these changes. Time frames for the delivery of land/ dwellings must be reviewed and updated regularly. Shortfalls in the HSP must be updated to reflect the changing circumstances.



Link to read more

pscouncil.info/housing-supply-plan

Appendix



Appendix 1

– Greenfield Housing Criteria

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

The criteria can be used to demonstrate that land is suitable for 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, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) 'Guide to preparing planning proposals' including consideration of any relevant state and regional plans, state environmental planning policies and ministerial directions.

LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

- Land identified in a local area strategy
- 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).
- Note, land means the extent of land proposed to be used for residential purposes.

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA

In accordance with Council resolution Minute No. 212 (9 August 2022), the following areas are excluded from any further consideration:

- any land within Wallalong that has previously been considered for urban development as part of the Wallalong Urban Release Area.

MANAGEMENT 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 Australian Standard AS 2021:2015.

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

Rezoning requests on land that has the potential to be isolated in flood events, must demonstrate compliance with the Flood Risk Management Manual and the associated toolkits. Consideration must also be given to the draft Shelter-in-place Guideline issued by DPHI in January 2023.

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 DPHI Biodiversity Values Map published on the NSW DPHI 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 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
- 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
- scheduled to be available (must be confirmed in writing from service providers)

Rezoning requests must be lodged with evidence demonstrating that 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.

NEXT STEPS

Proponents are required to submit a 'Rezoning Request Meeting Form' and include details of the proposals, 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 have consideration for the Port Stephens Rural Residential Strategy (2015) including the matters for investigation that have been identified.

Planning proposals will be subject to requirements of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's 'Guide to preparing planning proposals' including consideration of any relevant state and regional plans, state environmental planning policies and ministerial directions.

There are 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.
- 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, C3 Environmental Management, C4 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) and
- The proposed development is necessary to ensure the adequate supply of housing in the local area and will be compatible with the preferred uses of land in the vicinity.

To address the locational criteria, the rezoning request must include consideration of:

- the existing uses and approved uses of land in the vicinity of the development and any measures proposed to avoid or minimise any incompatibility;
- whether or not the development is likely to have a significant impact on uses that are likely to be the preferred uses of land in the vicinity of the development, having regard for any strategic plans and policies that may apply;
- any ways in which the development may be incompatible with any of those existing, approved or likely preferred uses;
- any measures proposed to avoid or minimise any incompatibility; and
- the housing needs in the locality and the current and planned future supply of housing in area.

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA

In accordance with Council resolution Minute No. 212 (9 August 2022), the following areas are excluded from any further consideration:

- any land within Wallalong that has previously been considered for urban development as part of the Wallalong Urban Release Area.

CONSTRAINTS 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. This mapping was 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.

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.
- 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.

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
- 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
- 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

NEXT STEPS

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



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL