

MASTERPLAN SUMMARY

Tomaree Lodge

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge



SHAC

Acknowledgement of Country

SHAC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Awabakal & Worimi people, upon which this document was created, as well as the land where this document now rests in your hands. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and we honour Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place, and their rich contribution to our society. To that end, all our work seeks to uphold the idea that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

SHAC acknowledges the Worimi people as the Traditional Custodians of the land we speak of in this document. We acknowledge their ancestors who defended, walked and managed this land, and who left a legacy of strong culture, wisdom and knowledge embedded within it that we endeavour to respect and understand. We acknowledge their Elders who are the knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers. We endeavour to facilitate open dialogue and space for the Worimi peoples to empower the existing and future community who are our hope for a brighter and resilient future, and our future leaders.

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Summary of Revisions

Tomaree Lodge Masterplan Summary

Revision I - 29.06.2026
Author - MR
Check - JaR

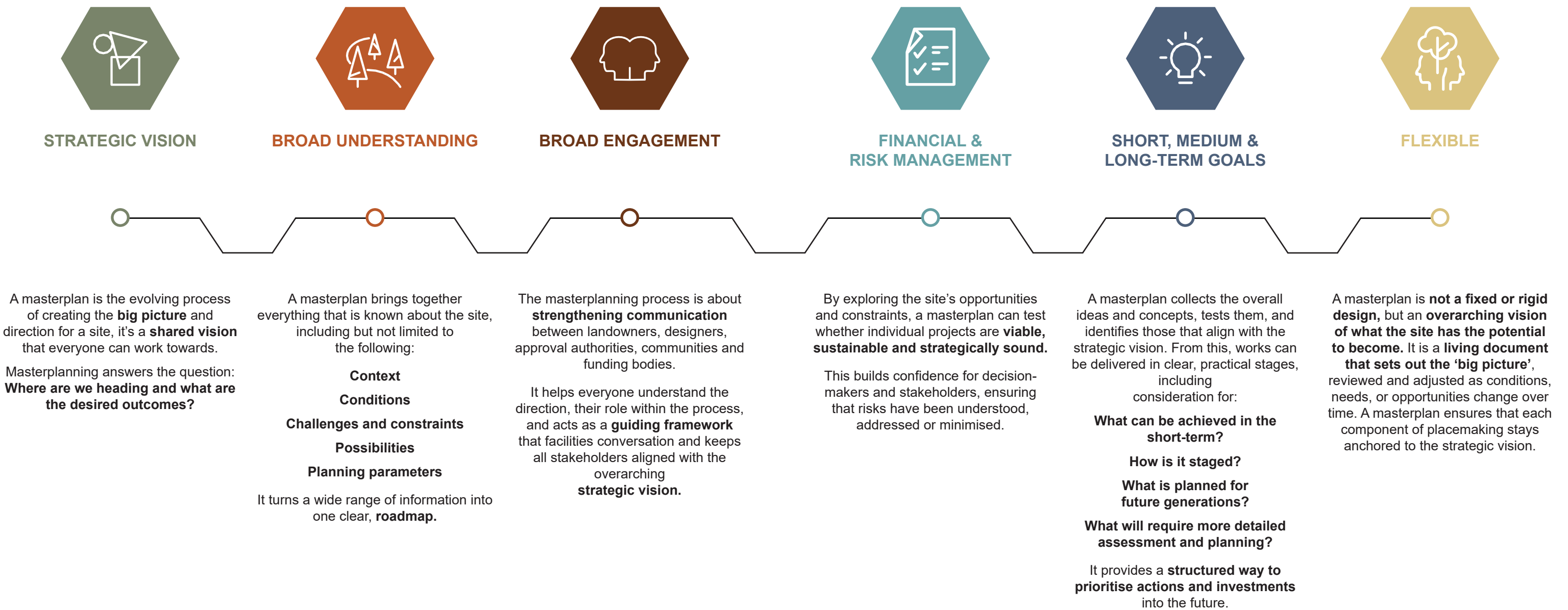
This Report © SHAC 2026
Front Cover Image - Nearmap, 2025
Back Cover Image - Jack Reading, 2025

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Jack Reading, 2025

What is a Masterplan?

A masterplan is an investment in short, medium and long-term viability. A plan for flexibility, staging, growth and value adds. We enable you to better understand the full range of opportunities, and constraints, to plan for a strategic future and be well informed considered actions.

The process and action of a masterplan consists of the following:



"Master planning is a method for defining clear strategies for the physical, economic, and social transformation of places. Planning for change in the physical, social, and economic fabric of places requires an integrated process achieved through the efforts of many – clients, professionals and local communities.

Master planning is a fluid and iterative process, with many people contributing to the initial investigations, the proposals as they develop and to their delivery.

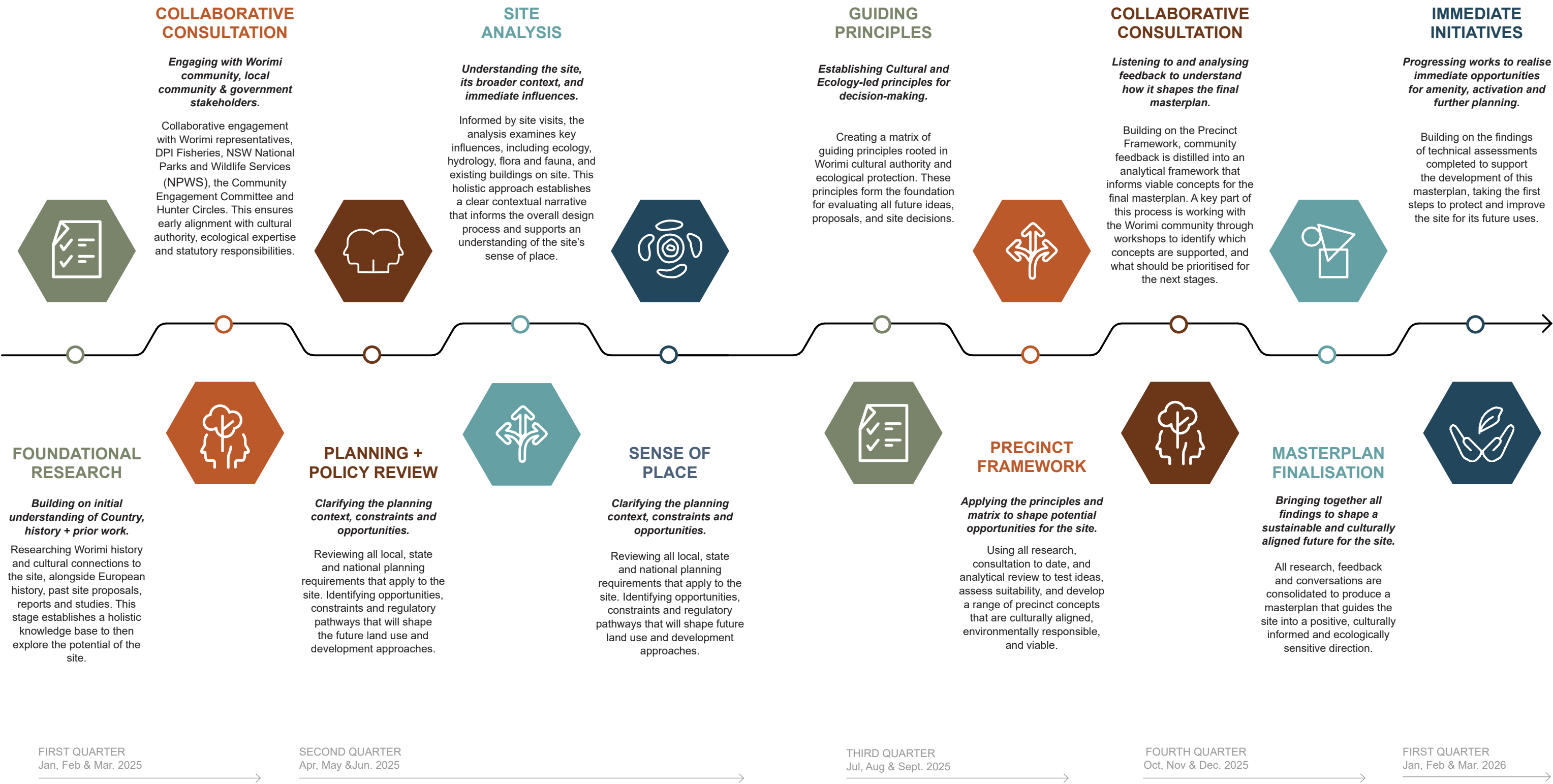
People – residents, visitors and ultimate users of the spaces and buildings – are at the heart of any master plan.

A successful master plan will embody a community's collective vision and values to create sustainable places for living, working, and recreation."

– NSW Government Architect

Masterplan Process

When approaching the Tomaree Lodge Masterplan, the SHAC team undertook extensive research, analysis and consultation to develop the concepts that would ultimately inform the final masterplan. The below graphic illustrates the journey from early investigations and community engagement through to detailed planning, refinement of ideas and the development of practical first-stage initiatives. It also highlights key moments of collaboration with stakeholders, community members and First Nations representatives, whose involvement was instrumental in shaping the project's direction and outcomes.



Executive Summary

A Place of Connection. At the northern apex of the long coastal peninsula known as Burraghihnbihng in Port Stephens, New South Wales, is Tomaree Head – Dhurumiri.

Standing proudly alongside his big brother, Yacaaba, together they are the towering gatekeepers of the narrow passage of water connecting the Tasman Sea and the flooded river valley harbour of Port Stephens.

Sheltered along the inner shoreline of Tomaree is the narrow strip of the headland that has been adapted for various purposes by Europeans for over 80 years.

Tomaree Lodge was the name given to the former WW2 military facility turned intellectual disability accommodation centre owned by the State that most recently occupied the site.

Following the decommissioning of Large Residential Centres (LRCs), the current Government committed to retaining Tomaree Lodge for public and recreational use in 2023.

This location has been the focus of numerous historical, planning, and blue-sky studies to determine the future use of the site to ensure it remains accessible, equitable, and a shared place for community connection.

Tomaree is a unique place defined first and foremost by its geology, topography, and overarching ecological / marine biological systems. It exists in a delicate balance with historical, cultural, social and economic values that collectively contribute to the Sense of Place. It is a highly valued place by the local community, as the Tomaree Headland Walk is the most visited site by tourists in Port Stephens.

As masterplanners, SHAC is privileged to be guiding the evolving cultural landscape of Dhurumiri as a place of connection. Our document seeks to bring together existing studies and plans, appreciate and to interpret this information to analyse the site for its capacity and capability, and interpret and measure it against a set of informed site-sensitive values. This culminates into a clear set of design principles and strategies to guide placemaking now and for generations to come.

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge Model, SHAC
Photograph, Jack Reading 2025

Stories of Land, Sea & People

The Tomaree Masterplan envisions a shared future where Country is respected, celebrated, and experienced by all. It seeks to create a space that honours the deep cultural significance of Worimi Country while acknowledging the rich layers of European heritage that have shaped the region's history. This balanced approach will ensure that Tomaree becomes a place of learning, connection, and collaboration, where stories, traditions, and histories are preserved and shared.

WORIMI STORIES AT DHURRUMIRI

Tomaree Headland and its surrounding areas, including Yacaaba and Boondelbah hold profound cultural and spiritual significance for the Worimi people. These volcanic formations serve as natural gateways to Worimi Country (Port Stephens) and embody ancestral connectedness to land, sea, and sky. Tomaree, also known as Dhurumiri ("Rainbows" and "Big Look"), has long been a vantage point for navigation, communication, and ceremony, and remains a sacred site for women's practices and resource gathering.

The Worimi maintain a deep relationship with Land and Sea Country across Port Stephens, expressed through songlines, seasonal calendars, and cultural knowledge systems. Songlines link inland mountains (balgarr) to the deep ocean (garuwa), connecting significant sites across Country. The Worimi seasonal calendar reflects ecological patterns, guiding cultural activities through indicators such as plant flowering, animal behaviour, and celestial movements. Gynea Lily blooms signalling whale migration. Hairy grubs descend trees as the mullet school for migration. The white flowers of coastal plants indicate the presence of lobsters.

Dhurumiri is part of a broader network of significant Aboriginal Places, including Yacaaba, Birubi Point and Dark Point. Future works must recognise and respect the site's place within this sacred landscape, with ongoing collaboration with Worimi custodians to preserve and honour these traditions and connections.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Tomaree Headland has a rich history shaped by both Aboriginal heritage and European settlement. First recorded by Europeans in 1770 during Captain Cook's voyage, the area became a hub for fishing, oyster farming, and cedar forestry after 1788. In 1818, Governor Lachlan Macquarie named the headland "Tomaree," aligning with the traditional Worimi name Dhurumiri. The land was reserved under the Crown Lands Alienation Act in 1861 for public purposes, including recreation.

Over time, Tomaree served multiple roles: livestock grazing (1932–1947), a strategic World War II military site known as Fort Tomaree (1942), and later a health and community facility. From 1960, it operated as Tomaree Holiday Lodge for patient respite, transitioning in 1985 to Tomaree Lodge for permanent residents. In 2001, the site became a residential disability accommodation facility, operating in this capacity until its closure in May 2021. Following the closure, the site remained vacant with ongoing management until 2025. In 2025, the Department of Communities and Justice opened the onsite Information Centre to provide visitors with information and to oversee ongoing maintenance and upgrades. Today, Tomaree National Park preserves much of the headland, featuring the Fort Tomaree Walk and historic military installations.

Information Source:
Tomaree Museum | Developed by Hosting Australia. 2025, Worimi Conservation
Lands. 2025, Tomaree Lodge - Military Past and Recent History. 2025.

Tomaree & the Port Stephens Bay

Tomaree Head / Dhurumiri is located at the southern headland of Worimi Barrary. Adjacent to Shoal Bay, it is an hour's drive from Newcastle and 3 hours north of Sydney.

Part of a series of coastal peaks and valleys, Tomaree Head is the final headland at the mouth of Port Stephens. It rests opposite 'Big Brother' Yacaaba, as one 'Wakulda', a pair of water pillar gateways guarding and guiding the passage to Port Stephens.

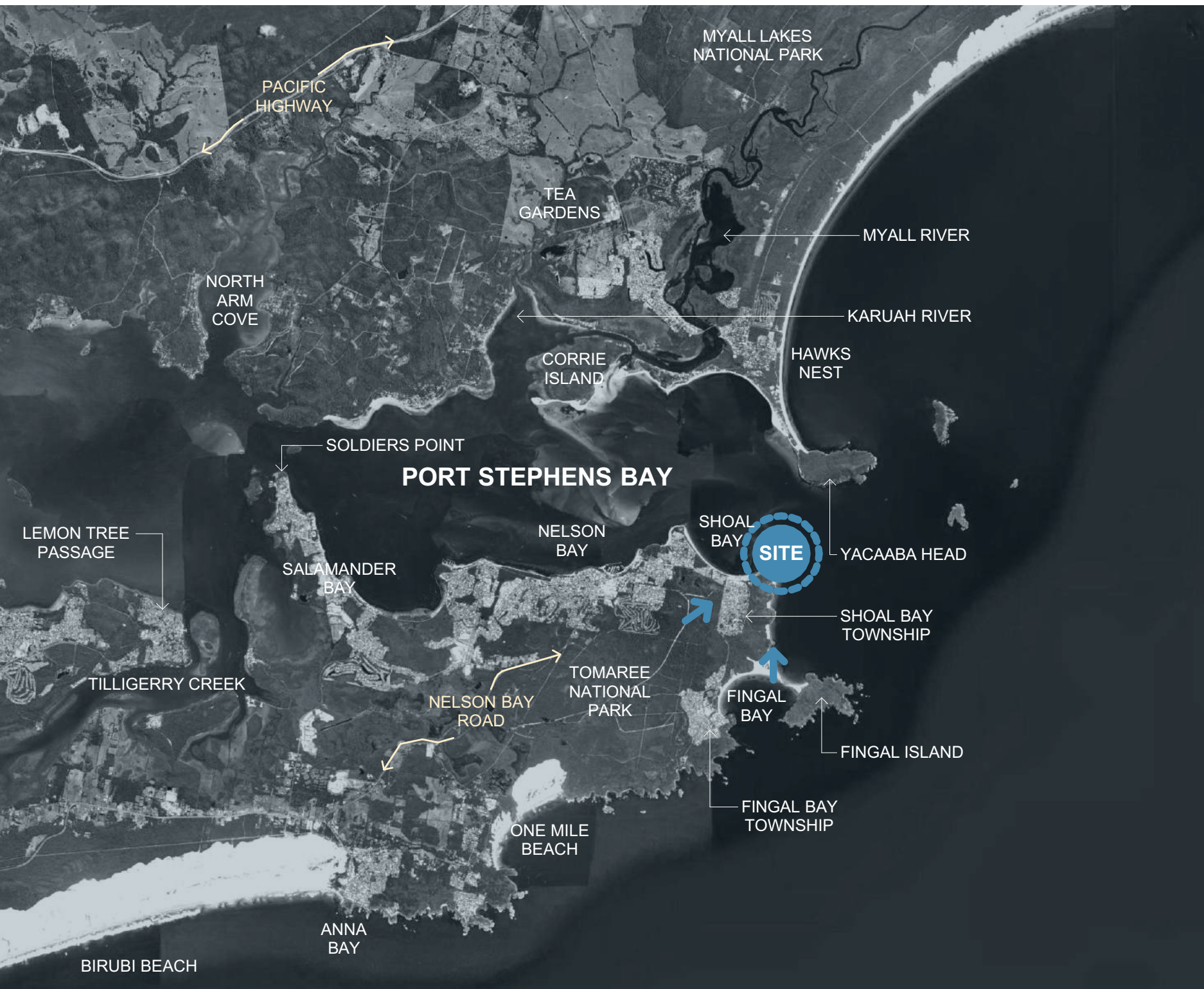


Image Source: Near Maps, 2025



Image Source: Perspective view looking North from Fingal Beach, Google Earth 2025

Envisioning the Future

The future vision for Tomaree Lodge has been shaped by insights gathered through First Nations conversations, community engagement, and stakeholder input. Together, these voices have helped envision a shared future for Tomaree, guiding the development of a Masterplan that respects cultural values, historical significance, and environmental sensitivities. This process has focused on listening, learning, and understanding—ensuring that the opportunities and considerations identified will create a space that is inclusive, respectful, and deeply connected to both Country and community.

ENVISIONING

Conversations with First Nations:
Understand what makes the site special, the stories it holds, and how to move forward respectfully. Identify cultural significance, lore and considerations.

Investment Logic Mapping:
Identify current issues on the site and explore community priorities.

Recommendations:
From the mapping process, determine key items that need addressing and what the site can offer—both physically and culturally.

A Site of Conscience:
Conversations to explore how to honour former residents, while planning future works.

A Site of Marine Significance:
Discuss strategies to protect marine wildlife and enhance public access in a sustainable way.

Tomaree National Park:
Conversations to develop a cohesive approach with NSW NPWS, ensuring respect for the headland and strategies for its protection.

Community Participation:
Input from the general community, helping to identify successful concepts, gaps, and priorities for emphasis in the Masterplan.

APPLYING

*This ongoing collaborative process is built on dialogue, storytelling, and trust to move the site forward in a culturally sensitive way. To date, these conversations have identified core themes that will guide not only the Masterplan but all future actions on site: **Storytelling, Collaboration, Grounded Design, Education, and Celebration.***

This phase revealed key community perspectives and informed a strategic framework consisting of core themes that shaped further conversations and recommendations which later went on to support the masterplanning process.

From the Strategic Framework, the community helped apply solutions to the identified core themes and contributed to developing a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs have been referenced and addressed through the Masterplan.

Conversations around a Site of Conscience have highlighted Tomaree as an opportunity to honour lived experiences through storytelling, reflection, and sensitive renewal. A dedicated framework will guide this process, shaping the site's future direction and strategies beyond the Masterplan.

Being a site of marine significance, it requires strategies that balance conservation with community access. Future planning will focus on protecting marine wildlife and ecosystems while creating sustainable opportunities for public engagement/education with the coastal environment.

Priorities include improving safe access to heritage sites, integrating interpretation and storytelling, and aligning approaches to stewardship of these adjoining sites. Collaboration with First Nations community will be essential to ensure protection, connectivity, and culturally grounded planning beyond the Masterplan.

Analysis of community feedback revealed a strong emphasis on nature-centric thinking and cultural and heritage values. These core themes have shaped all Masterplan concepts, aiming to create a harmonious balance between environment, culture, and future development.

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Justin Hamilton. 2025

A PLACE OF CULTURE & COMMUNITY

A PLACE OF TOURISM

A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY

A PLACE OF RESEARCH

A PLACE OF EDUCATION

A PLACE OF RETREAT & RECREATION



ENVIRONMENT + SUSTAINABILITY

Rehabilitate and manage degraded bushland: Follow NPWS process to protect and enhance natural values.

Establish a long-term sustainable strategy: Guide future development and environmental stewardship.

Address differing views on sustainability:
Use inclusive engagement to build
consensus and clarity.

Explore eco-tourism and environmental education: Align future use with the site's natural characteristics.

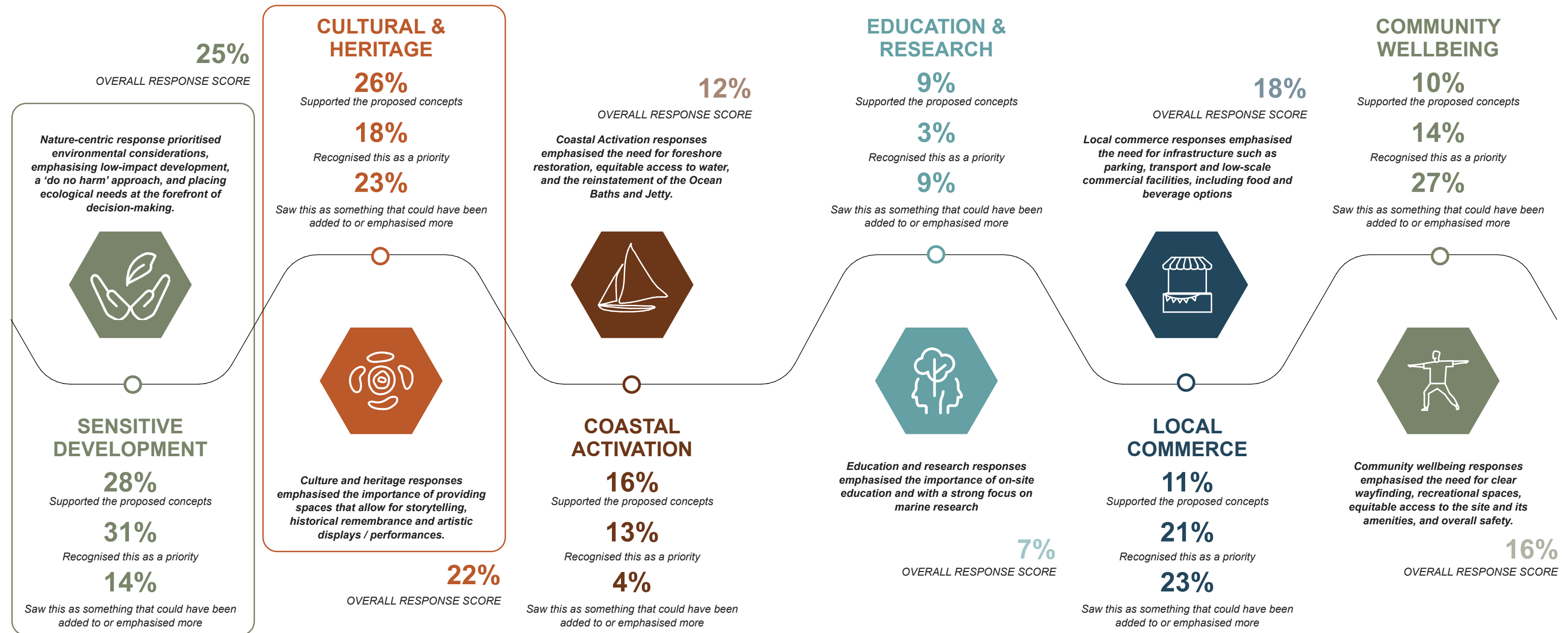
Integrate with adjacent National Park:
Ensure ecological connectivity and a cohesive visitor experience.

- ☐ Ecological Regeneration
- ☐ Shared Sustainable Solutions
- ☐ Ecotourism
- ☐ Visitor Experience

Community Feedback

Following the community viewing of the Concept Masterplan document, DCJ opened an anonymous forum where members of the public could share their feedback. The information below distils responses from three questions: What do you think are the best concepts so far?, What would you like to see prioritised?, and Is there anything you think could be added to the preliminary concepts?

The data has been analysed to provide an overall percentage representation of the common themes identified by community. While participants may have aligned with a range of concepts, there was a clear emphasis on prioritising the following, Nature-Centric and Cultural & Heritage ideations. These areas continue to be strongly influential, and all concepts will be developed alongside them to create a harmonious balance.



Planning

Throughout the master planning process, all relevant regulatory planning documents were thoroughly researched and assessed at both State and Local levels to ensure that the approach for the site is fully compliant and strategically aligned with statutory requirements. This was undertaken with a clear commitment to being both sensitive to the site’s ecological values and practical in making the most of the opportunities the site presents.

The masterplan aims to create places that improve quality of life, stimulate the economy, and enhance the environment by prioritising good design throughout all stages of development. Guided by the Better Placed policy from the NSW Government Architect, our objectives focus on integrating design excellence to deliver well-functioning, connected, and sustainable spaces.

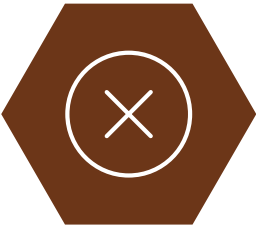
PROJECT INTENTIONS: The masterplan for Tomaree Lodge aims to fulfil the Better Placed objectives in the following ways:

- **BETTER FIT** A thorough understanding of the site in its context, including any relevant environmental, social, and cultural issues, is key to providing a solution that is site specific and sensitive.
- **BETTER PERFORMANCE** The proposed solution should provide key factors that work to maintain a strong foundation of suitability.
- **BETTER FOR COMMUNITY** Providing a diverse range of uses for users to engage with
- **BETTER FOR PEOPLE** The overarching component of the proposal should take into consideration public connectivity, amenity and story
- **BETTER WORKING** Ensuring appropriate public spaces and urban typologies is important in the efficiency of the development
- **BETTER VALUE** Understanding the viability and economic considerations for the site
- **BETTER LOOK AND FEEL** Ensuring an inviting, welcoming, and pleasant place to live and work, enhancing the coastal context, focusing on quality and aesthetics

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Jack Reading, 2025

The site is zoned C2 Environmental Conservation, a designation that prioritises the protection and restoration of areas with significant ecological, scientific, cultural, and aesthetic values. This zoning aims to safeguard sensitive ecosystems by restricting activities that could cause harm, while allowing only low-impact uses that align with conservation objectives. Development within this zone is carefully managed to prevent any adverse effects on these values, ensuring the long-term integrity and sustainability of the natural environment.

PROHIBITED



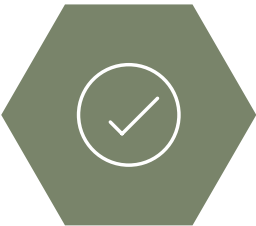
- ☐ Business premises
 - ☐ Hotel or motel accommodation
 - ☐ Distribution centres
 - ☐ Local distribution premises
 - ☐ Multi-dwelling or senior housing
 - ☐ Industries or warehouses
 - ☐ Pond or tank-based aquaculture
 - ☐ Recreation facilities (major)
 - ☐ Residential flat buildings
 - ☐ Restricted or retail premises
 - ☐ Service stations
- as well as any uses not identified in permitted without or with consent.

PERMITTED WITH CONSENT



- ☐ Bed & Breakfast
- ☐ Building identification signage
- ☐ Business identification signage
- ☐ Home based childcare or business
- ☐ Eco-tourist facilities
- ☐ Environmental facilities
- ☐ Information & education facilities
- ☐ Flood mitigation works
- ☐ Water supply systems
- ☐ Water recreation structures
- ☐ Roads
- ☐ Research stations
- ☐ Recreation areas
- ☐ Oyster aquaculture

PERMITTED WITHOUT CONSENT



- ☐ Bee Keeping
- ☐ Environmental Protection Works

This list has been adapted to included uses that are align with the strategic direction of the masterplan.

Opportunities & Constraints

Throughout the master planning process, the existing site was thoroughly and objectively assessed to identify both opportunities and constraints. This evaluation drew on previous reports and documentation, including the Conservation Management Report and Condition Reports. Each building, ancillary structure, and interstitial space was reviewed to understand their relationships and how they respond to the site's natural elements. The following summary outlines the key opportunities and constraints identified, along with the physical parameters that have guided the strategic direction and informed viable decision-making for the masterplan.

CENTRAL SITE: BUILDING REVIEW

- BUILDING 01

'The Helm' Good condition; suitable for reuse.
- BUILDING 02

'Star Fish Lodge' Good condition; suitable for reuse. Linkage to Building 03 creates visual clutter and restricts openness.
- BUILDING 03

'Spinnaker Lodge' Good condition; suitable for reuse. Linkage to Buildings 02 and 04 creates visual clutter and restricts openness.
- BUILDING 04

'Mariner's Cottage' Good condition; suitable for reuse. Linkage to Building 03 creates visual clutter and restricts openness.
- BUILDING 05

'Sea Horse Cottage' Good condition, but poorly situated on the site and heavily modified from original structure; may be suitable for reuse. Contaminated with asbestos but constructed with rafters, allowing flexibility in internal layout.'
- BUILDING 06

'The Anchorage' Poor condition. Building runs counter to site contours, resulting in water damage and structural deterioration.
- BUILDING 07

'The Jetty' Poor condition. Building runs counter to site contours, resulting in water damage and structural deterioration.
- BUILDING 08

'Dolphin Cove' Good condition; suitable for reuse. In general disrepair, its rafter construction allows flexibility in internal layout.
- BUILDING 09

'Yachtsman's Rest' Poor condition. Building runs counter to site contours, resulting in water damage and structural deterioration.
- BUILDING 10

'The Quarterdeck' Moderate condition; suitable for reuse. Weight of the top-floor structure appears to have compromised the ground-floor component. The ground floor features an open layout, allowing for internal flexibility.
- BUILDING 11

'Galleon's Rest' Good condition; suitable for reuse. The interiors have been recently refurbished; there is deterioration of the exterior building envelope and the external deck.
- BUILDING 12

'The Bridge' Good Condition; suitable for reuse. Open internal layout. General deterioration of internal & external finishes.
- BUILDING 13

'Administration' Good condition; suitable for reuse. Structurally sound with a large footprint and views to the water.
- BUILDING 14

'Clipper's Rest' Good condition; suitable for reuse. Surface damage to the external fabric caused by stormwater runoff.
- BUILDING 15

'Ketch Loft' Good condition; suitable for reuse. There is visible deterioration of interior and exterior finishes.

OVERARCHING CONSTRAINTS

Sewer Infrastructure – Operating at maximum capacity and struggling to support the existing building load.

Topography – Drainage issues across the site due to existing infrastructure and ongoing seawall degradation, impacting both site stability and long-term resilience.

Dilapidation – Select buildings are in poor condition and in some instances limiting reuse.

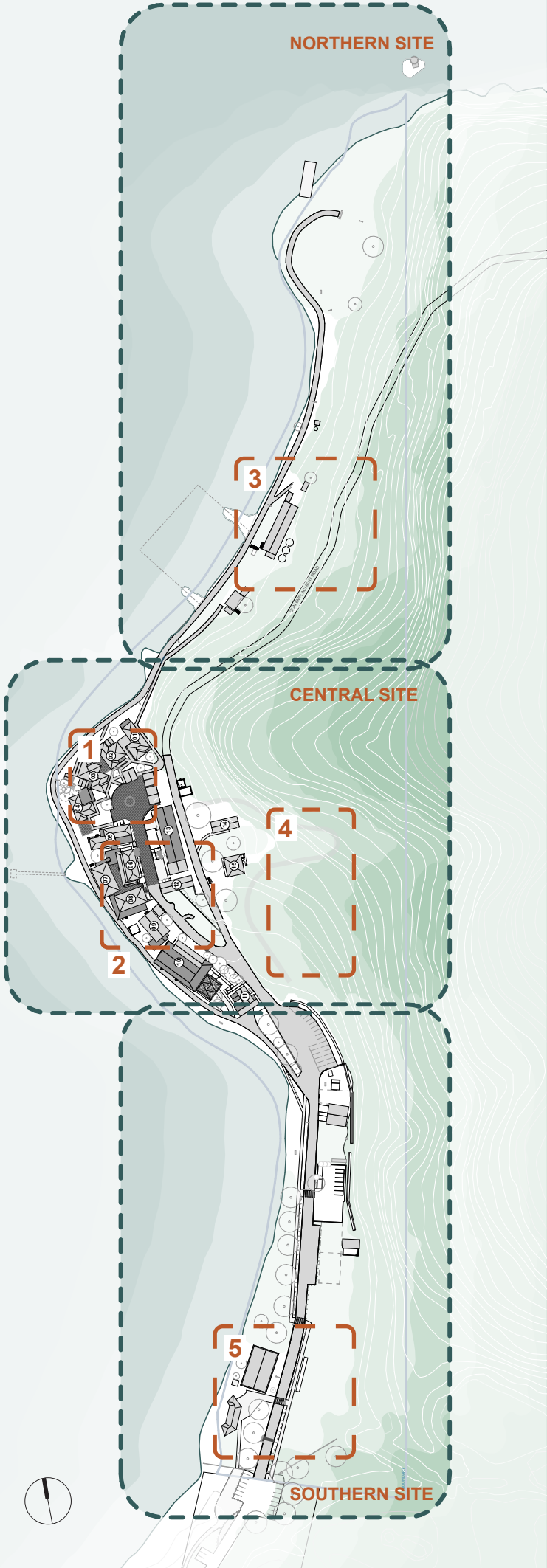
Traffic Management – Both pedestrian and vehicle movement are difficult and inefficient across the site.



1 Star Fish Lodge (Building 2), Spinnaker Lodge (Building 3) and Mariner's Cottage (Building 4), have seen interstitial links added over time and this has caused clutter in this area of the site and makes it hard to easily navigate through the area.



2 The Anchorage (Building 6), The Jetty (Building 7) and the Yachtsman's Rest (Building 10) run against the natural contours of country and they have been subject to water damage and are in general disrepair.



3 Highlights: Main areas of 'Constraint' within the existing fabric of the site.



3 Fisheries Facility. Lease for Oyster Operations. Sheet Metal Shed in poor condition and could explore a better, more aesthetic and functional outcome that has a stronger public aesthetic.



4 Disruption of natural water flow across the site. The past installation of culvert has disrupted the natural water flow and cannot withstand the volumes of water coming from the headland.



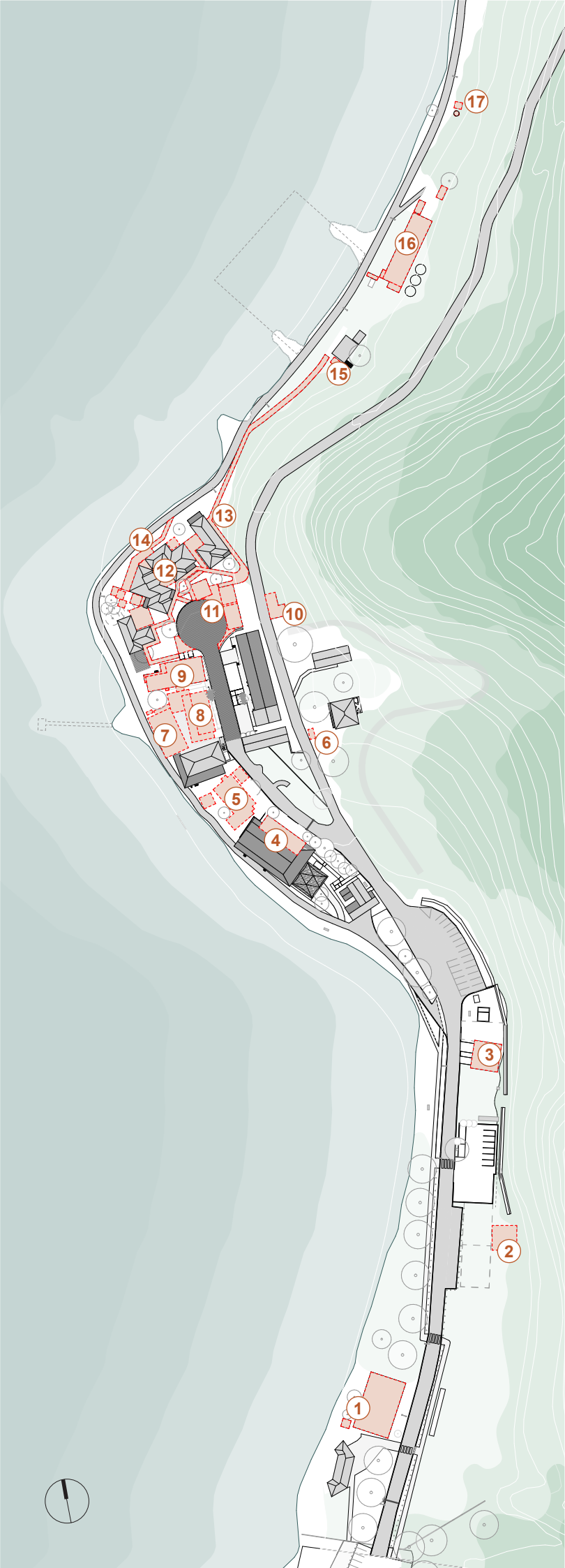
5 Amenities Block & Swimming Pool. Amenities Block is a single storey brick structure with no accessible amenities. The overall layout of the building does not have safety / visibility as a primary concern.

The Swimming Pool is beyond economical repair and has been decommissioned.

Site Investigation: Recommendations

Throughout the masterplanning process, and in consultation with Worimi and NSW Public Works, we have identified infrastructure that is either no longer viable or is negatively impacting the natural flow of Country. These decisions are supported by research from the previously commissioned Conservation Management Report and Condition Report, as well as detailed site inspections where each building was assessed in person. For a more in-depth assessment of each built form or ancillary item on site, please refer to the full masterplan. It should be noted that the scope is not limited to the identified items; smaller incidental infrastructure (such as pedestrian pathways, existing lighting, bollards, etc.) may also be removed if it does not align with the proposed masterplan.

- ① The pool has been closed for an extended period and is believed to contain asbestos within the grouting. It requires ongoing maintenance and supervision, which cannot be supported. Instead of complete removal, the feasibility of converting it into an in-ground stormwater system should be explored. If viable, the area should be covered with a hardstand to allow continued use for activities.
- ② Removal of dilapidated BBQ Shelter, currently not in use and requiring a high level of maintenance that is not available.
- ③ The existing maintenance shed is in poor and deteriorated condition, and its visually prominent location. It should be removed or upgraded and repurposed. A maintenance location should be reinstated elsewhere on the site to support future operational and servicing needs.
- ④ Prioritise structural engineering assessment of the top floor annex associated with Building 10, which is currently closed to public use due to uneven floors and water damage, and appears to be compromising the stability of the ground floor. Remove if a viable engineering solution cannot be identified to retain and make safe.
- ⑤ Building 09 is generally in good condition but has external water damage due to its position against the site contours, which disrupts the natural watercourse. To restore the natural flow, the building should be removed.
- ⑥ Remove and relocate isolated switch cupboard and associated services to a safe and secure compound location.
- ⑦ The exterior of Building 07 is partially damaged and generally in disrepair. Its position against the site contours disrupts the natural watercourse. To restore the natural flow, the building should be removed.
- ⑧ The exterior of Building 06 is partially damaged and generally in disrepair. Its position against the site contours disrupts the natural watercourse. To restore the natural flow, the building should be removed.
- ⑨ Building 05 is partially damaged, contains asbestos and in general disrepair. This building should be removed.
- ⑩ The old diesel fuel store is no longer in use and should be removed. The existing slab may be reused if indicated in the masterplan.
- ⑪ The existing carports are weathered, visually unappealing, and do not provide accessible parking. Should be removed.
- ⑫ The linkages and shelters between Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 create visual and physical clutter and should be removed.
- ⑬ This ramp which connects the upper site to the lower site should be removed and replaced. It has been closed due to safety concerns, as the timber structure has severely weathered. A new, durable solution should be installed, positioned away from Building 01 to prevent future issues.
- ⑭ The ramp connecting Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 to the lower portion of the site is severely weathered, in disrepair, and creates visual clutter while reducing privacy for these buildings. It should be removed.
- ⑮ The amenities associated with the picnic benches should be removed. They are not open to the public, require ongoing maintenance, and are visually unappealing. Community consultation confirmed there is no need to retain these facilities in this part of the site.
- ⑯ The exterior of the Fisheries shed is partially damaged and in general disrepair, and its position on the site impacts on the ability to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Potential for removal and reinstatement in a new location on site to be explored. Refer to the masterplan precincts.
- ⑰ The brick amenities block has been closed for an extended period and is not accessible to the public. It should be removed along with the septic tank.



Item 1: Swimming Pool



Item 17: Brick Amenities Block



Item 2: BBQ Shelter



Item 5: Building 09: Yachtsman's Rest



Item 7: The Jetty



Item 14: Ramp to lower portion of site



Item 11: Carports



Item 12: Linkages and shelters between buildings

Sense of Place

“Place” is more than a physical location. It is the expression of *experiences, perceptions, meanings, and interactions*. The *Genius Loci* embodies the spirit of place, including *atmosphere, symbolism, and identity*. The site’s unique sense of place is a combination of *physical (tangible) and metaphysical (intangible) components*.

Sense of Place is shaped by a rich interplay of *physical form, sensory experience, and cultural narrative*. The character of Place emerges not only from the natural landscape and built fabric but also from the *spatial patterns, social practices, and meanings* attached to the location over time.

The landscape setting is defined by *landforms, vegetation* and other *ecological characteristics* that contributes to an underlying spatial memory - that can be experienced as both familiar and grounding. *Materials, textures, and seasonal changes* all play a role in *shaping atmosphere and tactile identity*.

Built form and urban morphology contribute to the legibility (reading) and rhythm of the site. The configuration of *paths, edges, landmarks, and nodes* informs how people mentally map and navigate the Place - influencing both comfort and attachment. *Scale, grain, and architectural language* frame the user experience including movement through a space.

There is a strong emotive and social dimension to Place, expressed through *patterns of use, rituals, and gathering*. These activities reinforce a collective *memory and belonging*.

The sensory field comprises of *light, shadow, scent, sound, and texture* that are recognisable elements of familiar spaces. These sensory cues support emotional connection and memory formation, creating opportunities for *meaningful interaction between people and place*.

Design responses should seek to preserve and express the *Genius Loci* of the site to *reinforce spatial legibility, support ecological function, and deepen cultural narrative*.

INTERPRETATION OF ‘SENSE OF PLACE’

It is important for us, as design practitioners, to understand that Place is more than just a physical location. It is a living ecosystem of tangible and intangible elements. In the context of Tomaree Head, we seek to build a deep understanding of Place—not only in relation to the headland itself, but also within the broader setting of Port Stephens, including the adjoining islands, Yacaaba, surrounding peaks, and the Tomaree National Park.

Through our site visits and baseline analysis, we have documented the interconnected components that collectively define the Sense of Place. These elements must be carried forward throughout the design process to ensure this sense is preserved and expressed—from ecological, cultural, and community perspectives.

Our work is grounded in an intention to honour the Genius Loci of the Site, and the many stories, memories, knowledge systems and songlines, that have been shared with our team during the development of this masterplan document.

This illustration (to the right) unpacks our process of walking, sensing and listening to Place - presented through our baseline analysis and highlighting the following considerations that have guided our approach.



Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge/ Justin Hamilton 2025



Information Source:
Reading Country: Seeing Deep into the Bush/Daniele Hromek, Architecture Australia, 2021
A Framework for Understanding Sense of Place in an Urban Design Context/Ming Hu and Roger Chen,Urban Science (MDPI), 2018
Towards a Sense of Place Unified Conceptual Framework Based on a Narrative Review: A Way of Feeding Place-Based GIS/Ahmed Rezeg, Stephane Roche, and Emmanuel Eveno, Land (MDPI), 2025
The Image of the City/Kevin Lynch,Cambridge, MA: MIT Press,1960
Project for Public Spaces, 2025

Image Source:
1. Wreck Beach/Destination NSW, 2025
2. Smooth Barked Apple/Dapple Designs, 2025
3. Tomaree Lodge/Author, 2025
4. Morton National Park, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2025
5. Tomaree Head in Port Stephens/ Jarryd Salem, Australian Traveller, 2025

Worimi Country

A vital part of the masterplan process has been the engagement with the Worimi community through workshops and shared conversations to understand how the site can evolve by putting Mother Nature first. These dialogues have guided how we balance environmental care with the site's long-term viability, ensuring it remains a place for all communities to enjoy.

Worimi representatives have shared invaluable insights into what is most important, guiding us toward ways of moving forward that are respectful, sustainable, and future-focused. Each conversation with the Worimi community has informed the principle themes below with Country at the heart of every decision.



STORYTELLING

Listen and share the stories that the land holds including the stories of families, nature, and legend. Let these narratives shape how we build, care, and connect.

At Dhurrumiri, the natural and cultural narratives of land should guide our decisions from the placement of paths to the selection of materials and plantings. Storytelling acts as a grounding narrative, inspiring places where community members can gather, teach, and reflect, to ensure that the stories of Country continue to live and grow. Through community-led engagement - the site has the opportunity to become a living archive, one that strengthens connections between people and place while honouring and sustaining the traditions that have long cared for all.



GROUNDING IN DESIGN

Work with the natural contours, textures, and systems of our landscape. Our role is to listen and complement nature, retain what belongs, and carefully removing what disrupts the ecological balance. Design should grow from the ground up, not be imposed upon it.

At Dhurrumiri, the design process begins by listening, to the land, its ecology, and its stories. The natural systems of the site should guide how interventions are shaped and where they emerge. By respecting these patterns, the design can be sensitively incorporated and evolve to complement the landscape character. Natural and built elements should extend from one another, forming a unified whole where together they restore balance.



COLLABORATION

True balance of Country emerges through unity. Work together, across disciplines, communities, and perspectives, to create outcomes that honour both people and place. Foster a shared sense of belonging and connection to Country and advance the conversation toward a common ground of understanding for all within a collective circle of care.

The site holds potential to become a strong and nationally significant precedent - a living example of what can be achieved when collaboration is genuine and sustained. By working hand in hand with First Nations custodians, community and government partners - we can shape a cohesive and sensitive response to Place. Every decision, from restoration to future uses, should embody this spirit of unity that celebrates shared stewardship and demonstrating how collective care can guide the evolution of Dhurrumiri with integrity and respect.



EDUCATION

Pass knowledge forward to future generations. Prioritise learning from and alongside First Nations communities to embrace traditional and sustainable practices that ensures a thriving future for all.

Our youth are the future custodians of Place. The site should provide opportunities where learning is visible, accessible, and connected. A Place where traditional knowledge is shared through stories, practice, and mentorship. By showcasing how collaboration has shaped a sensitive and respectful response to Place - Dhurrumiri can become a living classroom that fosters intergenerational learning and skill building. Through spaces designed for gathering, demonstration, and storytelling, community can learn directly from knowledge holders to ensure that cultural richness continues to flow through generations.



CELEBRATION

Celebrate culture, place, and connection. Honour the beauty of the land and the platforms it provides for gathering, creativity, and shared experience.

Dhurrumiri is the holder of stories of celebrations, of reverence, ceremony, and cultural practice. The site should provide spaces for these traditions to continue and evolve - places for performance, song, dance, and dreaming to unfold and be embraced by community. Celebration here also means recognising what can be achieved through a sensitive and respectful approach to place that layers design with cultural intricacies and meaning. Through this, Dhurrumiri becomes not only a Place of gathering but also a living expression of shared achievement and ongoing cultural vitality.



CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

Respect the intrinsic sovereignty of the Worimi people in their lore, stories and culture, and actively involve Worimi people in the process of caring for this culturally significant site, for the benefit of the whole community.

Cultural knowledge, lore and practices belong to the Worimi people, who have the right to decide whether, when and how the deep cultural knowledge linked to this site and its broader landscape is shared.

Aboriginal people have cared for the Country we now call Australia for millennia. It is only fitting that the site be cared for in partnership with those who have cared for it throughout the entirety of human history.



Ecosystem Matrix

This page analyses key systems operating across the site and provides a framework for future design and development.



SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of Place 'refers to the unique character of a place, or the meaning people attribute to it, often a combination of both. It's an umbrella concept encompassing attachment to place, national identity and regional awareness.'

The unique locality shares a common connection with people, throughout history and into the future. Density, scale, pattern, material, sensory, social and cultural identity all contribute. Future operations on this site must maintain, contribute, support and improve upon the Sense of Place; 'Genius Loci'.



COUNTRY

Country encompasses everything. It includes both living and non-living elements. It holds everything within the landscape, including earth, water and sky. Country as well as people, animals, plants, and the stories that connect them.

The Gathang word 'Dhurrumiri' defines this location and landmark sounding near identical to the English translation 'Tomaree'. At SHAC, this is not our story to tell and engagement with the Worimi Elders is essential to deepen one's understanding of this site ensuring the deep connection to this significant place is maintained.



EDUCATIONAL

Education 'connected with or relating to education. It describes something that provides or is related to teaching and learning.'

The landscape and cultural values offer a unique education experience, further educating generations on the importance of story, balance, harmony and ecology. Projects which build on messaging to the existing and new audiences on thinking locally and acting globally should be encouraged.



RESEARCH

Research is the 'careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it.'

Discovery and scientific research is supported locally through DPIRD, NPWS and Universities such as marine habitats, coastal conservations and agricultural/aqua-cultural improvement projects which foster restorative and promotional opportunities.



COMMERCIALLY VIABLE TOURISM

Tourism 'is the business of providing services for people on holiday, like accommodation, entertainment and transportation.'

At the heart of visitations to the Tomaree Head is its climate, topography, coastal waters, vegetation, access to accommodation and scenic amenity. Transport links are limited by road and boat. The site's future must support visitation in an environmentally and economically sustainable way. The Tomaree Head should offer a place to create jobs and grow skills in environmental, hospitality and ecotourism.



AESTHETIC

Aesthetic 'is concerned with beauty and art, and the understanding of beautiful things and aesthetic appreciation of the landscape.'

Form, scale and order are three key principles of aesthetics. Balance, harmony, unity and contrast contribute to visually pleasing cohesive environments. Inspiration and influence can be drawn from existing, natural and built context - giving clues and relationships of value to inform aesthetics. Tomaree has an abundance of topographical, ecological and cultural markers available.



SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable 'means both involving the use of natural resources in a way that doesn't harm the environment and able to continue or be continued for a long time.'

Tomaree is a place of beauty, nature, community and climate. Current and future development must respect this balance to ensure social, political, cultural and environmental elements work together to sustain and not degrade or place the site at risk.



REGENERATIVE

Regenerative refers 'having the effect of making something develop or grow strong again'.

A step beyond simply sustaining good practices is encouraging the development of ideas which give back or regenerate. Tomaree should encourage cleaner, more efficient and less impactful ways of development to deliver timeless functional and aesthetic outcomes.



HYDROLOGY

Hydrology 'is the scientific study of Earth's water - focusing on its movement in relation to land.'

Tomaree, the 'Place of the Rainbow', by its very nature is a place of water, life and journey. Fresh and salt waters nourish the location in plentiful supply. Habitats are sustained and human interaction promoted. Water as it flows down and through the site must be appreciated celebrated, shared and cared for.



ECOLOGICAL

Ecological 'means relating to the interrelationships between living organisms and their environment.'

Tomaree Head exists as an ancient 340+ million-year-old volcanic landform, alongside coastal lowlands, wetlands, dunes, reefs, beaches and forests. The ecology of the region is unique and supports endangered animals and plants within complex ecosystems. The challenge here is to balance the habitats of humans with nature to conserve and sustain these ecosystems in perpetuity.



CULTURAL

Cultural describes 'something related to the way of life, customs, beliefs, and traditions of a particular society or group.'

Tomaree could offer a place for continuous sharing of music, story, dance, food, celebration and remembrance. Potentially including temporary or 'pop-up' opportunities managed through a set of sensitive and respectful measures considering equity, diversity and inclusion.



HERITAGE

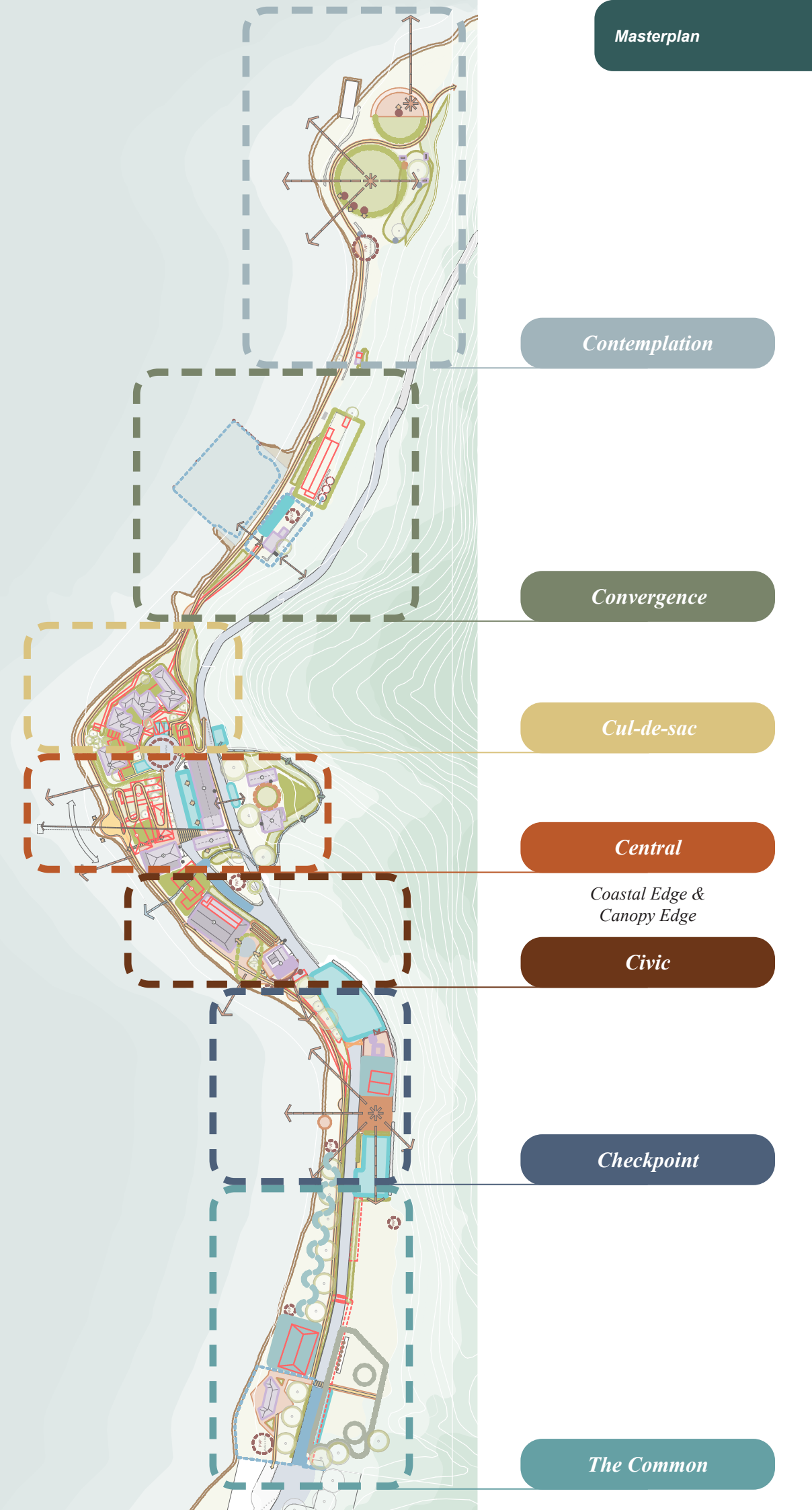
Heritage 'something that is passed down from the past, either through inheritance or tradition and is valued for its historical or cultural significance.'

Aboriginal and European Heritage at Tomaree is well documented and valued. Future development must recognise, respect and respond to these important attributes in a meaningful and ongoing way without tokenism or misappropriation.

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

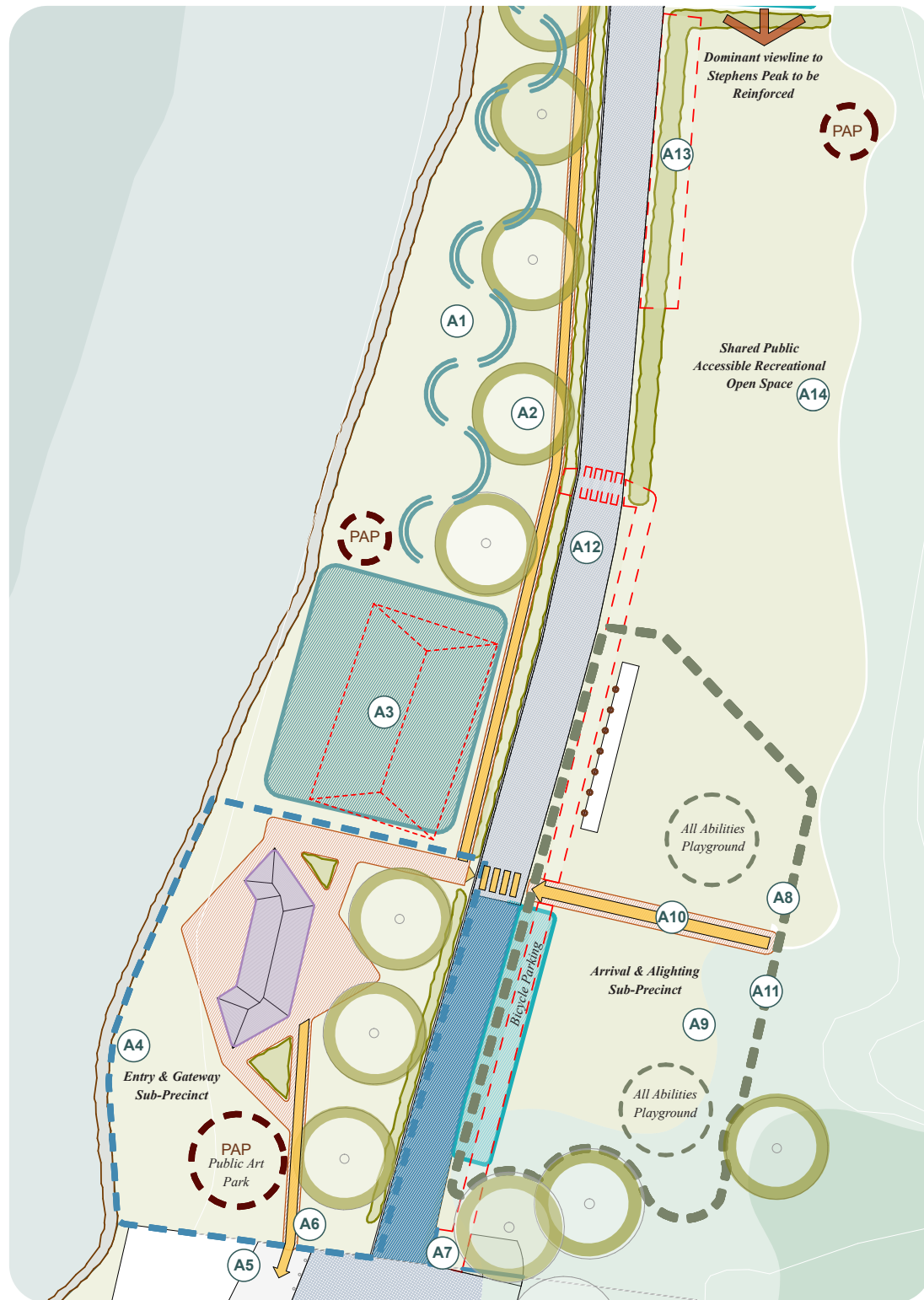
Masterplan

Image Source:
View from Tomaree Head Jack Reading. 2025



The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

A. The Common



A1 Sensitive Foreshore Edge.

- Rebuild and stabilise seawall and native planting + grasses.
- Remove concrete stabilisation attempts.
- Promote smaller gathering spaces, including places to sit and their connection to the full environment.
- Simple furniture, plantings, and places reminiscent of former health care and places of repose.
- Integrated site low-impact stormwater and overland flow drainage strategy.
- Low-glare public lighting integration.
- Removal of wire and log fencing. Replace with integrated planted beds / area
- Rationalise lights, bollards, signs and street furniture.

A2 Inclusion of endemic planting within area to complement plaza and Norfolk Island Pines.

A3 New Town-Square. Waterside Plaza. nom. 20m x 30m (600sqm) of flat open and flexible space. Allowing for:

- Community use and temporary uses.
- Markets and Exhibitions.
- Large vehicle turning and food trucks.
- Maximise expansive views across Port Stephens.
- Potential reuse of pool void for greywater, stormwater retention use.

A4 Entry & Gateway Sub-Precinct- Entryway- Wayfinding and orientation point

- Signboarding and public art start
- Connection to Country orientation
- Connections to historical referencing
- Amenities (Adaptive Reuse / Refurbishment)
- Water and Welcome

A5 A shared transport solution is required between DCJ, Port Stephens Council and NPWS. Refer to page 5806 in the Masterplan document.

A6 Review existing masonry boundary walls for suitability for refurbishment and adaption for new gateway entrance element.

A7 Clear and safe access to the site services, inclusive of fire hydrants, water, gas and power.

A8 Family spaces, with opportunities for picnics, quiet reflection and all abilities play areas.

A9 Arrival and Alighting Sub Precinct.

Low impact on land, vegetation and recreation space. Work in slope, drainage and Country. Soft edges with planting. Low impact retaining wall and embankment remediation at foot of hillside, with planted swale drainage element.

A10 Clear and safe circulation with traffic calming devices, lighting and wayfinding.

A11 Playground and Adventure Park nestled back against hill near shade close to amenities for observation.

A12 Provide new traffic calming, urban and water sensitive pavement treatments with pattern, texture, colour and sustainability

A13 A new landscape separation solution, containing the activities of the recreational space and allowing for traffic to flow seamlessly.

A14 Recreational Open Space Sub-Precinct.

Nom. 100x20m=2000sqm @10sqm pp = 200 people in active open play. This space is therefore a very important flat open space and is limited by intensity + density of use



Project: Walyalup Koor Playspace/SDS



Project: Bilya Marlee School of Indigenous Studies/UDLA



Project: Middleton Beach Foreshore/SDS



Project: The Basin Rottnest/SDS



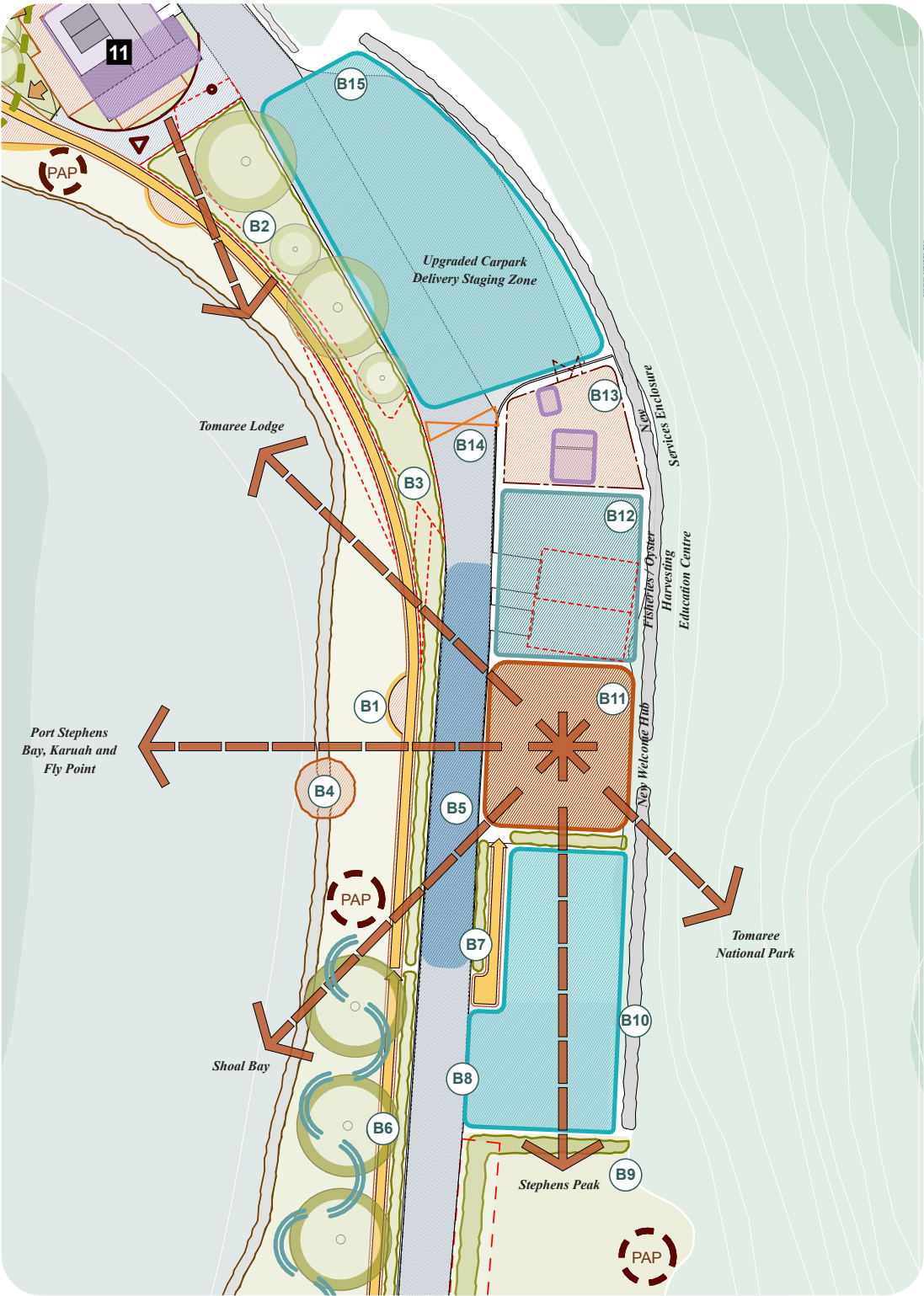
Project: Middleton Beach Foreshore/SDS



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The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

B. Checkpoint



- (B1) Provide a range of dedicated nodal points along path to educate and pause points. Consultation with Worimi on wayfinding and interpretive signage initiatives to be explored.
- (B2) Small pocket native garden with 2 x large Bunya Pines to be protected and integrated with new landscape strategy.
- (B3) Remove dual road access point and relocate separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Refer to the 'Civic' drawing for new vehicle link.
- (B4) Break in seawall to allow equitable beach access to sheltered / sandy beach in low tide. A chance to get your feet wet'.
- (B5) Shared slow traffic calming zone to promote pedestrian friendly movement.
- (B6) Clearly identifiable shared bike and pedestrian pathway along foreshore edge and integrated with landscape solution.
- (B7) Removal of dieback palms and replace with endemic planting.
- (B8) Existing carpark available for accessible parking, shuttle services and short term stay.
- (B9) Dominant framed view of Stephens Peak. Deeply connecting visitors to the whole context of the multiple mountains.
- (B10) Gabion blue stone retaining walls have a limited lifespan. Replace and upgrade using local stone from country and included drainage solutions.
- (B11) A new tourist hub including information centre, public displays, education office, point of sale including, but not limited to NPSW, Worimi, Fisheries / Marine Park, and/or Heritage and Ecology Centre.
- (B12) Potential for DPI 'Fisheries' / Oyster Harvesting Centre to move to the front of the Site, as a strong educational centre to complement the Welcome Hub.
- (B13) Defined site services compound with access off carpark. To be screened and fire-rated.
- (B14) New control point for guests, staff, researchers, service providers and tours.
- (B15) Maintain existing car parking for controlled use by staff, guests and deliveries.



Project: Barangaroo Reserve / PWP Landscape Architecture



Project: BARC/Sam Crawford Architects



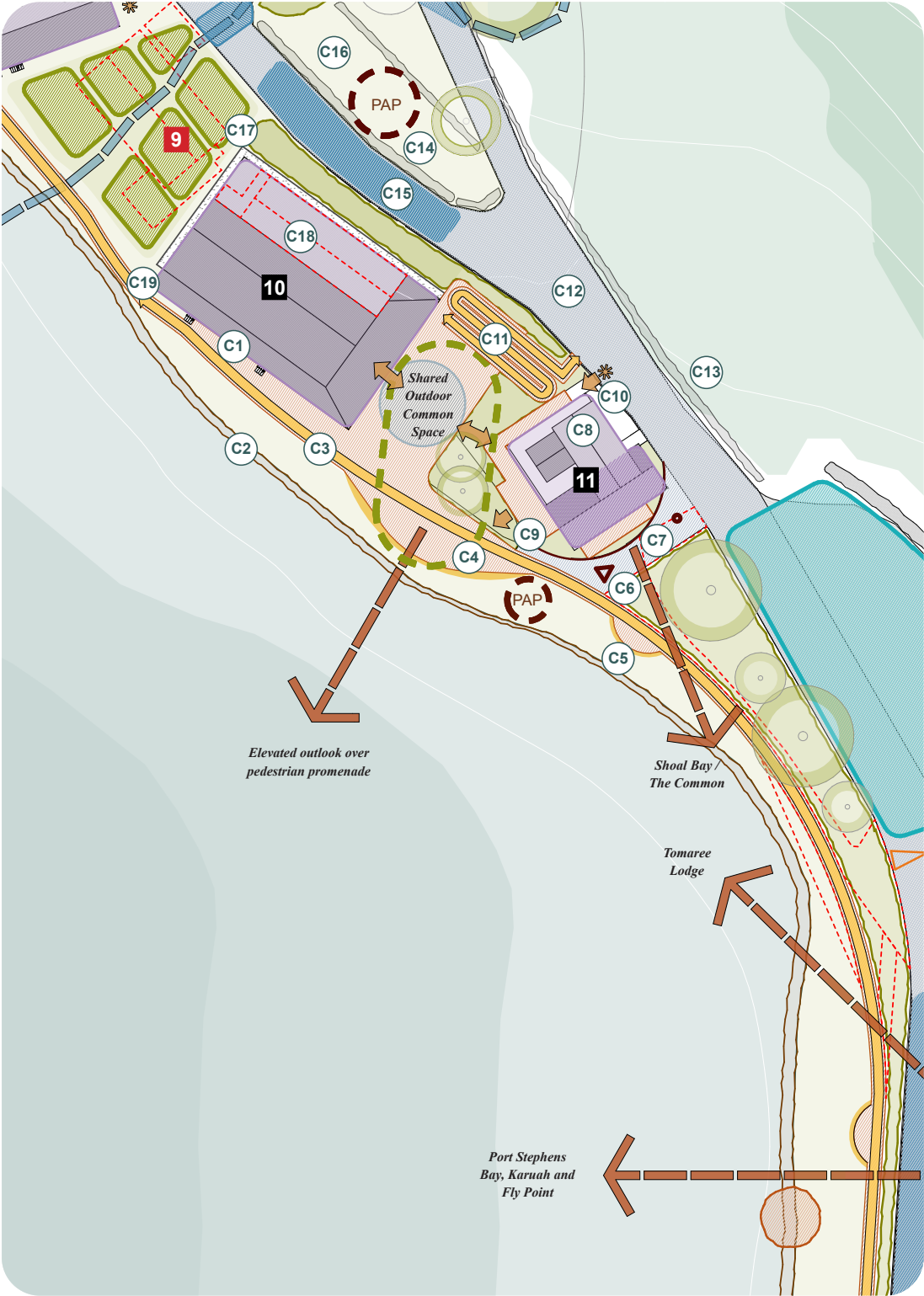
Project: Hurlstone Memorial Reserve Community Centre / Sam Crawford Architects



Project: Barangaroo Reserve / PWP Landscape Architecture

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

C. Civic



- C1 Repair and improve equitable access into the Hall. Open up sides to views and activate the foreshore connection.
- C2 Remove and reinstate damaged and failing seawall. Rectify poor drainage and PVC pipe stormwater systems.
- C3 Delineate clear 'shared' pathway for pedestrians, cyclists and when required for emergency / maintenance vehicles with texture and colour.
- C4 Key activation node between the Building 10 and 11.
- C5 Realign pedestrian walkway to improve safety and soften edges. Integrate with landscape solution.
- C6 Give way signage for vehicles to prioritise pedestrian movement.
- C7 New clear foreshore road access point secured and controlled access road intersection.
 - 'Give-way' to pedestrians
 - Bollard / locked access
 - Available to emergency and delivery vehicles.
- C8 Building 11 has a strong position with connection to 'Common', 'Checkpoint' and 'Civic' areas, long vistas, ideal for soft gathering such as cafe, kiosk / point of sale and bookable rooms.
- C9 Opportunity to add outdoor decking to elevate outlook from 3 sides. Rear access close to carpark and staging area - suitable for deliveries and waste management.
- C10 Publicly accessible building, low in-scale suitable for hospitality, cafe, bookable exhibition space or admin uses. Rear access suitable for deliveries.
- C11 New shaded accessible ramp to public forecourt / breakout space.
- C12 Rationalise all site services within the road reserve and resurface.
- C13 Protect and signpost heritage drainage culvert system and hand made low stone walls.
- C14 Opportunity for activating the park with public art, education elements and gathering spaces.
- C15 Reduce vehicle access to create a quieter pedestrian village zone.
- C16 Refurbish the pocket park to highlight the former use as a garrison parade ground and hospital garden terraces incorporate stone walls in future design.
- C17 New retaining wall solution to resolve level change and supply structure stability to the Hall.
- C18 Improve hall roof following the removal of the first floor structure. Strengthen to include sustainable elements.
- C19 Large open plan flexible hall space, suitable for a public bookable space, group gathering, displays and workshops.

BUILT FORM + POTENTIAL USE

- 10 Quarterdeck**
Adaptive Reuse and Repair
- Offices
 - Art Gallery / Exhibition Area / Museum
 - Conference / Meeting Space
 - Town Hall Space

- 11 Galleon's Rest**
Adaptive Reuse and Repair
- Shop / Space for Sale of Goods
 - Office Space
 - Small Arts Venue



Project: Spinifex Hill Project/Officer Woods



Project: South Melbourne Life Saving Club /Jackson Clements Burrow



Project: Balfour Street Park / Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture



Project: OneNinety/SDS



Project: Kelmscott Train Station/SDS

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

D(i). Central Celebration



- D1 Visual and physical connection to the port. Creation of shared public terraces with activated edges. Allow for long vistas deep into the site.
- D2 Creation of a new tiered outdoor public space. Arrival by footpath, roadway or jetty to offers split mode transport options. Ideal for markets, hospitality, community gathering, amphitheatre for music, dance, drama, concerts or entertainment.
- D3 Following the removal of Yachtsman's Rest, establish a terraced landscape and allow for the cascading of water.
- D4 'Forest to Foreshore' connection with a natural drainage swale system, water polishing, ecologically sustainable and an education opportunity.
- D5 Building 12 has limited potential for public interface - limited views or outlook. It has an elevated central location that can support nearby uses and can activate the nearby pocket park through the lower storage level.
- D6 Opportunity for a new flexible outdoor plaza spaces, to service food and beverage, exhibition and site visits.
- D7 Building 13 has substantial concrete framed floors and structure. Subject to engineers review it has potential for multi commercial uses such as a function centre, hospitality, education, accommodation and exhibition or research. Well serviced with both 'public' and 'back of house' service zones. It has significant elevation with views and outlook in all directions.
- D8 Pedestrianised safe low traffic area.
- D9 Building 5 is contaminated with asbestos and is also subject to water damage. To be removed. The available space to be part of a new terraced landscape solution. See D10.
- D10 New terraced landscape solution.
- D11 Strengthen and repair existing seawall where isolated concrete patching has failed. Potential for ramp and lift access.
- D12 Opportunity to reinstate original small craft transport jetty. Small vessel (water taxi) arrival by jetty with equitable outdoor landscape access solution has the potential to link all levels of the site. Subject to seagrasses and seabed surveys, depths and ecologically sensitive solutions. (This is not within of the site boundary and is a future extension opportunity).

BUILT FORM + POTENTIAL USE

8 **Dolphin Cove**
Adaptive Reuse and Repair

- Shop / Sale of goods
- Localised Offices
- Gallery / Exhibition Space
- Research / Learning Space

12 **The Bridge**
Adaptive Reuse and Repair

- Localised Offices
- Art Gallery / Exhibition Space / Historical Studies
- Research / Learning Space
- Education / PhD Student Offices

13 **Administration & Accommodation**
Adaptive Reuse and Repair

- Function Centre
- Accommodation
- Shop / Sale of goods
- Localised Offices
- Research / Learning Space



Project: Urban Design / Hassell



Project: Glebe Foreshore Walk / JMD Design



Project: Sub Base Platypus /Aspect Studios



Project: Sub Base Platypus /Aspect Studios



Project: Tweed Heads Promenade/Aspect Studios

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

D(ii). Central Canopy



- D13 Three large Norfolk Island Pines define the front edge of the upper terrace spaces. To be protected from destabilisation or disturbance to roots.
- D14 Opportunity to improve rainwater run off and overland flow whilst connecting to the 'forest to the foreshore'.
- D15 Former officers quarters is a traditional domestic residential house typology. Ideally suited for small offices, accommodation, teaching or display. Good rear yard connectivity to small kitchenette and amenities. Ideal to support a group of collaborative people needing a shared space or office with low delivery or servicing needs.
- D16 A wonderful opportunity exists to connect into the bush, to study and to appreciate the endemic flora and fauna and hydrology.
- D17 Deeply connected outdoor terraced landscaped spaces. Ideal for landscape seed bank, growing root stock, landcare equipment and educational spaces. A natural amphitheatre for teaching and learning, small performances, connection to Country and deep site immersion.
- D18 Central outdoor gathering space for small or medium group sizes. Could benefit from weather protection or canopy.
- D19 Former Officers Mess Hall. Single storey with limited vehicle or pedestrian equitable access. Ideal for refurbishment for workshop, teaching, makers space, small group gathering and making space.
- D20 Overhead link between buildings 13 and 14/15.
- D21 An opportunity exists for small vehicle delivery and turning bay to service Buildings 12,13,14 and 15.
- D22 Rear service access to Building 13 and 12 is viable from Gun Emplacement Road. Upgrade of existing ramps and covered circulation is needed with possible improvements by including a lift for greater equitable access.



Project: Wangun Amphitheatre/Equity Office



Project: Social Infrastructure / Breathe Architects



Project: Shortland Social Spaces / Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture



Project: Secret Gardens/CO-Architecture



Project: West Bund Waterfront Public Realm / Hassell

BUILT FORM + POTENTIAL USE

14 **Clippers Rest Cottage** Adaptive Reuse and Repair

- Localised Offices
- Workshop / Making Spaces
- Teaching / Research Space

15 **Ketch Loft** Adaptive Reuse and Repair

- Small Offices
- Accommodation
- Teaching
- Display / Exhibition Space



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The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

E. Cul-de-sac



- E1 Existing Norfolk Island Pine and scattered Frangipanis shall form the base for a new landscape solution together with the rationalisation of entry points, pathways, ramps and stairs to simplify and improve aesthetics.
- E2 A continuation of the 'Public Art Park' journey. An effective way to activate the space and create a narrative when transversing the site.
- E3 Remove carport structures and replace with a new accessible connection to the upper portion of the site. Include landscaping and drainage system.
- E4 Emergency vehicle parking and turning point.
- E5 Consideration must be given to streamlined services and compounds for air conditioning condensers, hot water systems, fire hose reels and sprinkler stop valve cabinets.
- E6 Re-establish native planting new ramp to allow for a cohesive and seamless change to the bush.
- E7 A new ramped pathway to improve equitable access to the northern end of the site and to remain away from the edge of Building 01.
- E8 Moment of rest and contemplation. New bench seating and signage.
- E9 New coastal walk.
- E10 Degraded seawall, repair and rectification work required.
- E11 A new unified landscape solution with a range of public, semi public and private outdoor spaces and gardens.
- E12 New bank of landscaping to provide sanctuary and privacy for cabins from onlooking pedestrian traffic.
- E13 Six Cabbage Tree Palms. Provide a slender landscape node at this point.
- E14 Moment of rest and contemplation. New bench seating and signage.
- E15 New bank of landscaping to provide sanctuary and privacy for cabins from onlooking pedestrian traffic.

BUILT FORM + POTENTIAL USE

- | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| 1 | The Helm
Adaptive Reuse and Repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">OfficeGuest HouseSmall Gallery/Studio Residence | 4 | Spinnaker Lodge
Adaptive Reuse and Repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">OfficeGuest HouseSmall Gallery/Studio Residence |
| 2 | Star Fish Lodge
Adaptive Reuse and Repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">OfficeGuest HouseSmall Gallery/Studio Residence | 5 | Mariners Cottage
Adaptive Reuse and Repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">OfficeGuest HouseSmall Gallery/Studio Residence |



Project: Anne Street Garden Villas/Anna O'Gorman Architects



Project: The Cottage School/Taylor & Hinds Architects



Project: Australian PlantBank/BVN



Project: Floating House / Conrad Gargett

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

F. Convergence



- F1 Timber retaining wall and concrete path on incline with galvanised handrail needs repair and stabilisation. Make compliant and easily accessible for users and offer a more aesthetic approach as part of an integrated landscape solution.
- F2 Short link to National Park Road and walking trails if needed (to be coordinated with NPWS).
- F3 Upgrade amenities for public use including the picnic and BBQ shelter. Activate the space with new, functional and accessible facilities as part of a site sensitive solution.
- F4 Seawater supply pump and line with water storage and tanks behind shed. If Fisheries remain use this as an education tool, to inform visitors on the process and make it visually appealing.
- F5 Cool rooms in compound hardstand, with a fence enclosure. If Fisheries remain in this location, replace the fence with a pattern mural or art piece which reflects the native surrounds.
- F6 New picnic bench and shelter. Existing gabion wall is to be removed and replace with landscape battening.
- F7 If DPI Fisheries remain in this location there is a strong opportunity to create public visibility and provide an interactive interface. Alternatively, if Fisheries move to the 'Checkpoint' precinct. This space is to become a landscape recreation area.
- F8 Existing street lights - there are a series of mis-match lights across site. A new uniform lighting layout for continuity and to be ecologically sensitive, low glare and part of electronic wayfinding solution.
- F9 Long, organic and landscape imagined tiered seating and gathering space between the promenade and the picnic terrace.
- F10 Existing remnants of historic bathing enclosure to be protected.
- F11 Opportunity to reinstate Harbour Ocean Baths enclosure. Allowing visitors to connect with land, sea and sky. (This is not within of the site boundary and is a future extension opportunity).



Project: Pirrama Park / Aspect Studios



Project: Centennial Park / Lahznimmo



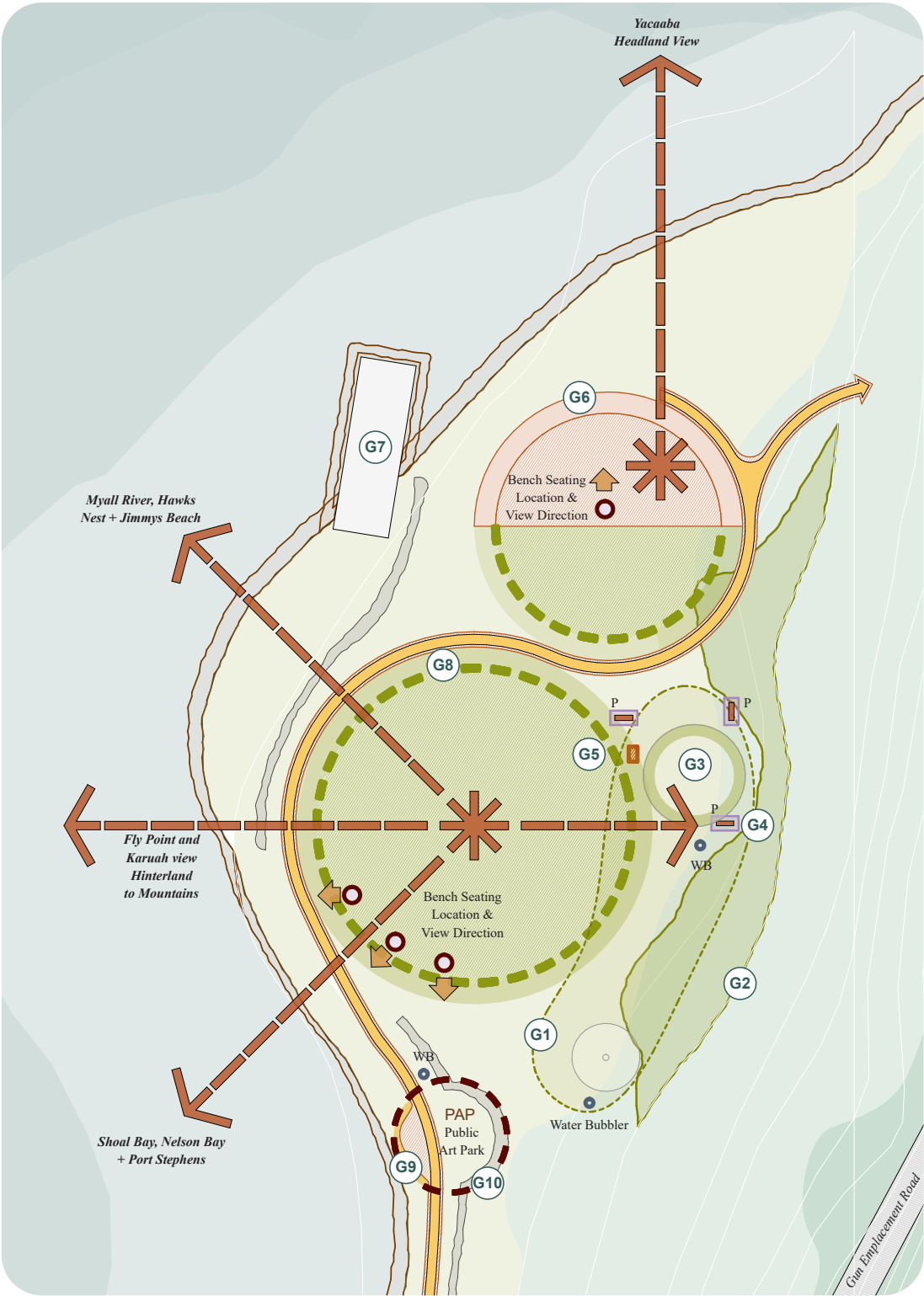
Project: Shelly Park Ocean Pool



Project: Hurlstone Memorial Reserve Community Centre/Sam Crawford Architects

The Masterplan for the renewal of Tomaree Lodge

G. Contemplation



- G1 Existing raised earth terrace. Ideal for outdoor stage or place to address groups.
- G2 Revegetation within this location.
- G3 Single Norfolk Island Pine in the backdrop of this space to be retained and included as part of an integrated landscape solution.
- G4 New picnic bench to rest spots.
- G5 Memorial plaque to Hospital Staff, to be retained and located appropriately.
- G6 An inground Indigenous Interpretation Piece about Place and Direction. A ground plane art piece.
- G7 Educational signage describing historical artefact and significance for the torpedo Tube.
- G8 Low impact public gathering space for community and private functions including memorials, weddings, family and fundraising events. Power available in this location.
- G9 Smaller personal stopping moments to site quietly and reflect across long views.
- G10 Small art park and wayfinding and signage locations.

Note: Lighting across the site should be considered and of low impact. The site would benefit from small downward lighting that is sensor operated and does not disturb the local wildlife. Refer to specific state lighting guidelines.

Note: There will be a connection point to the Tomaree Walk, linking to Tomaree National Park and the historic elements and back to Shoal Bay. This will be within NPWS domain but First Nations consultation required to determine an appropriate connection to Tomaree

Note: Across the site there is to be a consistent storytelling narrative displayed through signage and wayfinding. This is to be a collaborative process with Worimi community for all signage to be reimaged.



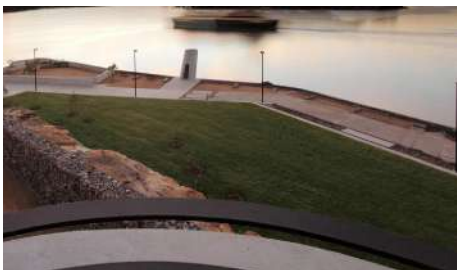
Project: Bendigo Botanic Garden/TLC



Project: The Drying Green/McGregor Coxall



Project: Bradleys Head to Chowder Bay Walk/National Parks NSW



Project: Ballast Point Park/McGregor Coxall



Project: Hassett Park/Hill Thalys Architecture + Urban Projects + Jane Irwin

A Place for all People

Dhurrumiri presents a unique opportunity to create a place that honours cultural heritage, fosters creativity, and drives sustainable social and economic outcomes. Grounded in the knowledge systems and values of local communities and Worimi people, this vision integrates arts and culture, education, tourism, and heritage interpretation to celebrate identity and connection to Country. Through collaborative partnerships, inclusive design, and ongoing engagement, Dhurrumiri will become a dynamic hub for cultural expression, learning, and innovation, supporting local talent, attracting investment, and shaping a future that is respectful, resilient, and community-driven.

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Meg Reading, 2025



Image Source:
1. Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council Website
2. Create NSW Website (Gimbay Gatigaan, Curious Legends, Photo Mick Ross)
3. Australian War Memorial
4. Destination NSW
5. SHAC

INDIGENOUS VOICES & GROUPS

The future vision for Dhurrumiri is to embed the knowledge systems, stories, and cultural values of the Worimi people with an ongoing connection to Country. Through conversations with First Nations, Dhurrumiri is envisioned to support self-determined cultural expression, ceremony, education, and community engagement. It will foster intergenerational knowledge sharing through arts, language, and learning in place, while genuine, ongoing engagement ensures the site evolves in a way that honours Country and celebrates First Nations leadership for generations to come.

ARTS & CULTURE

Dhurrumiri is envisioned as a vibrant hub for cultural and performative celebrations, a space for community gathering, artistic expression, and innovation. Tomaree can become a flagship destination within Port Stephens that showcases the richness of local arts, screen, and cultural sectors. The precincts can and will offer cultural and educational experiences that attract investment, nurture local talent, and draw visitors, all while honouring the unique identity of the place and its community.

MUSEUM & HERITAGE GROUPS

Tomaree is a place of deep significance for both Aboriginal and European histories, and these stories should be interpreted in consultation with cultural knowledge holders. The precinct's existing buildings and spaces offer opportunities to showcase local collections and narratives in meaningful, contextual settings, including displays that reflect its wartime role during World War II. By integrating these stories, Tomaree can honour its layered heritage while creating engaging cultural experiences for the community and visitors alike.

TOURISM & INDUSTRY

Dhurrumiri presents an opportunity to build a place-based economy grounded in sustainable tourism, hospitality, accommodation, conservation, and community wellbeing. The precincts can support diverse uses, from ecotourism and education to conservation-based employment, creating jobs, nurturing local talent, and attracting investment. Future operations offer a living laboratory for skills-based learning, social enterprise, and hands-on business training, integrating workforce development with tourism and cultural identity. Fostering economic growth and community prosperity.

FORMER RESIDENTS

Tomaree Lodge holds deep meaning for former residents, their families, and the broader community, as places once used as institutions are powerful holders of memory. The site has the potential to become a Site of Conscience, honouring lived experiences through dialogue, reflection, and storytelling, while serving as an exemplar of sensitive renewal. By acknowledging the past and reimagining a future centred on truth, community, and healing, Tomaree Lodge can transform its legacy into a source of learning and hope.

Tomaree as a Cultural Landscape

“Most cultural landscapes are living landscapes where changes over time result in a montage effect or series of layers through time, each layer able to tell us a human story.

They combine elements of space and time, and represent political as well as social and cultural constructs.

As they have evolved over time, and as human activity has changed, they have acquired many layers of meaning that can be analysed through historical, archaeological, geographical and sociological study”

In the case of Tomaree and Yacaaba, these sites share characteristics and values of a cultural landscape. We therefore find there is a strong correlation between the values that make up a Cultural Landscape and the natural beauty, cultural value and domestic uses at Tomaree. We therefore suggest these values are celebrated and employed as a foundational framework for assessing future proposals on this site of Tomaree Head.

"We can reflect on similar management systems for cultural landscapes and see Tomaree through a new lens, one of equal landscape and human interaction in harmony"

SENSE OF PLACE

As an extension of A Sense of Place: Cultural Landscapes are living records of dynamic interactions between people, place, and time. Recognised by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre, and the Australia ICOMOS — these landscapes embody values, knowledge systems, and lived experiences of communities both past and present.

Cultural landscapes are not just about the scenic quality or background of the site but represent an integrated understanding of identity, heritage, and the ongoing expression of culture.

Cultural landscapes are valued for their ability to:

- Reflect the evolution of settlement patterns, land use, and societies;
- Hold stories, myths, and spiritual connections;
- Showcase aesthetic, technological, and design achievements;
- Demonstrate sustainable management of natural resources over

TYPES OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Australia ICOMOS identifies three main types of cultural landscapes:

- Designed Landscapes** - created intentionally such as gardens, parks, garden suburbs, city landscapes, ornamental lakes, water storages or campuses.
- Evolved Landscapes** - display a system of evolved landuse in their form and features. They may be ‘relict’ such as former mining or rural landscapes. They may be ‘continuing’ such as modern active farms, vineyards, plantations or mines.
- Associative Landscapes** - that represent religious, artistic, sacred or other cultural associations to individuals or communities.

This is in alignment with the World Heritage Convention - in which became the first legal instrument to recognise and protect cultural landscapes, created in 1992. These landscapes are classified into three main categories:

- (1) Clearly defined landscapes designed and created intentionally by man.
- (2) Organically evolved landscapes, classified as either:
 - 2a - a relict (or fossil) in which the evolutionary process has ended
 - 2b - a continuing landscape (active social role in contemporary society - and associated with traditional)
- (3) Associative cultural landscapes, listed on the world heritage list by virtue of powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element.

The NPWS has prepared a practical guide for the management of cultural heritage and landscapes within parks, titled ‘Cultural Landscapes’ 2010. The guide outlines a cultural landscape approach, offering a framework for identifying and managing both the tangible and intangible values embedded in places of significance.

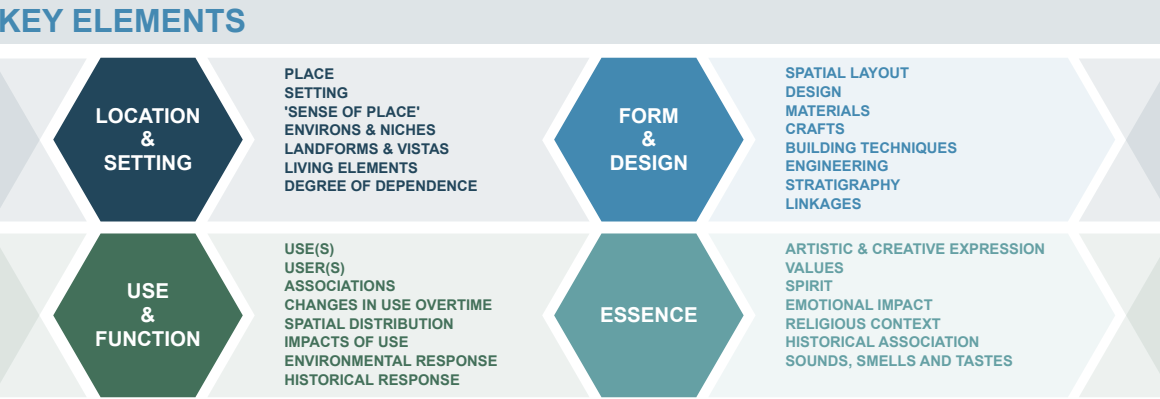


Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Jack Reading. 2025

Education in Place

Dhurrumiri is envisioned as a place for the people - a living cultural and ecological landscape that serves as a vision of education, wellbeing, research, justice, and climate action. Anchored in purpose and guided by a deep respect for Country and Community, Dhurrumiri can be more than a site and can be a legacy for future generations.

As the site owner, the Department of Communities and Justice brings a commitment to quality of life and systemic equity. The vision begins with the values of belonging, education, shelter, and health in communities, followed by equity, diversity, and inclusion in justice.

*The NSW Government has invited us to dream bold - and to embed **Connection and Community** as guiding principles, and to meet the evolving and intergenerational needs of Port Stephens through a place that uplifts youth, celebrates identity, and cultivates resilience. At its heart, Dhurrumiri will sustain a Cultural Landscape - a place of ongoing meaning for future generations, that can be supported by neighbouring agencies including but not limited to NPWS and DPI Fisheries.*

This place acknowledges that change is constant, and always will be.

Dhurrumiri recognises the many layers of use and significance the site holds and continues to hold:

- 1

part of a cultural landscape of immense significance for Worimi.
- 2

a significant site in Australia's military history and important place for local heritage.
- 3

as a former institution for people with disability.

What's Next? New beginnings including education, research, tourism, and nature-based recreation.

Education of Sustainability & Future

Education at Dhurrumiri will be holistic, inclusive, and future-facing. Opportunities may span:

- University-led research initiatives, including postgraduate and PhD cohorts;
- Integration into primary and secondary school curricula through visitation;
- Site based bespoke and culturally-informed programs such as:

- An Aboriginal Centre of Education Excellence;
- An Environmental Centre of Excellence;
- A Boarding or Satellite School, including potential exchange programs.
- A NSW Environmental Education Centre (EEC)

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Justin Hamilton. 2025

Our Discovery

Throughout the development of this masterplan, we have learnt from and deepened our understanding of this Place — forming a process of discovery. Through its unique qualities and attributes, the site has revealed its capabilities, defining characteristics, and, most importantly, the opportunities it can support. This understanding now informs the next steps beyond this guiding document, shaping a path forward for future development, design professionals, and community collaboration.

The masterplan is not an endpoint, but a foundation - a launchpad for ongoing collaboration, action, and development. The next phase is about deepening relationships, progressing site readiness, and enabling the long-term vision to take shape, and become reality.

It is important that the relationships strengthened throughout this masterplan phase are nurtured and included in ongoing consultation that will inform the future evolution of the site.



A PLACE OF CULTURE & COMMUNITY

- Open Recreation Space
- Space for Continuing Cultural Practices
- Wayfinding and Signage
- Cultural and History Tours
- Site of Conscience
- Cultural Practices and Learning
- Art, Performance and Creative Expression
- Sense of Arrival

A PLACE OF TOURISM

- A Cultural Landscape
- Walking, Hiking & Sightseeing
- Historical & Ecological
- Local & International
- Revenue and Return on Investment
- Safety, Inclusion & Accessibility

A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY

- Employment
- Micro-Industry and Social Enterprise
- Alternative Transport Strategy
- Creative Spaces and Artists in Residence

A PLACE OF RESEARCH

- Marine Studies
- Environment Studies
- Historical Studies
- Cultural Studies
- Social Justice Studies

A PLACE OF EDUCATION

- Environmental Education Centre of Excellence
- University Research & PhD Students
- Primary & Secondary Curriculum
- Aboriginal Centre of Excellence
- Boarding or Satellite School or Exchange Programmes

A PLACE OF RETREAT & RECREATION

- Short-Stay Accommodation
- Residential Retreat Programs
- Engagement with Tomaree National Park

Image Source:
Tomaree Lodge, Justin Hamilton 2025

