

# 2015

## Warners Bay Town Centre Planning Framework



"I guess there is this very difficult tradition, which comes from the way we teach architecture and planning, the idea that one person can solve everything. We even have this term, the 'master plan', like I'm going to 'do' the master plan which will answer all the questions. And of course we know, it's impossible. Cities are unbelievably complex, so even the idea of a master plan is really crazy.

All we can do is make a kind of framework...a very robust framework, which allows life to take place. One thing I can be sure about, in ten years, twenty years, fifty years, one hundred years, human beings will be more or less the same size, our senses will work more or less in the same way, we'll probably enjoy meeting each other in the same way we enjoy meeting each other today — just as happy about handshakes and hugs and flirting glimpses. I don't believe we can plan for things. I don't think, by me drawing a line, I can make things happen, I can't force anybody to do anything, or be anyone. But we can make invitations. We can invite people to walk. We can invite people to sit, to stay. Invitations to a better every day, a better way to cross the street, a better way to wait for the bus, a better way to live your life. That's all we can do."

David Sim | Gehl Architects | *The Human Scale*, 2012

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## Version History

Version No.	Date	Details/Comments
A	August 2014	Draft for public exhibition
B	May 2015	Revision based on public exhibition feedback. Submitted to Council for adoption
C	11 May 2015	Adopted by Council

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Draft Warners Bay Town Centre Planning Framework (the Framework) has been prepared following three extensive periods of community consultation regarding the previous versions of the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan in 2012. Community feedback raised issues with this draft Area Plan, which lead to Council resolving to defer the adoption of the draft Area Plan and request further community engagement to be undertaken.

The Framework has also been prepared to provide a holistic approach to the growth and change of the Warners Bay Town Centre based on research, community feedback and specialist advice. The Framework provides an analysis of various matters pertaining to the centre and its future.

### Community Engagement

The two separate periods of community engagement have highlighted the main areas of interest for the community. The feedback received during the August to September 2013 and September to October 2014 consultation is collated in the Community Engagement Report (Appendix 1) and provides a comprehensive understanding of the community's thoughts and opinions about Warners Bay and its future.

### **August to September 2013 - community engagement**

A series of surveys, workshops and drop in meetings were undertaken. The key outcomes from the first survey are:

- The main reasons people visit Warners bay is for recreation/social purposes and for shopping. Results show 48.5% of respondents drove a car when visiting the centre while 51.5% of respondents used active travel modes (walk, cycle or public transport) to get to the town centre.
- The community is divided on whether Warners Bay needs another supermarket, but most agree they do not want to see Warners Bay have a shopping centre like Charlestown or Glendale.
- The majority of respondents are supportive of people living in the Town Centre however, the buildings must be of high quality, well planned, and not high-rise. More accommodation and tourist facilities in the Town Centre were also identified as a future need.
- Close to 30% of respondents believe that Warners Bay would be easier to visit if there were more pedestrian facilities (such as footpaths, crossings, refuges) and improved public transport.
- Nearly 50% of respondents identify that car parking needs to be addressed in the future.

Regarding the visual preference survey:

- The majority of respondents preferred that car parking set up was parallel parking adjacent to a wide footpath with cafes and outdoor dining.
- The most popular building appearance contained small-scale frontages, balconies, a variety of façade detail and vertical windows and doors.
- As a general building height scenario for the town centre, 16% supported heights up to eight storeys; 24% supported heights up to six storeys; 33% supported heights up to four storeys; and 27% supported heights up to two storeys.
- More than 70% of responses supported building heights the same as, or more than, currently permitted in locations such as, land south of King Street, land east of Charles Street, and in the street block bounded by Lake, John, King and Charles Streets.

- Similarly, more than 70% of responses voted for building heights the same as, or less than, currently permitted on the car park on John Street and land fronting The Esplanade between Lake and King Streets.

Regarding the online interactive map:

- Foreshore related comments were the most common (18.6%), with people providing a range of ideas to improve and make better use of the foreshore.
- Traffic related comments (16.6%) included suggestions such as closing The Esplanade to traffic or changing its speed limit, allowing a right turn from John Street into King Street, and installing traffic lights at the intersection of Lake Street and The Esplanade.
- Town Centre appearance/character related comments (14.6%), reinforced that the community associates the character of the centre with its location adjacent to the Lake, and that linking the centre with the foreshore and providing more opportunities for a lifestyle precinct with outdoor dining, cafes and restaurants, is desirable.
- The majority of car parking related comments (14.2%) called for maintaining or increasing, perhaps with a multi-level car park, the number of car parks in the Town Centre.
- Building Scale/Form/Appearance related comments (10.3%) acknowledged that any development needs to be high quality and architecturally diverse. Some comments indicated support for buildings up to eight-storeys, but these higher buildings need to be located away from The Esplanade or south of King Street. There was also a strong indication that buildings up to three-storeys across the centre were acceptable.

### September to October 2014 public exhibition

Council received 68 submissions – two from Government agencies, eight from Council departments and 58 public submissions. Each submission was categorised based on the issues that were raised in the submission. Thirteen key themes were raised in submissions including:

- Building height – generally across the centre
- Car parking
- Building height on the John Street Car park
- Town centre character
- Traffic and intersections
- Esplanade footpath upgrade
- Plaza on John Street
- Business employment and residential mix
- Consultation
- Cycling and public transport
- Impacts during construction
- Building design and appearance
- Foreshore

Consideration of the submissions resulted in changes to the suite of planning documents.

### Planning, Economic and Social Context

The relevant plans and strategies applicable to the future of Warners Bay Town Centre were analysed. The demographic, social, retail and economic drivers for change and trends were also identified and their influence on the future of the town centre considered. Key amongst these are:

- A growing and aging population,
- Increasing urbanisation,
- Changing household size and structure,

- Housing supply and affordability,
- Policy focus on urban containment, mixed-use town centre development and transit oriented development,
- Increasing median weekly household income,
- Changing employment categories,
- Anticipated increase demand for commercial and retail floor space, and
- Changing demand for town centre living.

### Town Centre Strategies

The Framework identifies a number of strategies, plans or concepts that will deliver a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future for the town centre, including:

#### *Increasing Active Transport and Managing Parking*

The Town Centre Framework has a clear goal to foster a pedestrian friendly town centre, and to facilitate more walking and cycling transport to the centre. The supply of free parking might be seen as a significant subsidy that makes driving less expensive than it should be, and skews travel choices away from walking, cycling and public transport.

Currently, planning controls identify minimum parking requirements to meet the peak demand for each land use, without considering:

- the cost of providing the required parking spaces,
- the loss of potential retail, office or residential floor space,
- the potential to share each space between different users of the centre at different times of the day.

The Framework includes strategies for:

- improved walking and cycling paths and facilities,
- improved bus facilities,
- setting a maximum on-site parking rate for development,
- maximising the number of parking spaces that can be occupied at different times of the day by different town centre users,
- integrating multi-level town parking across several new developments, and
- reducing the minimum on-site parking requirements for development in the core area

#### Improving Vehicle Circulation

The key transport and traffic changes include:

- Replacing roundabouts with traffic signals at the King Street and Lake Street intersections with The Esplanade.
- Replacing angle parking with parallel parking to support footpath dining along The Esplanade.
- Replacing the mid-block pedestrian lights with a pedestrian refuge on The Esplanade.
- Upgrades to intersections at John/King Streets and Charles/King Streets to facilitate all turning movements.
- Signalise the intersections of Lake/John Streets and Lake/Charles Streets.
- Make Lymington Way a two- way street



## *Economic Benefit of Improvements to Streets and Public Places*

The Framework highlights recent research showing that investment in quality public space (and associated walking and cycle connections) is responsible for a range of economic benefits, including:

- direct increases in town centre retail trade,
- indirect benefits through retail and office rents, higher occupancy rates, property values and investment,
- changes in employment opportunities through rising fortunes of retail and services in a centre,
- more walking and cycling, increasing fitness and reducing public health costs,
- environmental improvements such as better air quality, noise reduction, better outdoor amenity, and fuel savings,
- more social interactions and community cohesion, less social isolation, and
- household savings associated with lower vehicle ownership and usage.

In addition for areas that develop pedestrian based trade people walking or cycling not only make up a much larger proportion of the customer base, they spend more per month in non-supermarket businesses than people arriving by car.



Figure i - Integration of public space with walking and cycle transport and vehicle circulation

### *Market Square and Upgrade to The Esplanade café strip*

Two major areas for improvement for the public domain are upgrades to the Esplanade footpath trading area and a new public plaza

The southern part of the John Street car park is identified for a Market Square. This concept involves closing a section of Postmans Lane to vehicles and will provide a sheltered, sunny pedestrian area. The Market Square will provide a venue for community events, small markets, outdoor trading and pedestrian

social space. Its location is at the junction point for the pedestrian routes to Charles Street, The Esplanade, King Street and Lake Street.

The Esplanade similarly has the potential to become a successful, active and high amenity trading strip for boutique retail, cafes, restaurants, take away food and footpath dining.

Suggested footpath improvements to support trading and improve amenity include:

- parallel parking to buffer footpath diners from traffic,
- a wider footpath with level platforms for more outdoor café trade, and
- planters to provide greenery and divide lease areas.



Figure ii - Potential for high quality footpath dining terraces on The Esplanade

### *Dress Circle Redevelopment and Town Parking*

Town Parking could be distributed over three larger sites to replace existing parking and cater to future re-development.

The Dress Circle fronting The Esplanade is identified as the as the premier town centre frontage for café trading, small ground floor shops, with offices and residential apartments and visitor accommodation above. While the Dress Circle sites do not have the capacity to redevelop with parking on-site parking the John Street car park would be a satisfactory location for parking to service Dress Circle apartments .





## Principles for Planning Controls

### *Building Height*

This Framework establishes the following principles for building height to take into account the topographic setting, the planning objectives for vibrant town centres, community feedback, development economics and the qualities of human scale development:

1. Ensure that buildings are lower than the treed ridgeline to the north-east when viewed from the lake.
2. Ensure that building heights allow a connection between the building occupants and people in the street.
3. Ensure that building height and setbacks maintain sun access to public plaza
4. Establish consistent street wall height on each street that provides a comfortable sense of enclosure.
5. Setback the levels above the street wall to reduce building bulk and scale and maintain open sky view.
6. Maximise the potential of Dress Circle sites because they can deliver the highest amenity retail, office and residential floor space in the centre.
7. Maximise the use of basement level parking to reduce building bulk and height.
8. Provide a transition of height between lower scale residential development and higher buildings.
9. Locate higher buildings on larger sites to encourage investment and development of higher quality buildings and associated improvements to public domain.
10. Ensure that building heights are suitable to enable feasible development to occur when market conditions are favourable.

The proposed building heights reflect these principles and are illustrated below.

### *Building design – getting good quality buildings*

The Framework establishes detailed principles for building design. The principles set out the essential building elements based on community feedback about village character, and the intention to deliver buildings that are interesting and comfortable for pedestrians. The character elements include:

- awnings on high activity frontages.
- small scale shop fronts.
- vertical proportions for facades, windows, and doors.
- setback of upper levels.
- Facades with good quality detailing of balconies, balustrades, screening, louvres, awnings, articulation, mouldings and other smaller elements.

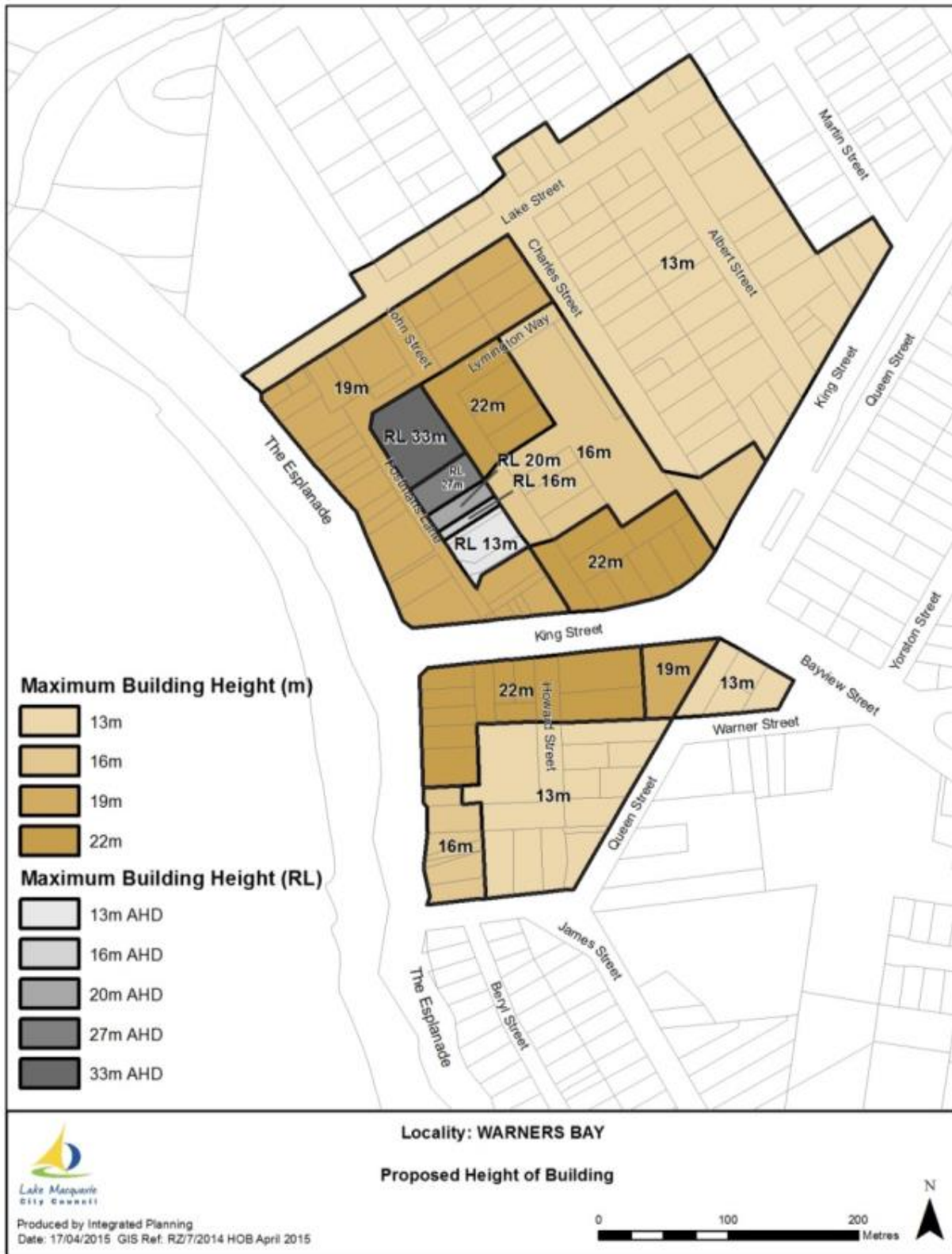


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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Council has exhibited the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan on two previous occasions. Strong community interest was shown during each exhibition period. Council resolved in June 2013 to undertake further community engagement. The community engagement undertaken in August and September 2013 along with this draft Warners Bay Town Centre Planning Framework (the Framework) seeks to establish a positive strategic direction for the growth and development of the Warners Bay Town Centre.

The Framework seeks to provide a long-term direction for development and change that will support a vibrant accessible and successful centre with a mix of community, recreational, commercial and residential uses. The Framework aims to provide strategic direction for the appropriate development, or conservation of private land, public land and Council commercial property.

A key component of the Framework has been engaging with the community to gather a broad range of ideas and comment, and use this input to develop a positive and constructive approach to change and growth in Warners Bay. The community preferences, ideas and opportunities, have been documented in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the “Community Engagement” section of this document.

The Framework is divided into a number of sections including:

- **Background and Context** – history, existing character, recreation and community facilities,
- **Community Engagement** – outlines the community feedback from 2013,
- **Planning Environment** – the national, state and local planning policies that apply,
- **Economic and Social Context** – the drivers for change such as the population, demographic and business trends, demand for floor space and town centre living,
- **Transport and Access** – the required transport infrastructure to support the town centre,
- **What makes a Town Centre successful** – theory behind providing places for people to walk and sit, human senses, and the relationship between humans, buildings and the street,
- **Town Centre Strategy** – outlines the key objectives and opportunities for growth and change in the town centre,
- **Principles for Planning Controls** – provides the basis for the principles that influence the town structure, heights, transport and access, and building design,
- **Potential Development** – outlines the assumptions used to inform the traffic study and supply of floor space,
- **Implementation** – identifies and provides detail on the key actions necessary to realise the growth of a successful town centre.



Figure 1 - Warners Bay Town Centre Study Area

### 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Warners Bay is a local town centre situated on the north-eastern edge of Lake Macquarie that serves the needs of the local population. Warners Bay is a focus for the retail, commercial and recreational activities of the local population. Visitors are attracted to the foreshore park, cultural events and café strip on The Esplanade. Many businesses in the town centre are retail based, with a relatively high share of employment in health services, cafes and restaurants but with limited availability of office space.

In 2012, Lake Macquarie City Council prepared the Lake Macquarie Town Centres Development Control Plan (DCP) to review the desired future character, structure and form of five town centres in the local government area, including Warners Bay.

Council prepared and exhibited the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan in April and May of 2012 as part of the Lake Macquarie Town Centres DCP. One hundred and thirty-three submissions were received regarding the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan (draft Area Plan) and Council resolved to defer the adoption of the plan on 23 July 2012.

Council amended and re-exhibited the draft Area Plan in late 2012, as part of Council's citywide Development Control Plan. Council received 88 submissions that raised similar issues to those raised in the previous exhibition period and included:

- Inconsistency with the Lifestyle 2030 Strategy
- Impacts on the viability of local businesses
- Excessive building heights
- Loss of village character
- Parking and vehicle access
- Pedestrian accessibility, open space and connectivity
- Proposed central pedestrian lane and its impact on proposed future development
- John Street car park should be used for community purposes
- Inadequate consultation

On 11 June 2013, Council adopted the citywide DCP 2014 with the exception of the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan. Council resolved at this point, to undertake further engagement with the community to establish a positive strategic direction for the town centre that would then guide an updated Area Plan.

In addition to the extensive community engagement program undertaken during August and September 2013, Council engaged the services of a specialist consultant to advise on the economic development mechanisms and planning instruments that would support quality urban outcomes for the centre. Council also engaged transport and traffic planning expertise to undertake a full transport, traffic and parking study for Warners Bay.

Public consultation was also undertaken during August and September 2014 to seek community feedback on the suite of draft planning documents. The outcomes of this consultation is outlined in the Consultation section of this report.

### 2.1 HISTORY OF WARNERS BAY

The information contained in this section has been obtained from the Lake Macquarie History Project prepared by Lake Macquarie Libraries.

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#### 2.1.1 THE AWABAKAL PEOPLE

Lake Macquarie Local Government Area (LGA) is part of the traditional country of the Awabakal people. People from the Awabakal tribe or clan lived on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie around what is now called Warners Bay. The northern extremities of the Lake were important in the daily and ritual life of these people, although there is little visible evidence remaining to suggest their habitation.

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#### 2.1.2 MISSIONARY STATION

In January 1825, the Reverend Lancelot E Threlkeld of the London Missionary Society made the decision to found a mission among the Awabakal people at Lake Macquarie. The site "Biddobar" or "Biddaba" was chosen as the location of the mission. In a map accompanying a claim for land in 1829, Threlkeld marked the location – at the lakeside of what is now Warners Bay.

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#### 2.1.3 ORIGIN OF NAME - WARNERS BAY

Warners Bay was named after first European settler, Jonathan Warner.

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#### 2.1.4 EARLY SETTLERS/LAND SUBDIVISION

Warner selected his land in July 1829 and was authorized to take possession on 8 February 1831. He was a disbanded officer from the New South Wales Royal Veteran Battalion. He had also been Assistant Surveyor of Roads and Bridges in the Wiseman's ferry district and had been sent to check a proposed road from the Hawkesbury to Maitland via Lake Macquarie. He built a two-storey weatherboard house called "Biddaba" ("silent resting place") on a hill near the present Warners Bay Primary School and established a farm and orange orchard. He had a number of assigned convicts to work on the farm, besides his sons. In 1833, he was appointed Police Magistrate for Brisbane Water, which involved fortnightly horseback journeys to Gosford to attend court sittings. He died in 1842, leaving his widow to manage the estate. The orchard was a showplace as late as 1870 and visitors came from Newcastle to see it. The Warner homestead was demolished about 1932.

In August 1840, Warner subdivided part of his grant, advertising it as allotments constituting the township of Lymington (his hometown in England). The colony was in the grip of a land boom that collapsed soon after into the depression and Lymington remained unsold. It was Lake Macquarie's second subdivision, the first being Newport at Eraring. In 1855, a second attempt was made to sell the Lymington lots but was again unsuccessful and it was not until the third attempt in 1885 that some lots were sold. In 1878, "Biddaba" and its orange orchard were advertised for sale as Lot 1 plus 6 other lots and 679 acres of land but do not seem to have been sold.



On 5 March 1927, a subdivision D.P.14751 was declared. It encompassed James, Mills and Beryl Streets. In spite of numerous subdivisions, Warners Bay developed slowly during the first half of the 20th century and it was not until the end of petrol rationing and the widespread use of the private car that it became a popular residential area.

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### 2.1.5 EARLY INDUSTRY

The Warner family had a small coal mine in the form of a tunnel on the waterfront below their house, the coal being taken away by boat from a jetty there. A second tunnel had been dug for coal in a gully near the homestead but it was not economical because of the difficulty of transporting the coal to the waterfront.

In 1883 a company headed by Hyde, Waterhouse and Cowlshaw, leased the Warner Estate from the surviving heirs with the intention of drilling a third tunnel but the project does not seem to have materialized. On 24 July 1884, Archibald Gardiner notified the closure of the Warners Estate mine on behalf of the South Wallsend Coal Company.

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### 2.1.6 EARLY TRANSPORT

By water or horse; Jonathan Warner made his fortnightly journeys to Brisbane Water accompanied by two of his sons for safety. There was a horse and dray track to Newcastle, which was used to transport farm produce.

In 1931, a private bus service operated from Speers Point to Broadmeadow via Warners Bay and Charlestown. This was converted to a government service in 1937 and extended to Newcastle.

A railway was planned for Warners Bay but never established. The park between King and Queen Streets was the land left vacant for it.

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### 2.1.7 FIRST SCHOOL

Opened as a provisional school in July 1892, Warners Bay Primary School became a public school in April 1904. The school was called "Warner" until November 1913. Warners Bay High School was opened in January 1966.

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### 2.1.8 FORESHORE RESERVE

The Warners Bay Shopping Centre expanded rapidly after 1980. Lake Macquarie Council created a reserve along the edge of the bay using fill from various sites. This foreshore has become a hub for recreational activity both on and off shore, sailing, fishing, kayaking and paddle boarding are all popular activities. The area also features a shared cycle path and walking track stretching from the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery at Booragul to Green Point; the path is widely used by the local community.



Figure 2 - Warners Bay Shopping Centre (Lake Macquarie City Library)

## 2.2 CLIMATE

Warners Bay enjoys a moderate maritime climate similar to much of central and northern coastal New South Wales. Summers tend to be warm and humid and winters are generally mild. Precipitation is heaviest in late autumn and early winter.

Prevailing winds

## 2.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SETTING

Warners Bay Town Centre has a memorable landscape setting on the north-eastern foreshore of Lake Macquarie. It lies on low ground surrounded by vegetated ridgelines including Munibung Hill and Bayview Hill, and is predominantly surrounded by low density residential development. The town centre setting can be appreciated from Marmong Point Reserve across the lake to the west, The Esplanade at Speers Point to the north-west, and The Esplanade at Warners Bay Lions Park to the south, as well as from the open water of the lake. From these vantage points, the town centre is contained by the treed ridgeline behind, and the foreshore trees in front.

One of the many commercial centres within Lake Macquarie located near the lake, Warners Bay is the only centre with a main street and buildings that directly address the lake and the Foreshore. From the centre there are excellent views to the south and west across the lake, especially at sunset.

## 2.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CENTRES

Warners Bay is connected with other town centres by a network of regional roads. Charlestown to the east is the major regional centre providing a range of government and professional services with the largest shopping centre at Charlestown Square. Belmont to the south on the lake, and Toronto to the south west on the lake are neighbouring local centres. Glendale to the north is a designated future regional centre and



is located on the main Northern rail line. The existing retail area of Glendale is anticipated to develop into a mixed-use commercial and residential centre with a rail interchange.



Figure 3 - Regional road links to surrounding centres

## 2.5 TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER

The Esplanade, a four-lane road, separates Warners Bay commercial area from the foreshore and the lake. The buildings along The Esplanade collectively form a low scale shopping strip that follows the eastern edge of the road.

The Esplanade strip has 1-2 storey buildings, a wide footpath interrupted by rear to kerb angle parking and an outlook to the foreshore and lake. A range of cafès, take away food outlets and restaurants trade on The Esplanade eastern footpath. At the same time, the foreshore has become a popular daytime and night-time gathering place for community cultural and recreation events.

John Street is operating as the main commercial services area, with a supermarket, post office, banks, and other service and specialty stores. Generally, there is little permanent or short term visitor accommodation within the town centre.

The John Street car park provides a central at grade car park facility that has easy access to most shops, businesses and community facilities in the town centre.

Surrounding the town centre is a range of relatively low-density housing with some villa development and small apartment buildings to the north-east and south-east around Howard and James Streets.



Figure 4 - The Esplanade looking north from King Street

## 2.6 RECREATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY

The Foreshore Park, the Lake Macquarie Performing Arts Centre on Lake Street and the large sports field between North Creek and the town centre are major assets to the amenity of Warners Bay.

The Foreshore Park between the lake and the town centre provides a range of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and is particularly busy at weekends. Live music performances in the rotunda attract crowds on Friday evenings during summer, and on some Sundays during winter. People of all ages use the cycleway throughout the day. The Great North Walk, linking Lane Cove in Sydney to Newcastle, passes through the foreshore park.

The Performing Arts centre is the focus for a diverse community and cultural program of events. The adjacent park is used for community events such as the bicycle race, 'Loop the Lake', Family Fun Days, the Children's Festival and the Lake Macquarie Festival.

The Lions Club of Warners Bay organises the monthly Sunday market currently held in the John Street car park.

## 2.7 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 2.7.1 LAKE MACQUARIE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

The Lake Macquarie Performing Arts Centre (the centre), located on Lake Street adjacent to Warner Reserve, is a venue for concerts, plays, musicals, and other live productions. The centre is available for hire to groups and individuals. It provides opportunities for professional and amateur musical, theatre, dance, and cultural groups to host and present stage productions.

The centre's auditorium has a seating capacity of approximately 300. The 10m x 10m stage has an orchestra pit, as well as a screen and projector system suited for presentations and film screenings. There

is a rehearsal room off the stage and a stage lift for full accessibility. The centre includes a commercial kitchen and large foyer area, suitable for serving refreshments.

An unformed gravel car park at the rear of the building provides about 60 parking spaces in addition to on-street parking.

There is diversity of groups who use the centre including dance, theatre, and music, as well as for art and cultural presentations and events. The groups are mostly local organisations and businesses although there are some users based in Newcastle and the Central Coast. The centre is popular with an average of 160 bookings per calendar year with the peak periods being March, May, June, October, November and December.

The centre is ageing and regularly requires upgrades, with the most recent including; some structural upgrades, painting, new stage and auditorium curtains/shutters, new furniture in foyer and the addition of a skip bin service.

Likely future upgrades required to ensure the centre continues to meet user needs includes; alterations to the kitchen, major upgrade/replacement of sound and lighting, and remote user friendly sound equipment.

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### 2.7.2 CHILDCARE CENTRE

Council operates a childcare facility at 49 Charles Street, on the corner of King Street and Charles Street, which provides 51 child places per day, and employs approximately 16 people.

The facility provides services to 96 families from widespread areas. Approximately half of these families come from the local catchment of Warners Bay Town Centre that includes the suburbs of Warners Bay, Lakelands, Speers Point, Eleebana and Valentine. The remainder come from areas as far afield as Maitland, Marks Point, Toronto and the inner suburbs of Newcastle.

## 2.8 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS AND STREETS

Generally, the Warners Bay Town Centre has a poor quality built environment despite its superb natural setting (Urbacity, 2013). Most of the buildings in the centre are of poor, or at best, moderate quality. There are no buildings in the centre that have great architectural merit, or significant historical value.

The Esplanade footpath area is generally irregular in shape, uneven, sloping from the kerb line to the shop fronts with poor quality paving and minimal greenery. People at tables and chairs located on the sloping pavement have a restricted outlook to the lake and are exposed to car exhaust fumes and generally poor amenity.

The bus shelter on The Esplanade is old and intrusive, and located directly in front of one of the busiest cafe frontages. Pedestrian areas on Lake, King, and John Streets and through the car park are also poor quality spaces.

At present the fronts and backs of buildings are not clearly defined particularly around the John Street car park.

Shop fronts reinforce the street frontage of The Esplanade, and around the corner into Lake Street and King Street as far as John Street. These same buildings back onto Postman's Lane. Some have direct entry off the lane at the rear, which confuses 'fronts and backs'.

The short section of Warners Bay Village shopping centre that faces John Street creates a weaker front that is not currently reciprocated across the street. Sleeved development on Charles Street creates a section of active frontage on the west side of the street that is not reciprocated.

### 3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a result of community feedback, and concern expressed during two public exhibition periods of the draft Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan in 2012, Council resolved to undertake further community engagement to develop a positive and holistic planning Framework for Warners Bay.

Since then, two separate community engagement programs have been held. One in August and September 2013 and one in September and October 2014. The process and feedback from each of these programs is outlined in separate sections below.

#### 3.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2013

Residents, business owners, property owners, the Chamber of Commerce, and visitors were invited to share their views and ideas during August and September 2013. The intention was to identify the important values held by the community, generate ideas, and provide input to the planning process.

The engagement activities held in August and September 2013 included:

- A two-part workshop (6 and 28 August 2013) with landowners, business owners and those who made a submission to previous public exhibition periods for the draft Area Plan;
- Survey 1 – covering likes, dislikes and improvements for Warners Bay;
- Survey 2 – responses to a range of images to determine preferences for car parking, building appearance, development scenarios and building height;
- Online interactive community map inviting ideas and comments as well as ability to record like/dislike vote on the ideas of others ;
- Three information stalls in Warners Bay Town Centre (Thursday 1 August 2013, Sunday 11 August 2013 and Thursday 15 August 2013); and
- Written submissions.

All presentations, background information and summaries of results were posted on Council's website at [www.lakemac.com.au/warnersbay](http://www.lakemac.com.au/warnersbay)

In particular, the surveys, conversations, and invitations for comment, asked community members to consider:

- What are the possible and preferred economic development outcomes for Warner Bay?
- What sort of businesses would be suited to Warners Bay?
- What would make it easier to get to Warners Bay?
- What will make the centre a safe, active, convenient and desirable place to walk around?
- What is detracting from the public domain?
- What are the community preferences about how buildings will look? (Visual Preference Survey)
- How much development is right for Warners Bay? Where should higher buildings be located?
- What are other community aspirations for Warners Bay such as cultural and recreation activity.

The Community Consultation Report (Appendix 1) details the concerns, ideas and priorities for residents, business owners, property owners, and shoppers who contributed their views.



### 3.1.1 COMMUNITY VALUES

The aspects of Warners Bay most valued by the community have been drawn from the feedback and grouped below, and are central to the formulating of the Town Centre Planning Framework.

#### 3.1.1.1 THE FORESHORE

The community associates the character of the town centre with its location on the lake foreshore. A majority of community comments related to the foreshore reserve, this demonstrates the focus of attention on waterfront activity, and the value attached to this public recreation area. Comments covered the value of:

- Waterfront views to the lake; proximity to the lake; access to the lake
- The foreshore as a focus for family gathering
- An attractive place for outdoor physical activity; social get together
- Music in the podium and similar events
- Foreshore green zone, the natural environment and open spaces with landscape and trees
- Open feel with views to the sky, mountains and lake

The Warners Bay Foreshore Master Plan that was adopted by Council in May 2012 guides future improvements of the foreshore. There is a significant opportunity to integrate the activity and environment of the commercial centre with the foreshore and foreshore activity.

#### 3.1.1.2 WALKING AND CYCLING ACCESS

Many people expressed the importance of walkability and value the following:

- A small shopping centre where it is easier for the elderly and disabled to do their business
- Ability to walk shops and services
- Pedestrian access from the town centre to the foreshore
- Shared bike and walking path around the lake
- opportunity to cycle for transport from neighbouring suburbs
- having continuous connected paths that are safe for less confident riders



Figure 5 - Active links between car park and The Esplanade at Village Arcade and Bay Arcade (right)



### 3.1.1.3 VILLAGE CHARACTER

While Village character is valued by most people who have made comment, the perception of what makes for village character varied widely. The common themes expressed about village character are:

- friendly atmosphere and sense of community
- a beautiful little village, in a beautiful spot
- shops on streets rather than in shopping malls
- individuality of businesses with no major chain stores
- a small shopping centre that is easy for the elderly and disabled to use
- the small scale of buildings
- one, two, or three storeys especially if close to the foreshore
- easy parking and movement around the town centre
- sharing of views to the lake

### 3.1.1.4 THE ESPLANADE

Many respondents valued being able to sit out on the café strip looking to the foreshore



Figure 6 - Footpath diners on The Esplanade

### 3.1.1.5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Valuable community facilities that were identified:

- Performing Arts Centre on Lake Street,
- Child Care Centre at the corner of King and Charles Streets,
- Good medical facilities,
- Good sporting facilities.

### 3.1.1.6 CAR PARKING

Many comments expressed the view that parking areas should be improved or expanded with suggestions like:

- On-grade parking ,free; centrally located; with 24-hour access,
- Central with easy movement across the centre and a good number of access points to and from the parking.

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### 3.1.2 COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

#### 3.1.2.1 THE ESPLANADE

- Linking the town centre to the foreshore,
- Providing more opportunities for a waterfront shopping strip,
- Wide attractive footpaths for pedestrians and outdoor dining, cafes, restaurants and wine bars, greengrocers, gifts and bookstores,
- Restricting car parking along The Esplanade between John Street and Lake Street,
- Reducing vehicle speeds along The Esplanade and King Street,
- Installing traffic lights at Lake Street and The Esplanade intersection to make pedestrian crossing easier.

#### 3.1.2.2 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

- Installing a roundabout at the John Street and Lake Street intersection,
- Providing a pedestrian crossing on Lake Street,
- Keep large semi-trailers and loading traffic out of town centre,
- Create a one-way circuit – south bound along The Esplanade and north bound along John Street.

#### 3.1.2.3 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Increase the variety of services and businesses,
- Encourage new uses and activities such as government services, skate parks, library, tourist;
- Support business owners' skills to develop trendy, attractive, appealing businesses,
- Make shops in the arcades more inviting,
- Aim for a vibrant, 'Darby Street' style street with funky food and coffee culture,
- Expand the arts, film and music,
- Provide free Wi-Fi along the foreshore,
- Develop more accommodation, a revolving restaurant on top of a tower, and open/civic space.

### 3.1.2.4 BUILDINGS AND STREETS

Many expressed the view that the current village feel is 'old, run-down, ugly and boring' and offered the following views:

- Encourage development to bring more prosperity to the centre and more attractive streets,
- Support development of high quality and architecturally diverse design,
- Improve the appearance of the arcades,
- Improve the appearance of buildings,
- Use the area at the north-eastern end of Lake Village Arcade for a sheltered sunny pedestrian space with greenery,
- Make sure development does not cause overshadowing,
- Locate higher buildings away from The Esplanade between Lake and King Streets,
- Accept higher buildings if they are attractive and of high quality.

### 3.1.2.5 CAR PARKING

Many submissions suggested one or more of the following:

- Provide more parking so people come and use the foreshore, cafes and restaurants
- Make car parking areas more attractive
- Keep John Street car park as a central public parking area
- Maintain or increase the number of car parks in the town centre, locating the current John Street car park underground, or provide a multi-level car park
- John Street car park is not the right place for a supermarket

### 3.1.2.6 COMMUNITY MARKETS

- Make sure community markets are located on an all-weather surface to maximise their use.

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### 3.1.3 VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESPONSES

The visual preference survey was designed to allow respondents to make a personal response to each image in a series of photos and hand drawn sketches. Each image was intended to highlight a particular built quality or element and allow an overall comparison of preferences.

The survey highlighted responses to the following built elements:

- Horizontal or vertical building character
- Small scale shop frontages compared to wider frontages with similar treatments
- Colonnades or awnings or neither on the street facade of buildings
- Highly detailed facades or facades with minimal detailing
- Projecting balconies or recessed balconies

The scale of possible responses ranged from 'like it a lot' through to 'dislike it a lot'.

Respondents indicated a preference for:

- Streets with a two to three storey facade at the street boundary
- Streets with smaller shop frontages
- Facades with smaller projecting balconies
- Facades with windows and entries punched out of the facade wall
- Shop fronts that each have individual character
- Continuity of street awnings

The responses are summarised in the *Community Consultation Report - Warners Bay Town Centre Framework and Area Plan* (LMCC, November 2013)



Figure 7 - Most liked facades with small scale frontages, balconies, and vertical windows and doors.  
(Illustration by Steve Thorne, Design Urban)

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### 3.1.3.1 VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY - SHOPS AND CAR PARKS

The visual preference survey also set out to determine individual preferences for the relationship between shop fronts and car parking.

The results were not conclusive although it was clear that the most preferred outcome was active footpath trading areas under deep awnings with parallel parking at the kerb (see Figure 11).

Shops with angle parking out front were not favoured.



Figure 8 - Outdoor dining on wide footpath buffered by parallel parking (Concord NSW)

### 3.1.3.2 VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY - BUILDING HEIGHT

The community also provided essential feedback on height through the surveys, the on-line collaborative map, and in particular, through the survey questions in the Visual Preference Survey.

The key input from the community is that:

- higher buildings above four storeys are not acceptable on The Esplanade,
- development on the John Street car park should be lower than buildings on The Esplanade,
- six or eight storey development may be acceptable if located well back from The Esplanade area or south of King Street,
- buildings should not be bulky.

## 3.2 STATUTORY PUBLIC EXHIBITION - SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2014

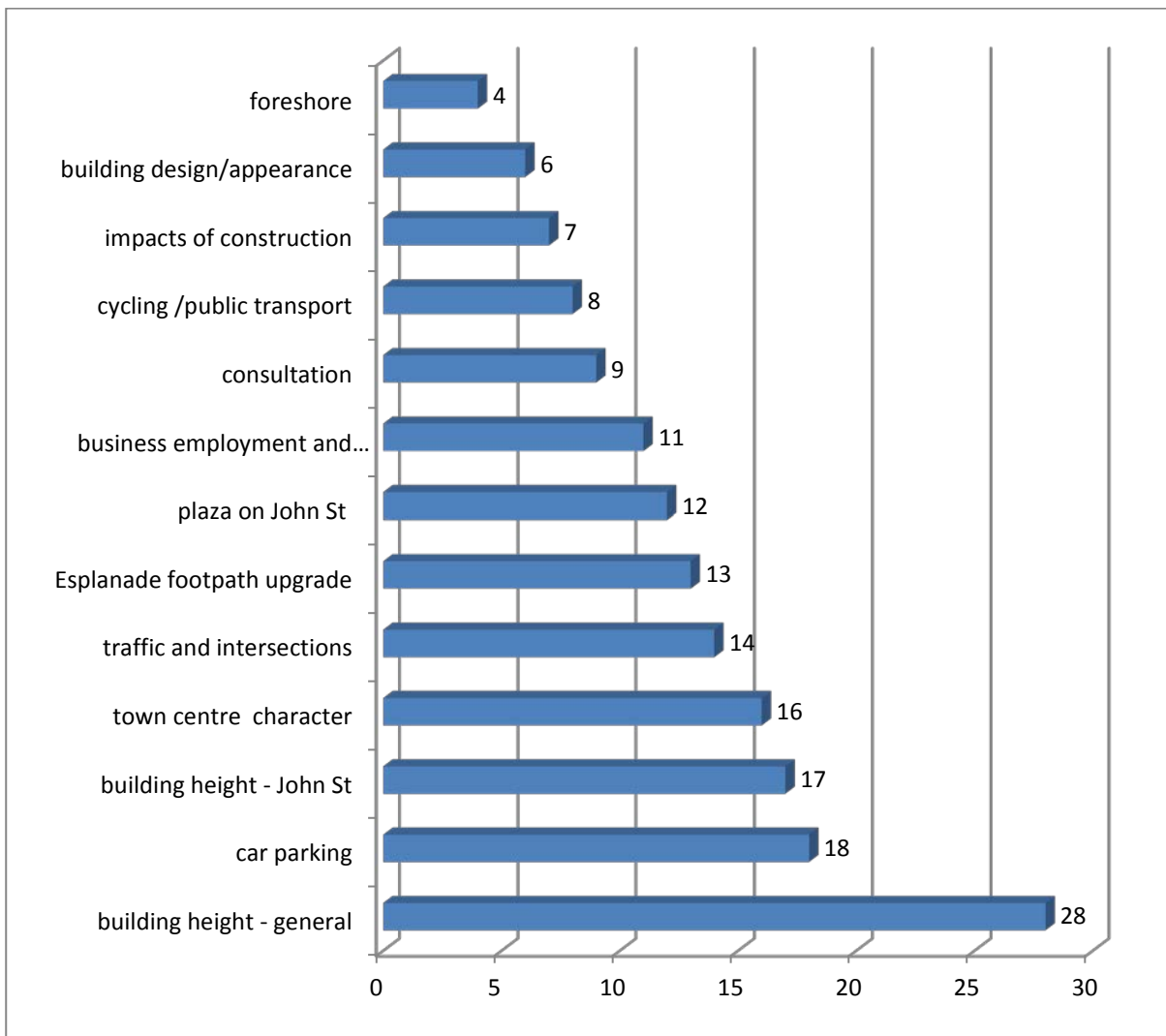
This Framework along with the suite of planning documents was on public exhibition from 8 September 2014 to 20 October 2014. A comprehensive consultation program was undertaken for the public exhibition, which included:

- All documents being available on Council's website, at Council's Customer Service Centre and Speers Point Library.
- The [haveyoursay/warnersbay](http://haveyoursay/warnersbay) website was set up for the public to; view the exhibition documents and supporting visual aids, participate in four quick polls that were held, read latest media articles about the exhibition and ask questions and read responses from the Council project team. The website was visited 1740 times (1336 unique visits) with the slideshow viewed 500 times.
- Three community drop in days; 9 and 25 September 2014 at the performing arts centre, and Sunday 14 September 2014 at the Warners Bay foreshore podium where the public could ask questions and listen to staff explain the key concepts in the plans. Over 100 people attended the drop in days.
- Delivery of 4200 information brochures to residents of Warners Bay and Lakelands and to businesses within the town centre.

- Public notice of the exhibition period in the Newcastle Herald, Lakes Mail and The Post newspapers.
- Letters to 173 landowners in the Warners Bay Town Centre.
- A meeting with the Warners Bay Chamber of Commerce and its members.
- An email to 246 people who made submissions to or were involved in previous community engagements.

### 3.2.1 SUBMISSIONS AND ISSUES RAISED

In response to the notification and consultation activities, Council received 68 submissions. The issues raised in submissions have been grouped into 13 categories outlined below.



### 3.2.1.1 BUILDING HEIGHT – GENERALLY ACROSS THE CENTRE

Raised in 28 submissions, comments regarding this issue included:

- the majority of the community do not support an increase in building heights.
- proposed heights will impact on views and cause overshadowing.
- preference for taller buildings to be away from foreshore.
- proposed heights will change to the current low scale character of the town centre.
- if a plaza were created in John Street they would support building up to 8 stories east of John Street.
- proposed heights will facilitate apartment living in King, Lake and Albert Streets, which is desirable.
- development will stimulate the local economy and provide opportunities for services and businesses in the town centre.
- specialist advice be obtained regarding the relationship between building heights and equitable developer returns.

### 3.2.1.2 CAR PARKING

Raised in 18 submissions, comments included:

- need to preserve and/or increase the number of car parks in the town centre.
- more parking is not required citing because more parking increases use of vehicles and creates more demand for parking.
- free parking is not supported because it subsidises vehicle use, inflates the demand for more parking, reduces the potential yield and activity level of buildings in the centre, and undermines the goal for more walking and cycling transport.
- removing any parking along The Esplanade.

### 3.2.1.3 BUILDING HEIGHT ON JOHN STREET CAR PARK

Raised in 17 submissions, comments included:

- the majority of the community do not support development or tall buildings on this site.
- the car park should remain as it is now.
- the car park should be converted to an open style plaza with some shops surrounding the plaza.

### 3.2.1.4 TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER

Raised in 16 submissions, comments included:

- the plans will destroy or change the village character of the town centre largely due to proposed building heights.
- the increased population, increased traffic and impact on available parking will undermine the centres village character.
- the plans will revitalise the area and have a positive benefit for the community.



### 3.2.1.5 TRAFFIC AND INTERSECTIONS (RAISED IN 14 SUBMISSIONS)

Raised in 14 submissions, comments included:

- support for the proposed traffic and intersection improvements.
- object to removing roundabouts.
- roads will not be able to handle additional vehicles that will occur because of development
- The Esplanade should be closed and traffic redirected along King and Medcalf Streets.

### 3.2.1.6 ESPLANADE FOOTPATH UPGRADE

Raised in 13 submissions, comments included:

- support for the proposed improvements to the footpath along the Dress Circle
- completely remove parking along The Esplanade. One submission objected to the
- object to removal of the existing signalised pedestrian crossing on The Esplanade.
- object to changing roundabouts to signals as it would make vehicle travel slower along The Esplanade, which would contribute to congestion and air pollution and make footpath dining unpleasant.

### 3.2.1.7 PLAZA ON JOHN STREET

Raised in 12 submissions, comments included:

- that the current John Street car park or at least part of the car park be turned into an open, sheltered, sunny plaza.
- shops and cafes should face the plaza.
- a space suitable for markets.

### 3.2.1.8 BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND RESIDENTIAL USE MIX

Raised in 11 submissions, comments included:

- the need to provide more employment opportunities for the community.
- support the introduction of residential living into the town centre.
- provide an enhanced shopping choice and café/lifestyle culture to attract residents and visitors to the town centre.

### 3.2.1.9 CONSULTATION

Raised in nine submissions, comments included:

- the consultation process was not adequate.
- community views are not being taken on board.
- congratulations to Council staff on the comprehensive community consultation process that was undertaken.



### 3.2.1.10 CYCLING/PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Raised in eight submissions, comments included:

- more emphasis and improvements to cycling facilities as Warners Bay is an important node for cycling.
- more attention and detail to public transport and associated facilities.

### 3.2.1.11 IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION

Raised in seven submissions, comments included:

- availability of car parking would be impacted during the construction of buildings
- viability of existing businesses would be impacted during the construction of buildings, especially on the John Street car park site.

### 3.2.1.12 BUILDING DESIGN/APPEARANCE

Raised in six submissions, comments included:

- buildings need to achieve architectural excellence and allow use of different materials.
- 2m building setbacks to Bay Arcade laneway are unnecessary.
- 1.5m setback to Postmans lane is unnecessary
- Setback for upper two storeys of buildings is unnecessary.

### 3.2.1.13 FORESHORE

Raised in four submissions, comments included:

- improvements to the foreshore area including, a deep water jetty, swimming facility/baths, more public toilet facilities, larger entertainment area and outdoor gym equipment.

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## 3.2.2 CHANGES RESULTING FROM SUBMISSIONS

Following consideration of all submissions, the following changes have been made to the Warners Bay Town Centre Planning Framework.

- Updated to include advice about development feasibility in the town centre,
- Updated to incorporate principles for managing parking demand and making walking and cycling attractive forms of transport,
- Updated to incorporate Market Square, associated principles for public space, and examples of successful public spaces,

Submissions also resulted in changes to other planning documents relating to the Warners Bay Town Centre.

## 4 PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

Australia's population is projected to increase to between 36.8 million and 48.3 million in 2061, and reach between 42.4 million and 70.1 million in 2101 (ABS, 2013). Along with population growth, other challenges facing Australia's urban areas into the future include:

- An ageing population. The proportion of Australians over 65 years of age is expected to grow from 14% in 2012 to between 22.4% and 24.5% in 2061 (ABS, 2013),
- Increasing urbanisation and urban densities. In 2010, 89% of Australians lived in urban areas. By 2050, the proportion of Australians living in urban areas is expected to grow to 93% (United Nations, 2012),
- Changing household and family size and structure,
- Housing supply and affordability,
- Influence of the internet and information technology,
- Changing skills and education,
- Shift in sectors of employment,
- Increasing cost of fuel and changes to active transport usage and networks, and
- Climate change.

The effects and response to these challenges are becoming visible across Australia through a number of trends:

- An increased interest in urban policy focused on urban containment, mixed-use town centre development and transit oriented development,
- The renewal of former industrial land for commercial and residential uses,
- The growth of service economy that has led to the rise of relatively wealthy professionals who prefer inner city/town centre lifestyles,
- The aging population and changing household structures increasing the demand for smaller dwellings with good access to a range of services typically only found in city and/or town centres,
- The growth of the "café society" as a social trend has made inner city/town centre lifestyles more desirable for certain age groups,
- Increasing costs of land and housing on the fringe is leading to increased demand for infill development,
- Increasing economic and social costs of commuting, leading to more demand for inner city/town centre housing close to work, services, and facilities, and
- A renewed recognition of the convenience and sense of place a wide range of services and facilities has within walking distance.

In response to these projections, pressures and trends, the Australian Government released the *Our Cities, Our Future – A national urban policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future* report in May 2011. This report seeks to guide urban policy and planning to meet the growing population and pressures that it accompanies. Additionally the Australian Government released the fourth in the series, *State of Australian Cities 2013* report. This report presents a snapshot of the 18 Australian cities with more than 100,000 people, details changes in population and settlement, and examines indicators relating to productivity, sustainability, and liveability.

The *Our Cities, Our Future* report contains several relevant objectives, among others, including:

- Locating housing close to facilities and services, including jobs and public transport, in more compact mixed use development,
- Encouraging a range of housing types to suit diverse household needs,
- Improve accessibility and reduce dependence on private vehicles by improving transport options and reducing travel demand by locating jobs, people and facilities close to each other,
- Integrating planning systems, infrastructure delivery and management,
- Supporting sustainable development and refurbishment of our built environment,
- Integrating planning of land use, social and economic infrastructure, and
- Investing in urban passenger transport.

The National context and trends are important factors that will influence the future direction and development of the Warners Bay Town Centre.

### 4.2 NSW CONTEXT

*NSW 2021: A plan to make NSW number one (2011) (NSW 2021)* is the NSW Government's 10-year strategic business plan. *NSW 2021* sets the key priorities and actions for the Government. *NSW 2021* contains certain targets that are relevant including:

1. Increasing the share of jobs in regional NSW,
2. Increasing the population in regional NSW by 470,000 by the year 2036,
3. Grow knowledge industries,
4. Improve housing affordability and availability,
5. Increase use of public transport,
6. Encourage job growth in centres close to where people live.

*NSW 2021* also contains Regional Action Plans. The *Hunter Regional Action Plan (2012)* outlines four key priorities that are relevant to Lake Macquarie:

1. Drive economic growth and diversity,
2. Invest in critical infrastructure and integrated transport,
3. Improve the liveability of Newcastle and regional centres,
4. Provide access to quality services.

The *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (2012)* brings together land use planning with transport planning, and integrates planning for freight and passenger movements, as well as all modes of transport. It includes actions for road, rail, bus, ferry, light rail, cycling and walking. The *Hunter Regional Transport Plan (2014)* was prepared to support the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* and outlines the actions to

address the local transport needs and priorities of the region. Both plans have been produced to assist in meeting the targets and priorities outlined in *NSW 2021*.

#### 4.3 LOWER HUNTER REGIONAL STRATEGY 2006

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) identifies Charlestown as a ‘major regional centre’ and Glendale/Cardiff as an ‘emerging major regional centre’. Warners Bay, Toronto, Mount Hutton and Belmont are identified as ‘towns’, being shopping and business centres that service the district and include health and professional services mixed with medium to higher density residential development.

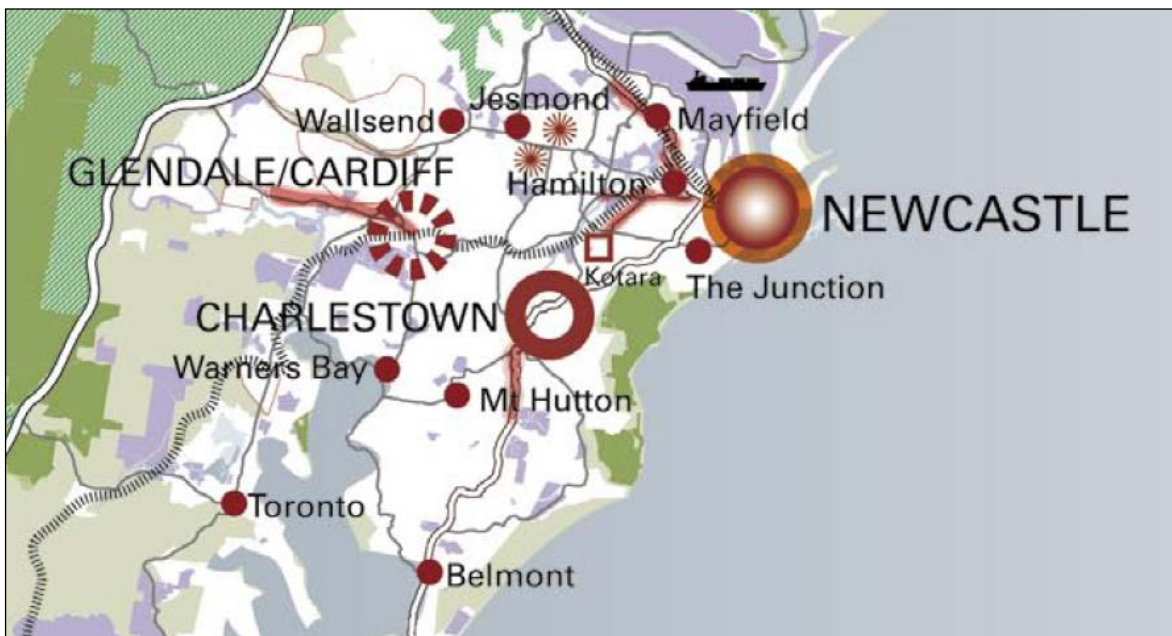


Figure 9 - Extract from the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006

The LHRS identifies that there is an ageing population in the Lower Hunter, and that there is a need to increase housing affordability. There are opportunities for infill development in the region to meet these needs.

The LHRS projects 60,000 additional residents and 36,000 additional dwellings in the Lake Macquarie LGA comprising 15,000 in new release areas, and 21,000 in existing urban areas by 2031. The LHRS also sets a target of 12,000 new jobs for Lake Macquarie LGA by 2031.

The LHRS includes a hierarchy of centres, including Warners Bay, to accommodate a proportion of future housing growth. New housing in Warners Bay could be achieved through well-planned infill development and use of existing infrastructure and services, or upgrading of infrastructure and facilities as needed to accommodate new residents.

The LHRS also identifies major infrastructure projects for the region until 2015-16.

At the time of writing, the LHRS was under review by the NSW State Government. It is anticipated that the newly titled Lower Hunter Regional Growth Plan will be available for public exhibition during the second half of 2014. Details of the anticipated Lower Hunter Regional Growth Plan will be incorporated into this document when available.

#### 4.4 LIFESTYLE 2030 STRATEGY

The Lifestyle 2030 Strategy (the Strategy) is Council's key land use planning document which provides the long-term direction for the overall development of the City and describes Council's high level policies for managing private and public development in Lake Macquarie.

The Strategy contains several key aims, including:

- Reinforce and strengthen Centres so that a wide range of commercial and community services may be provided in a timely and accessible manner.
- Provide local employment opportunities for residents and to promote economic development consistent with the LGA's natural, locational and community resources.
- Guide the development of urban communities that are compact, distinct, and diverse with a range of housing types and activities.
- Develop attractive and liveable urban areas in the LGA, which reflect its physical and natural environment, and visual character.
- Integrate land use with the efficient provision of public and private movement systems.

The Strategy incorporates the core values of Sustainability, Equity, Efficiency, and Liveability and a hierarchy of centres based on levels of service and function. Centres are intended to increasingly act as the focus for commercial and retail activity, service delivery, employment opportunities, public transport, meeting places, medium density housing, and mixed-use development.

Warners Bay is identified as a town centre in the Strategy. It's important town centre functions are:

- Retail and commercial activities,
- Professional, social and community facilities,
- Medium density residential within and adjoin the centre,
- Serve the surrounding residential communities,
- Located on major transport routes, accessed by frequent public transport services,
- Accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and
- Express the character of the area.

Additionally, Lifestyle 2030 Strategy shows Warners Bay being located on the edge of the Cardiff-Glendale Growth and Expansion Corridor (Figure 13). This is one of three key urban corridors identified by the strategy for redevelopment and intensification of existing urban-zoned land with good access to public transport, services, centres and employment land.



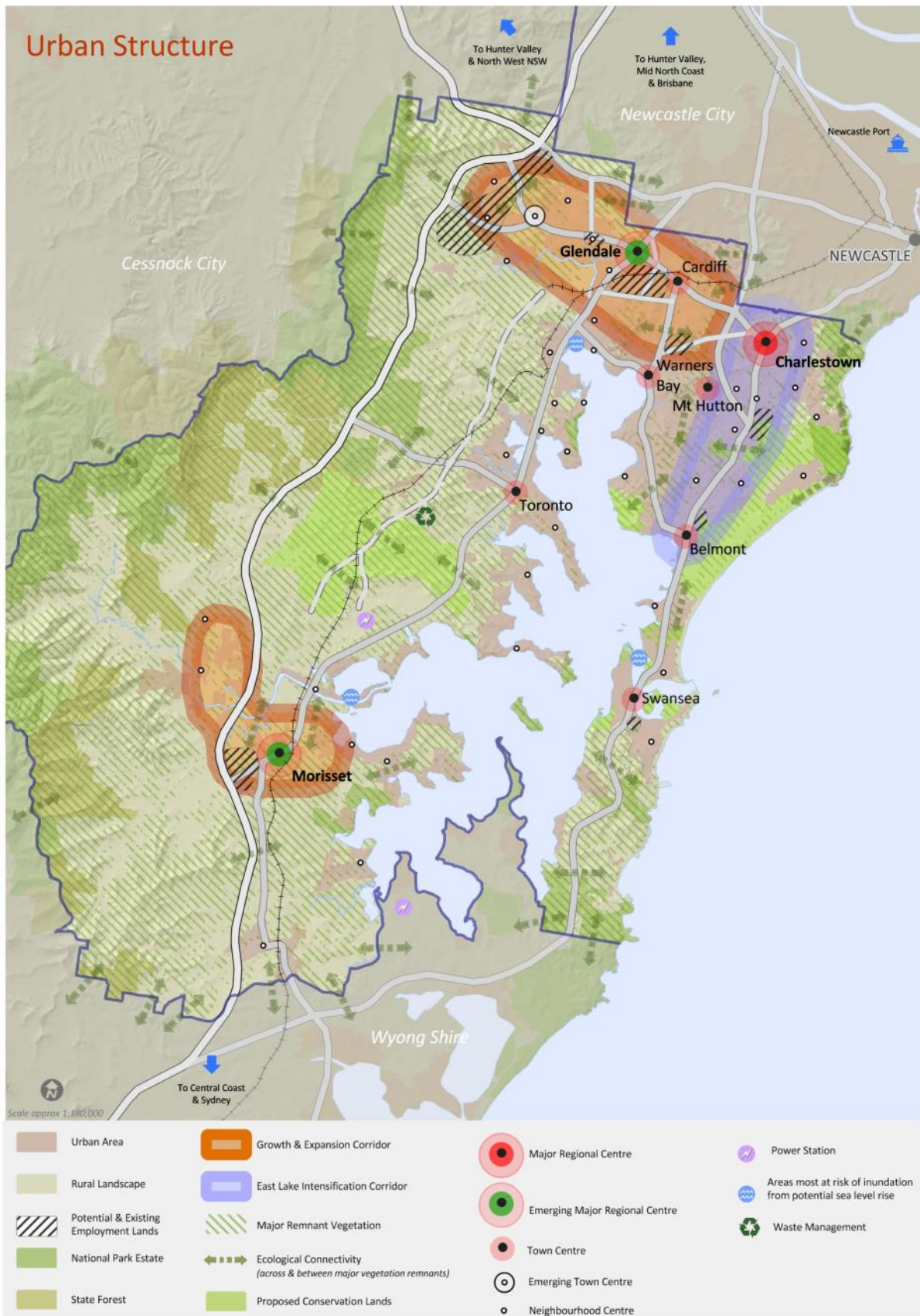


Figure 10 - Lifestyle 2030 Strategy – Urban Structure Map



The Strategy incorporates four significant State government policy changes made since the adoption of Lifestyle 2020, including the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, the Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan, the State Plan, and the Newcastle–Lake Macquarie Western Corridor Planning Strategy.

The review of the Lifestyle 2020 strategy also included:

- a demographic analysis of the city over the past 10-years,
- a review of the status of the city’s biodiversity, and
- a review of the supply of residential and employment lands in the city.

The *Lake Macquarie Employment Lands Study* (SGS Economics and Planning, 2010) was used to guide the preparation of the Lifestyle 2030 Strategy and it identifies the future demand for commercial floor space in centres for the period up to 2031.

In particular, the report cites demand for 10,000m<sup>2</sup> more retail floor space and demand for 17,000m<sup>2</sup> more office floor space in Warners Bay Town Centre by 2031.

## 4.5 LAKE MACQUARIE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2004 AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN NO.1

Warners Bay Town Centre is currently zoned 3(1) Urban Centre and 3(2) Urban Centre (Support) under Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2004 as shown in Figure 14.



Figure 11 - Land Use Zoning LEP 2004

Currently Development Control Plan (DCP) No.1 includes the Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan, which provides development controls for the commercial zoned land in Warners Bay. This Area Plan provides general controls for height in storeys, setback and height but does not provide any guidance on building design and architectural quality (see Figure 15).

The Warners Bay Town Centre Area Plan in DCP No.1 provides for heights up to a maximum of three to four storeys in the core area, with opportunity for higher buildings that have architectural merit on specified sites. What constitutes architectural merit is unclear in the DCP.

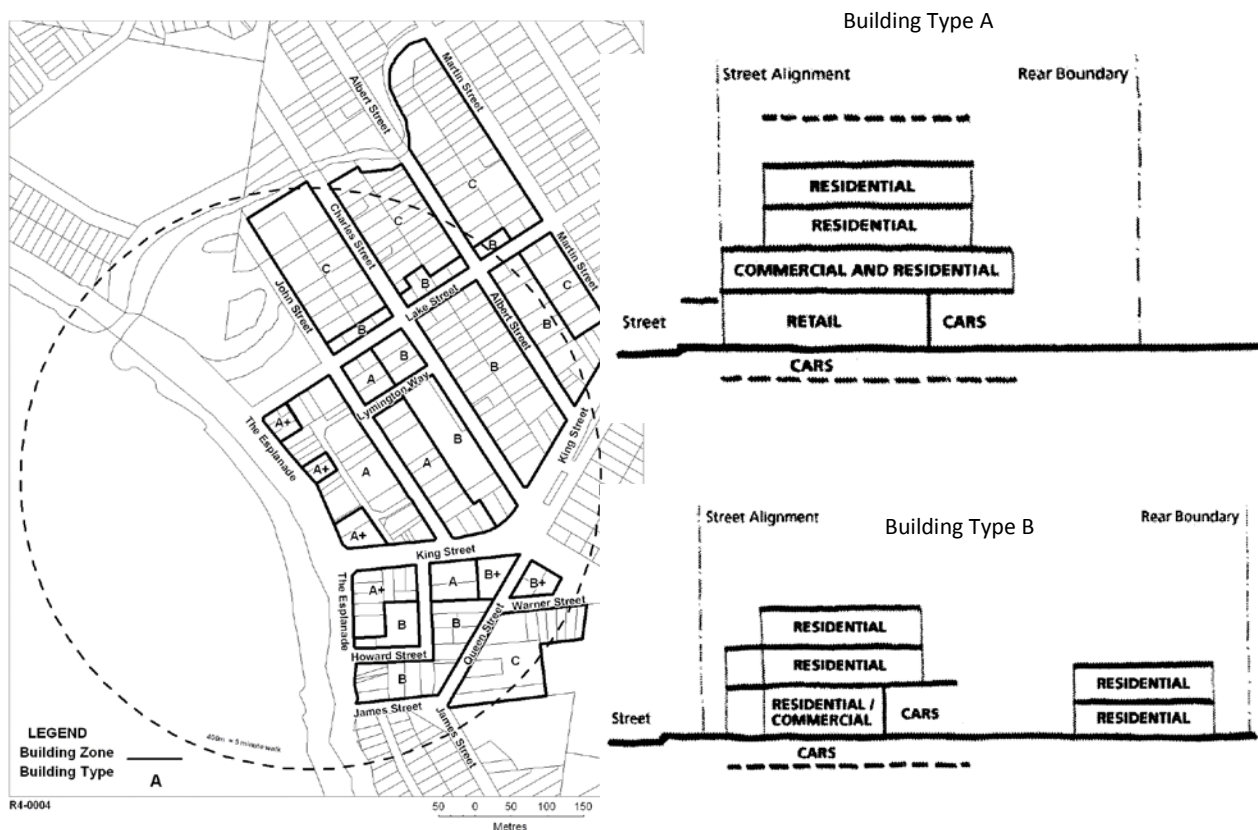


Figure 12 - Heights of Buildings DCP No.1 - Warners Bay Area Plan

#### 4.6 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2014

The NSW Government introduced a Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to provide a consistent terminology and format across the state.

Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 (LMLEP 2014) came into effect on 10 October 2014. However, the Warners Bay Town Centre was deferred (excluded) from LMLEP 2014 until such time as appropriate building heights could be resolved for the town centre. Lake Macquarie LEP 2004 will continue to apply to the Warners Bay Town Centre until LMLEP 2014 is amended to bring the town centre into the operation of LMLEP 2014.

### 4.7 LAKE MACQUARIE SCENIC MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Scenic Management Guidelines identify the desired future character of the Warners Bay town centre as a compact, higher density centre with a mix of retail, business and residential uses. The centre should have active street frontages, a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians and attractive streets. The character of buildings and the surrounding landscape should reflect the lakeside location and the popularity of these areas as social and recreational destinations.

The Scenic Management Guidelines specify, that to manage scenic quality, the buildings should be of a scale that does not dominate views from the lake nor breach the tree line of surrounding ridgelines.

Visual analysis would be required from the following key viewing points to determine the principles for development design, scale and height:

1. Marmong Point Reserve across the lake to the west,
2. The Esplanade at Speers Point to the north-west,
3. The Esplanade at Warners Bay Lions Park to the south,
4. Open water of the lake

### 4.8 LAKE MACQUARIE CYCLING STRATEGY 2021

Lake Macquarie City Council Cycling Strategy 2021 recognises the importance of encouraging walking and cycling for short trips in order to achieve a well serviced and equitable city with attractive and liveable urban areas. In particular, the Strategy includes direction to design, implement and maintain a safe, convenient and integrated cycle and pedestrian network.

The goal is for more people cycling more regularly for all purposes.

The Strategy identifies the enabling factors for adults as:

- Legitimisation of cycling
- Dedicated, separated and connected bicycle routes
- Way finding and knowledge of bicycle routes
- End-of-trip facilities

The enabling factors for children are:

- Increased awareness among drivers
- Cycling skills training
- Safe places to learn to ride
- Opportunities to ride with other children
- Connected network of safe, attractive and comfortable bicycle routes
- Traffic calmed local and residential streets
- Secure bicycle parking at schools

These principles are adopted for enabling active transport to and from the Warners Bay town centre.

### 4.9 WARNERS BAY FORESHORE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT AND FORESHORE MASTER PLAN

Council adopted the Warners Bay Foreshore Plan of Management and Foreshore Master Plan in 2012. The Foreshore Master Plan covers the foreshore between Fairfax Road in the north and Warners Bay Road in the south, and guides and outlines the intended improvements to the foreshore.

The key elements and proposed improvements from the Foreshore Master Plan applicable to the foreshore directly opposite the Town Centre as shown in Figure 16 include;

- shared pathways,
- car parking areas,
- landscaping and tree planting,
- picnic shelters,
- community facilities (toilet block, amphitheatre),
- jetty and boardwalk, and
- pedestrian links across The Esplanade to the Town Centre, specifically, signalised intersections at Lake Street/The Esplanade, and King Street/The Esplanade.

The Foreshore Master Plan contains few recommendations that vary from those identified in this Framework including:

1. Proposed row of trees on the shop side of The Esplanade, and
2. Proposed mid-block zebra crossing of The Esplanade.

The proposed improvements and intersection upgrades to The Esplanade would have a positive bearing on connectivity to the foreshore. Pedestrian crossing points at Lake Street and King Street signalised intersections would be safe and convenient. Removal of the mid-block pedestrian signals would be consistent with the long-term site planning of the foreshore facilities and main gathering areas. Future works on the foreshore reserve should take into account appropriate integration with the town centre framework. These variations are not considered significant, and do not affect the overall objective of the Foreshore Master Plan, and therefore changes to the Foreshore Master Plan are not warranted.





Figure 13 - Warners Bay Foreshore Master Plan – Zone 2

4.10 ACID SULFATE SOILS

The Warners Bay Town Centre is within an area classified as potentially containing acid sulfate soils. The potential presence of acid sulfate soils typically occurs on land close to water bodies, such as lakes, creeks and wetlands.

Development involving excavation will need to address and manage the possibility of exposing acid sulfate soils.

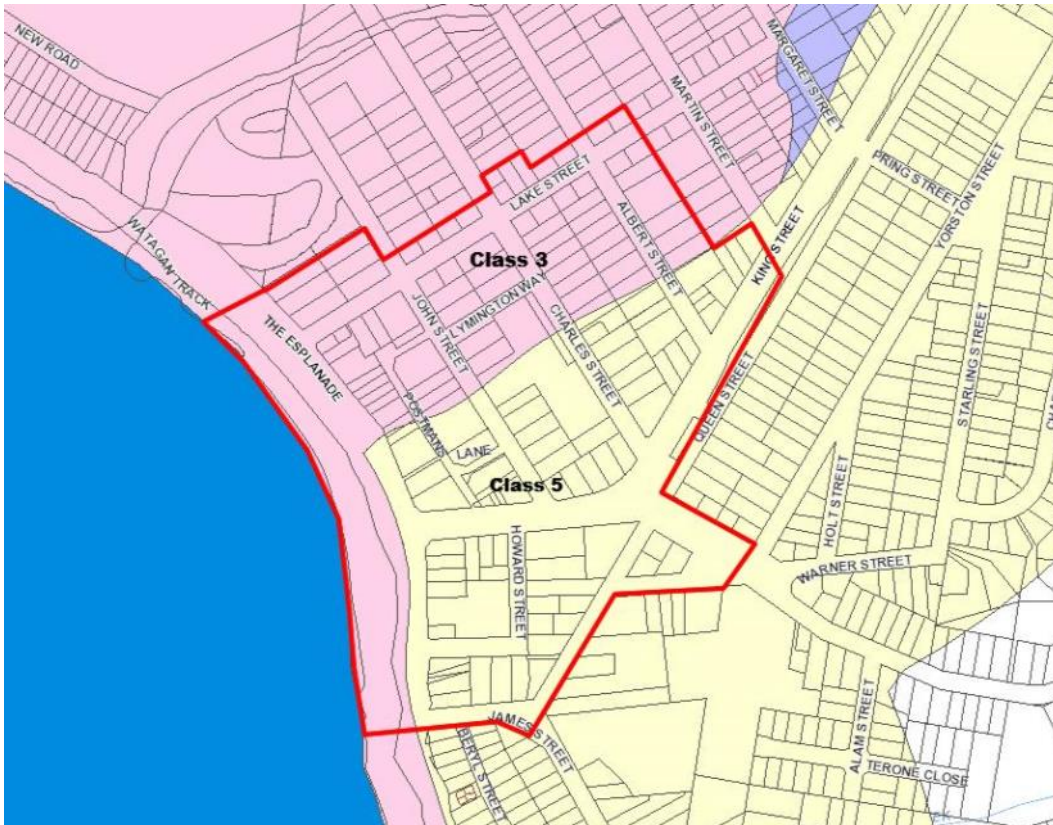


Figure 14 - Acid Sulfate Soils

4.11 FLOOD PRONE LAND

The northern areas of the centre around Lake Street are prone to inundation in the event of flooding. Some lands will be affected by flooding from North Creek, and flooding from the Lake Waterway.

The flood prone land map at Figure 18 shows the extent of the year 2100 1:100 year flood, and land less than 500mm above the 1:100 year flood level (the additional area for a 500mm freeboard). Lots affected by the 1:100 year flood and freeboard have development controls applied to manage flood hazard.

All areas below 3m Australian Height Datum (AHD) are subject to Council’s Sea Level Rise DCP provisions. General provisions in the DCP set the minimum floor levels for commercial and residential development.

This will affect development of properties, including basement car parks, near Lake Street as shown in Figure 18.



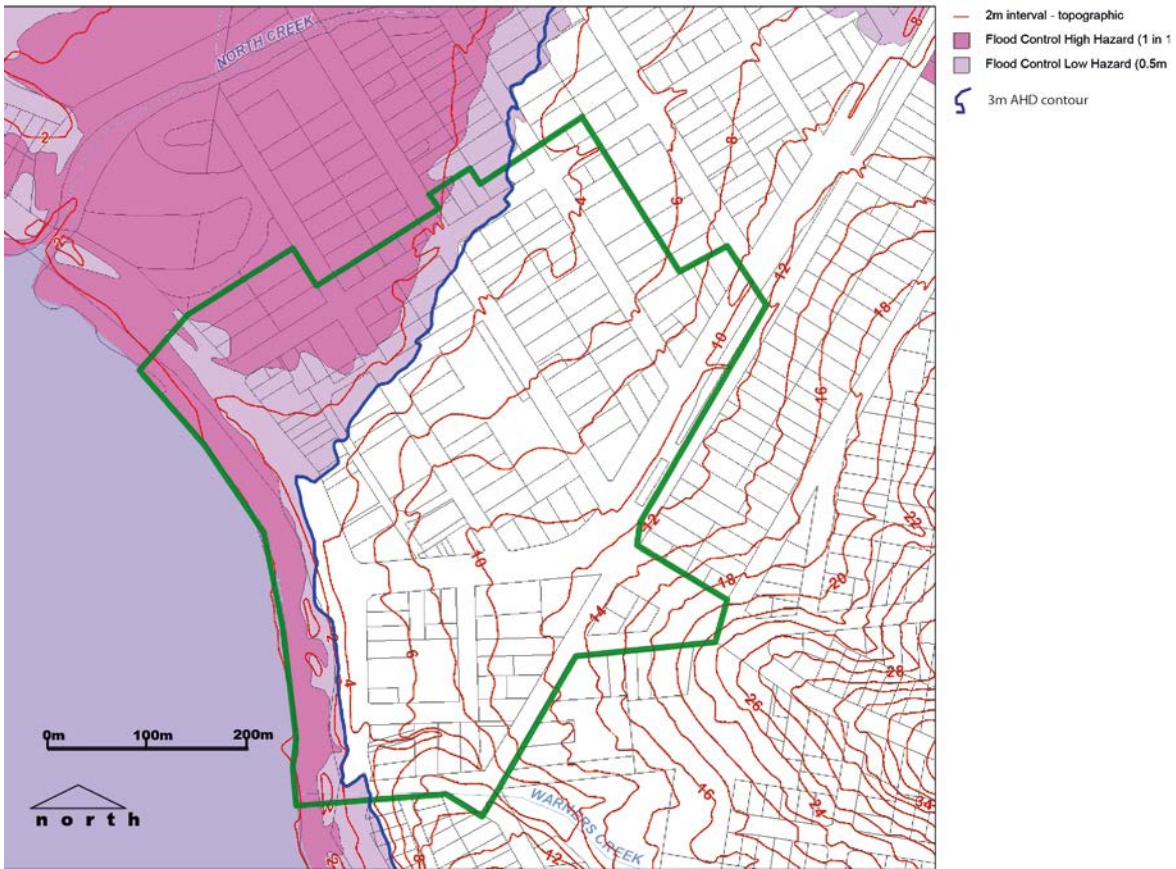


Figure 15 - Extent of 1:100 year flood event with 500mm freeboard to ground floor

Minimum floor heights for mixed-use developments proposed on the block bounded by John, Lake and Lymington Streets (Building type D) will be above existing footpath levels.

This will affect the design and pedestrian access at street frontage on Lake Street. A preferred design solution is shown in Figure 19. Basement car parking will need access above the flood planning level, and may need to come from a higher street boundary of the development site.

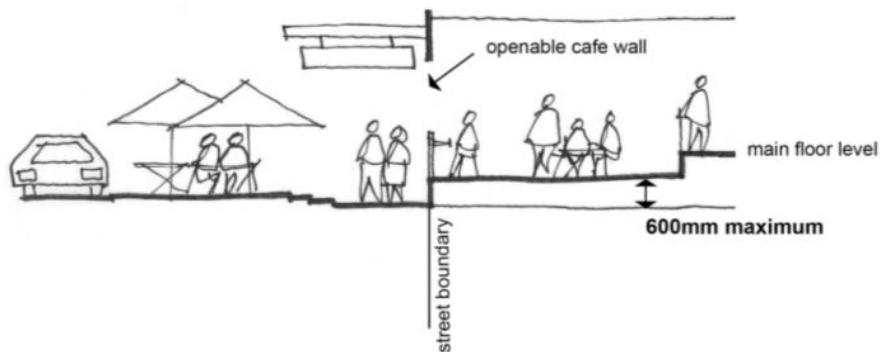


Figure 16 - Relationship of footpath and development on sites subject to Sea Level Rise MOVE IMAGE

## 5 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

For the purpose of this section of the Framework, the local catchment of Warners Bay Town Centre includes the suburbs of **Warners Bay, Lakelands, Speers Point, Eleebana and Valentine**. The combined population of these suburbs is 23,792 based on the 2011 Census. It is assumed that residents of these suburbs would reasonably visit Warners Bay Town Centre for local needs.

Statistics used in the following sections are taken from the 2001 and 2011 ABS Census data. See Appendix 2 for more detailed demographic information.

### 5.1 POPULATION GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), between 2001 and 2011 the population of Lake Macquarie LGA increased by 11,387 from 177,619 to 189,006. During the same period, the population of the local catchment of Warners Bay Town Centre increased by 1,209 from 22,583 to 23,792. The growth rate for the Lake Macquarie LGA between 2001 and 2011 was 6%. The population of the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment grew by 5.4% over the same 10-year period.

The latest estimated residential population for Lake Macquarie LGA is 200,796 (ABS, 2014).

Looking forward, the LHRS includes targets<sup>1</sup> for population, dwelling and jobs out to 2031. For Lake Macquarie, these targets include:

- population growth of 60,000 people,
- 12,000 more jobs, and
- 36,000 more dwellings with 21,000 of these in existing urban areas.

The NSW Government has recently released the NSW Population, Household and Dwelling Projections, 2014. The 2014 projections will be used as the basis for preparing the review of the LHRS, which is expected to be titled the *Lower Hunter Regional Growth Plan* and available for public comment in the second half of 2014. The key relevant statistics for Lake Macquarie LGA arising from the 2014 projections are:

- a population of 217,850 by 2031,
- approximately 12,800 more dwellings, and
- a decreasing household size from 2.51 people in 2011 to 2.39 in 2031.

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<sup>1</sup> Population “estimates”, “targets” and “projections” have different meanings and use different methodologies. A “target” is an aspirational figure that government policy may seek to deliver. An “estimate” or “projection” is a figure that is based on established demographic methodology and uses data such as population age profile, birth rate, death rate, immigration, fertility, dwelling occupancy rates, and how these may change over time to give a projection. Targets and projections are frequently different.

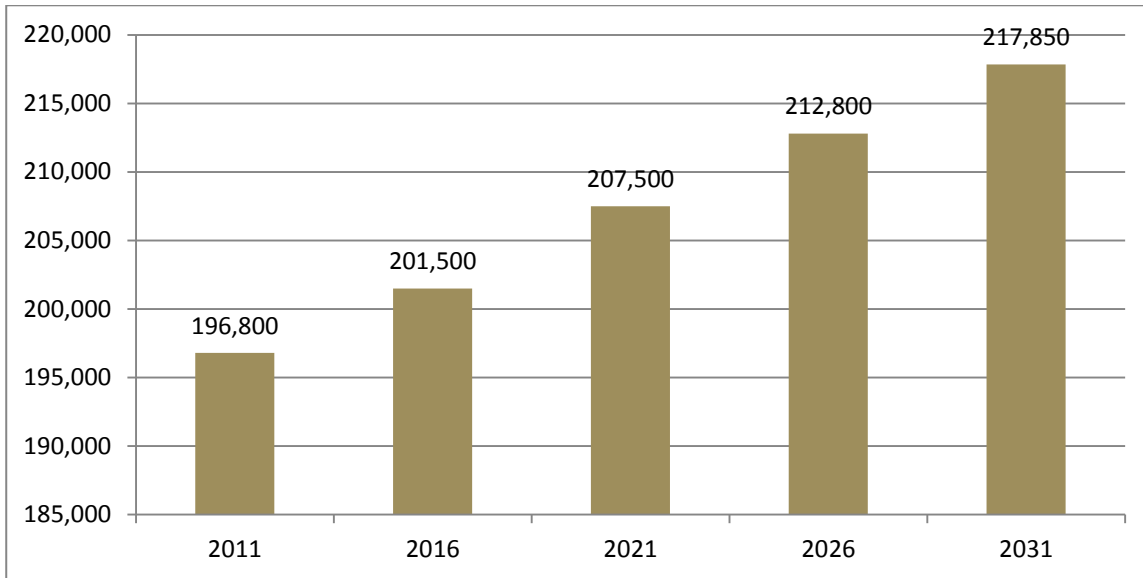


Figure 18 - Lake Macquarie LGA - Population Projections (NSW Government, 2014)

An analysis of development approvals and land availability within the catchment has outlined that the following development activity will likely occur in the Warners Bay local catchment:

- A five storey mixed-use building on King Street,
- Continued strong demand for redevelopment of residential land immediately surrounding the town centre, and
- Creation of approximately 200 residential lots off Fairfax Road.

Due to this expected level of development activity and Warners Bay’s desirable location, it is anticipated that the population of the Warners Bay local catchment will continue to increase at the same or slightly higher rate than what occurred between 2001 and 2011.

### 5.1.1 POPULATION AGE PROFILE

The population of the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment comprised approximately 12.6% of the total Lake Macquarie LGA population at the 2011 Census. This proportion changed slightly from the 2001 Census.

The median age of people in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment increased from 39 in 2001 to 42 in 2011. Warners Bay Catchment also continues to have a slightly older population than the Lake Macquarie LGA, 38 in 2001 and 41 in 2011. The increase in median age is reflected in the population age profile change between 2001 and 2011 where there has generally been a decrease in the proportion of people in the 0 to 49 age group and an increase in the proportion of people in the 50 plus age group. This aging trend is also being seen across the broader Lake Macquarie LGA population.

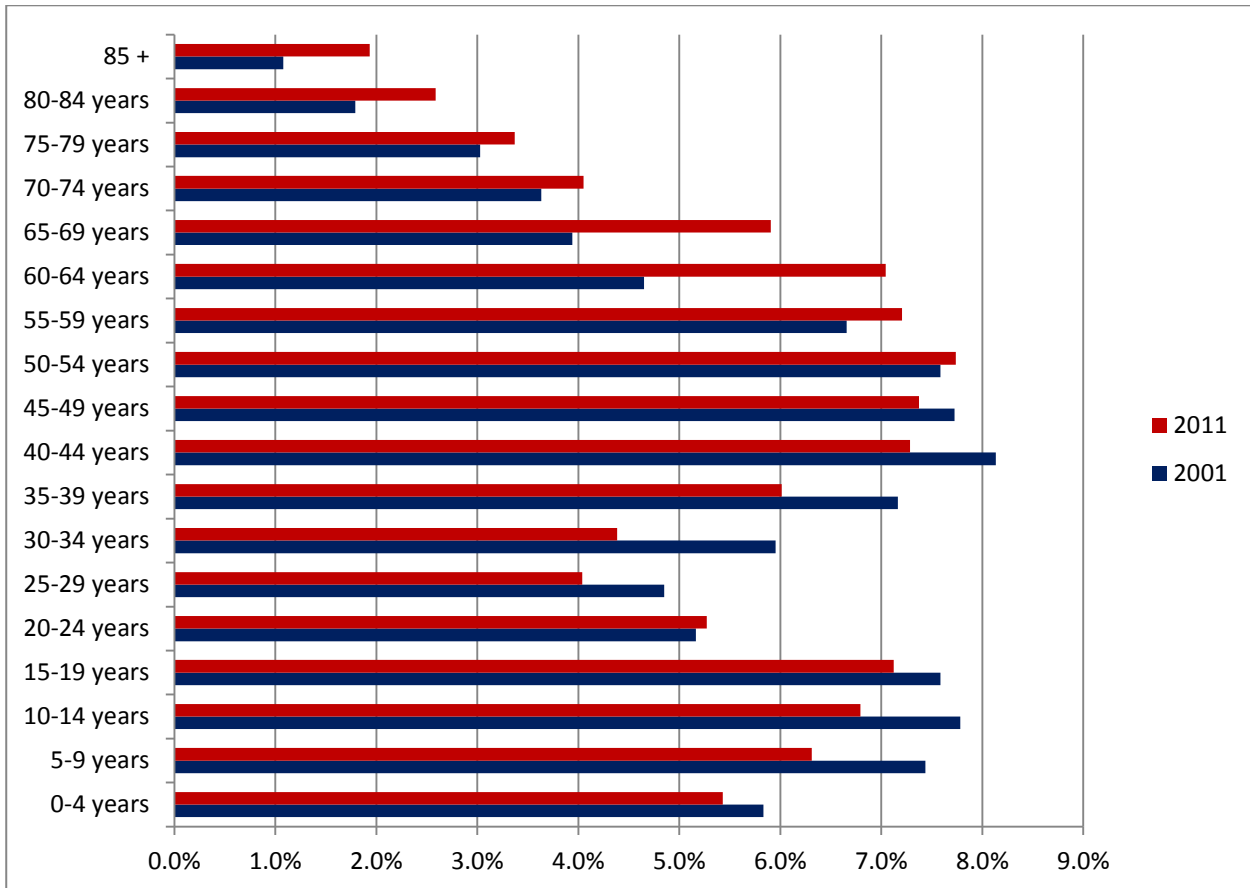


Figure 19 - Warners Bay Catchment Age Profile 2001 and 2011.

Between 2001 and 2011, there have been some significant changes in the number of people in several age groups as shown in Figure 22. Of particular note is the increase of 1,501 people aged between 50 to 70, and a decrease of 606 people aged between 25 and 40. There is also notable change in the number of people aged between 5 and 15 (-304) and those aged 70 plus (+724).

The population forecasts released by the NSW Government shows the continuing aging trend for Lake Macquarie LGA and that the proportion of residents over 55 years of age will increase from 31% in 2011 to 39% in 2031. (NSW Population, Household and Dwelling Projections, 2014).

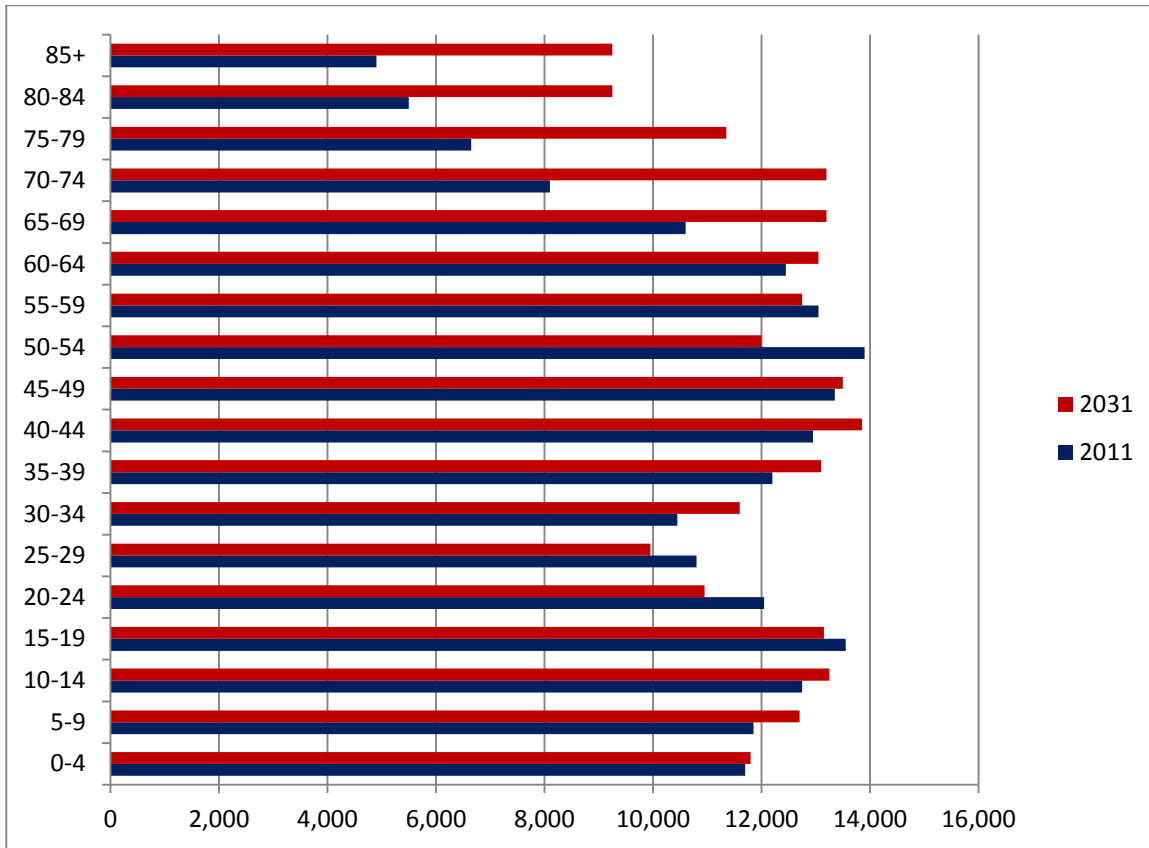


Figure 20 - Lake Macquarie LGA – Age Group Projections – 2011 and 2031

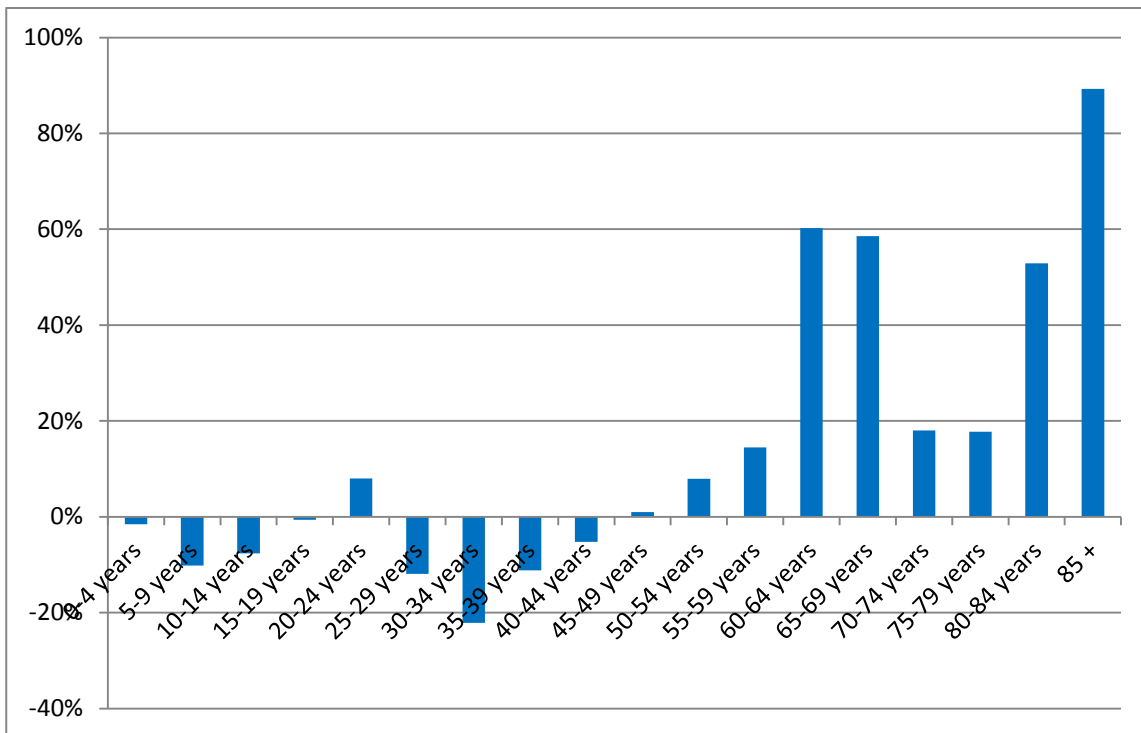


Figure 21 - Warners Bay Catchment – Age Group Rate of Change between 2001 and 2011.

The proportion of males (48.6%) and females (51.4%) in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment remained much the same between 2001 and 2011. This proportion is similar when compared to the Lake Macquarie LGA (48.8% Male and 51.2% Female).

## 5.1.2 INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

The median weekly family income in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment in 2001 was \$1,082 compared to an LGA median of \$899. This increased to \$1,781 in 2011 for the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment and \$1,396 for the LGA. The gap in weekly family incomes between the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment and the LGA grew between 2001 and 2011.

The Warners Bay Town Centre catchment had a lower unemployment rate (3.7%) compared to the LGA (5.3%) in 2011. The unemployment rate for both the catchment and the LGA has decreased from 2001.

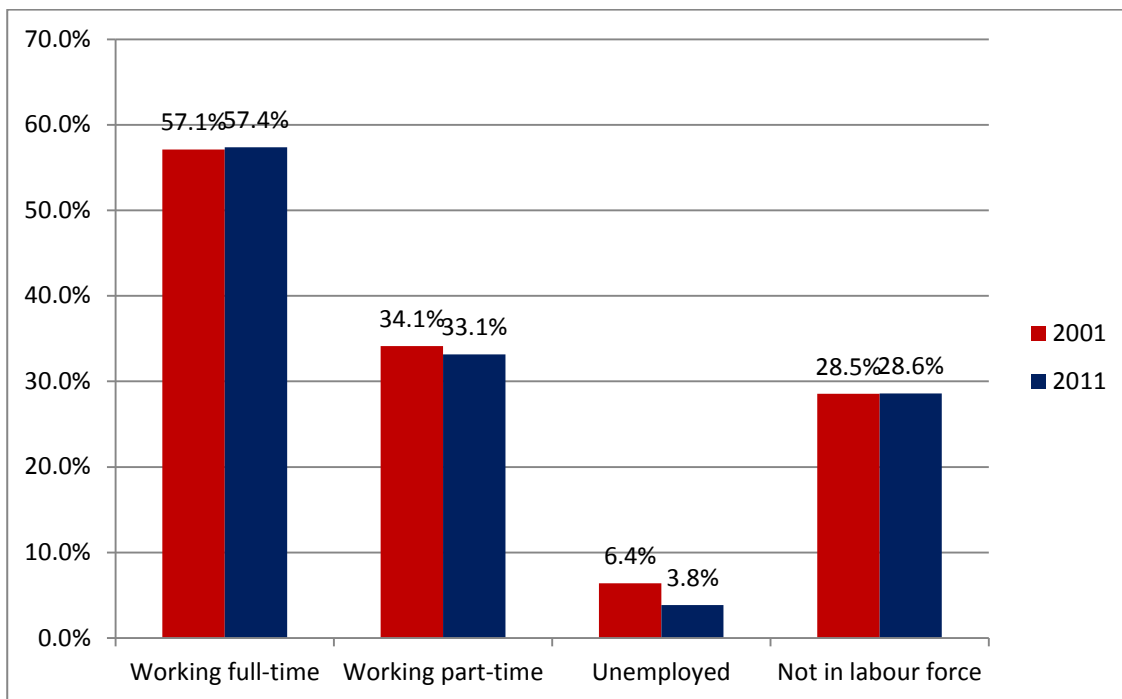


Figure 22 - Warners Bay Catchment –Employment – 2001 and 2011

For the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment, between 2001 and 2011 there has been little change in the number of people employed in part-time and full-time jobs. However, there has been a decrease in the proportion of the catchment population classified as ‘unemployed’. Additionally, when compared to the LGA, in 2011 there were a smaller proportion of people in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment who are classified as ‘not in labour force’ (28.6% compared to 31.4%).



### 5.1.3 EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

In 2011, across six different education and qualification categories, the Warners Bay Town Centre Catchment had a higher proportion of the population in five of the six categories compared to the Lake Macquarie LGA.

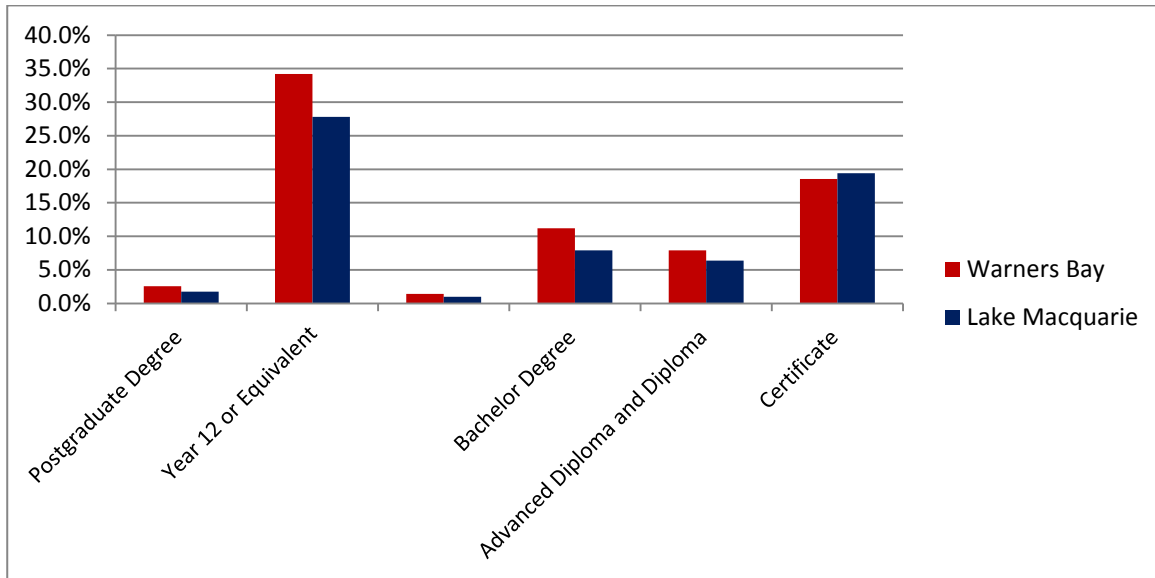


Figure 23 - Education types – Warners Bay compared to Lake Macquarie – 2011

Between 2001 and 2011, the Warners Bay Town Centre Catchment experienced an increase in the proportion of people in each qualification category as seen in Figure 27.

The greater proportion of people in the Warners Bay Town Centre Catchment in most categories compared to the LGA provides some insight as to why people in the catchment may also have a higher income.

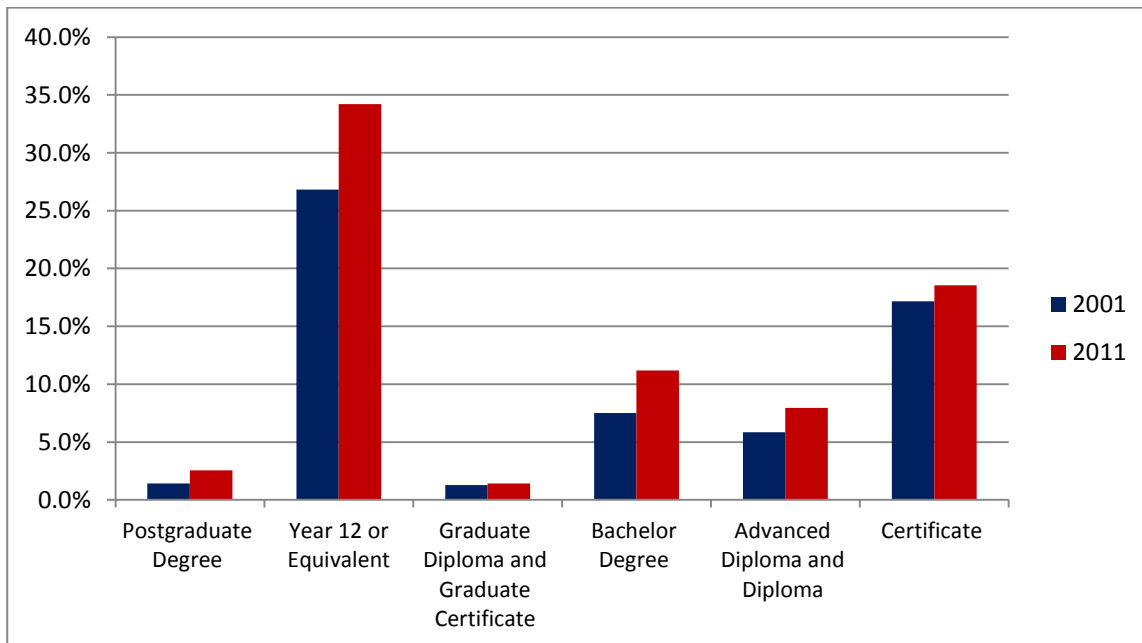


Figure 24 - Warners Bay Catchment – Education & Qualifications – 2001 to 2011

## 5.1.4 HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND DWELLING TYPE

In 2011, the average household size in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment was 2.7 people compared to the LGA average of 2.5 people. Both the catchment and LGA average household sizes decreased slightly between 2001 and 2011 from 2.8 for the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment and 2.6 for the LGA. These decreases reflect what is happening more broadly across NSW. There were similarities in the proportion of various household sizes between the Warners Bay catchment and the Lake Macquarie LGA in 2011 as shown in Figure 28. However, there were two notable exceptions; lone-person households, where Warners Bay Town Centre catchment had a smaller proportion, and four-person households where Warners Bay Town Centre catchment had a greater proportion compared to the Lake Macquarie LGA.

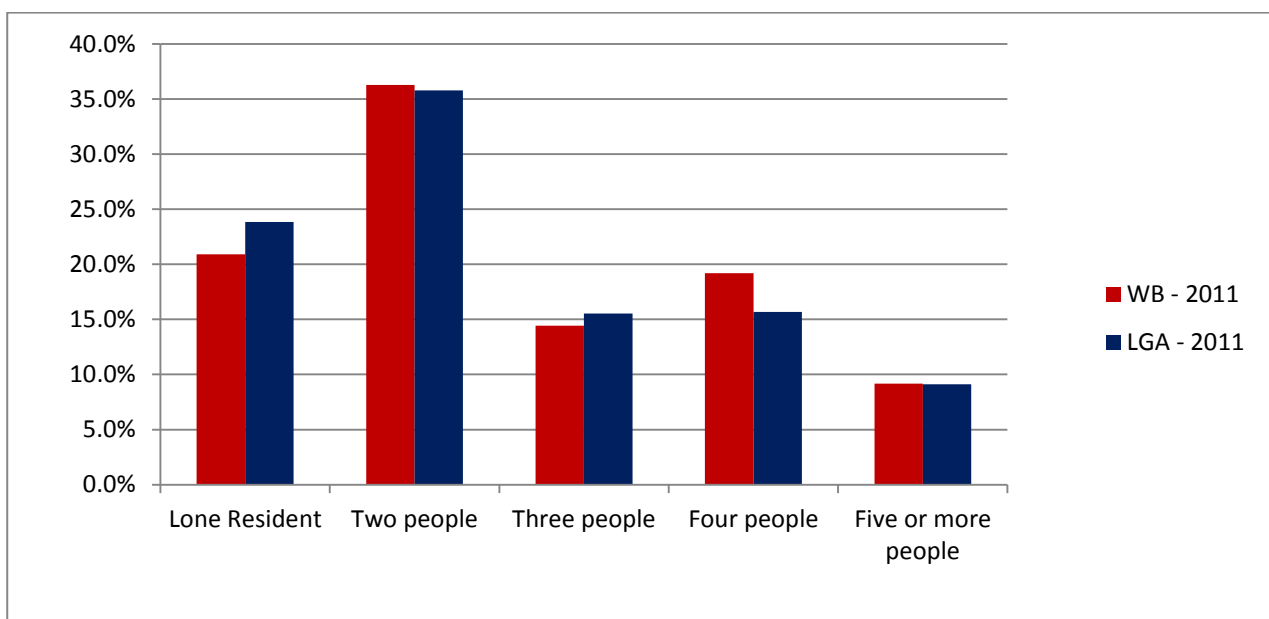


Figure 25 - Household size – Warners Bay and Lake Macquarie - 2011

Between 2001 and 2011, there has been a 16% increase in the number of private dwellings in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment. As seen in Figure 29, over the same period Warners Bay Town Centre catchment has experienced a slight decline in the proportion of separate dwellings and dwellings that are part of a flat or unit complex. Conversely, the catchment has experienced a slight increase in the proportion of villas, townhouses and other attached dwelling types.

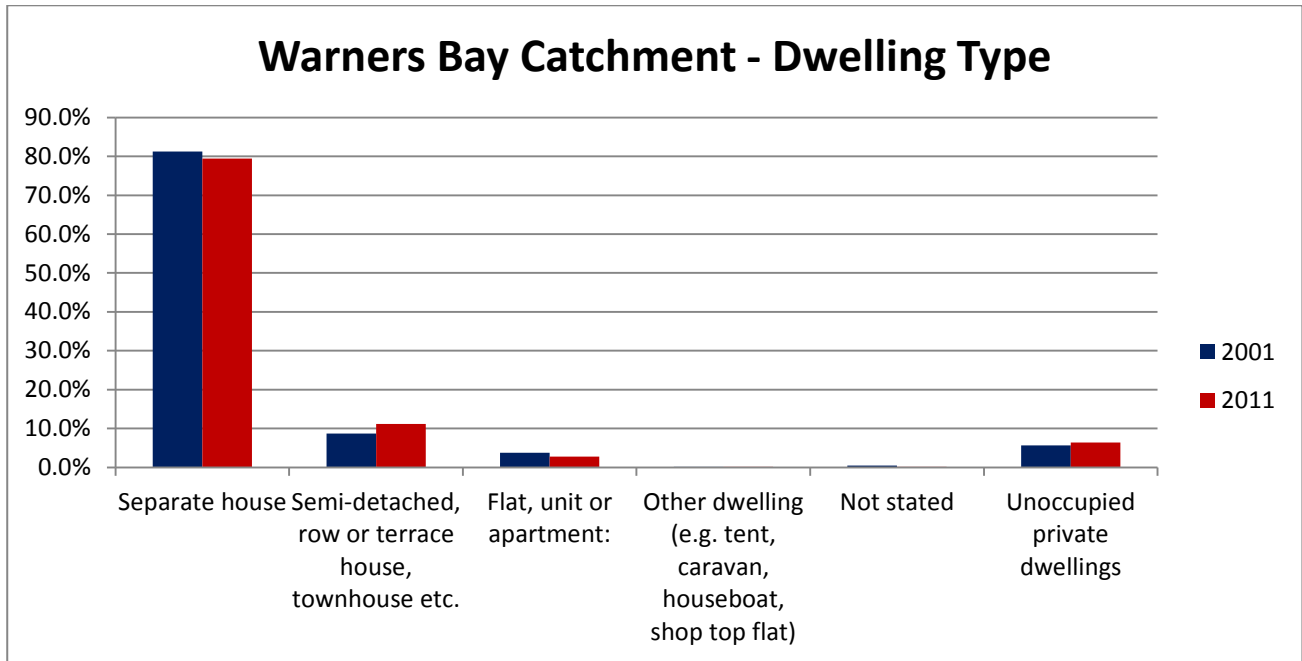


Figure 26 - Warners Bay Catchment – Proportion of Dwelling types – 2001 and 2011

### 5.1.5 MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Used as a guide for population mobility, motor vehicle ownership in the Warners Bay Town Centre catchment increased significantly between 2001 and 2011. As seen in Figure 30, the number of dwellings reported as having one motor vehicle increased by 86%, with the two motor vehicle dwellings increasing by 235% while three or more motor vehicle dwellings increasing by 387%. These increases are also consistent with the growth in motor vehicle ownership seen across the Lake Macquarie LGA.

The increase in the number of motor vehicles may also explain the increased demand for car parking outlined in community feedback.

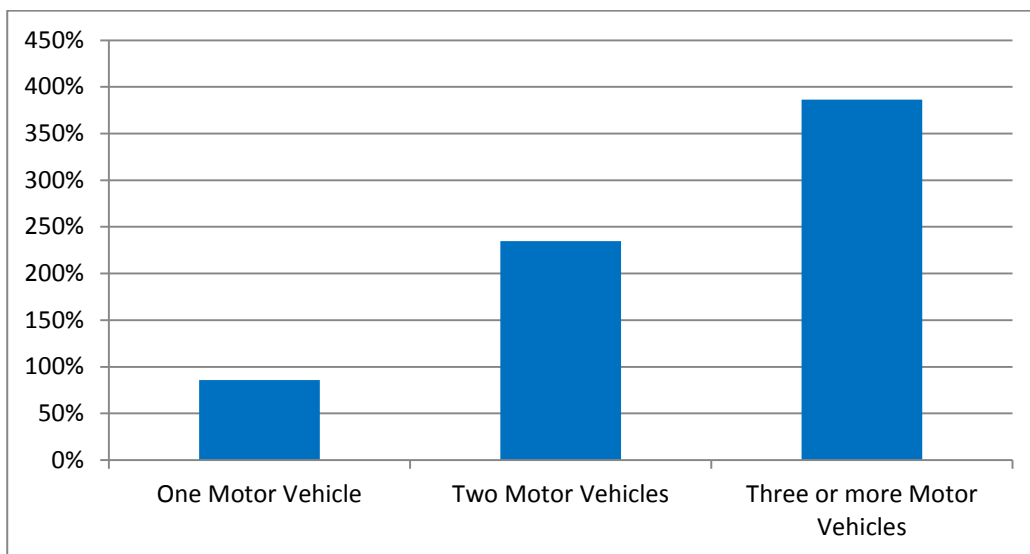


Figure 27 - Warners Bay Catchment - Vehicles per dwelling change 2001 to 2011

### 5.2 RETAIL AND BUSINESS TRENDS

Warners Bay Town Centre supports approximately 170 businesses mainly in the areas of retail, health, medical, professional services, and hospitality (Town Centre Coordinator 2013). The Lake Macquarie Commercial Centre Study (2012) identifies that there were 157 operating businesses in Warners Bay Town Centre in 2012 with 41% (63) of these in the “knowledge based service industries” category, 36% (57) in the “person based service industries” category and 22% (35) in the “goods related service industries” category.

**GOODS RELATED SERVICE INDUSTRIES** – those providing services, such as moving or selling goods, to industries that produce goods. transport; storage; wholesale trade; retail trade.

**KNOWLEDGE BASED SERVICE INDUSTRIES** – the highly skilled service industries. property and business services; health and community services; education, finance and insurance; communication services.

**PERSON BASED SERVICES** – those which cater directly to people’s needs. personal and other services; accommodation; cafes and restaurants; cultural and recreation services

Source: Australia and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification 1993 (ABS)

Warners Bay is one of only two town centres in Lake Macquarie LGA that has experienced a decrease in leasable floor space between 2002 and 2012. (Lake Macquarie Commercial Centre Study, 2012)

The Chamber of Commerce reports that many retailers are experiencing difficulty competing with growing internet services and on-line retailing.

Anecdotally, and as shown in the Lake Macquarie Commercial Centre Study, 2012, Warners Bay Town Centre is finding a niche in the types of services and businesses available in the town centre. This niche includes strong representation in health related services and personal service based businesses such as, general medical practitioners, physiotherapists, dentists, pathology, optometrists, chiropractors, banking and finance, personal beauty, cafes, restaurants, take-away cafes and real estates, along with a range of other specialist medical related businesses. The centre also provides a range of other services such as chemists, women’s fashion, lawyers, travel, and youth services.

Due to the location and catchment demographics of the Warners Bay Town Centre, there is an opportunity to strengthen and build on this niche.

### 5.3 INVESTMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE

There has been minimal private investment in new building stock in the Warners Bay Town Centre core (3(1) and 3(2) zoned land), since the Warners Bay Village was developed in 2001, Auscoal Offices established in 1997, and the five-storey mixed-use development on The Esplanade south of King Street in 2003. This is in contrast to investment in surrounding town centres such as Belmont and Charlestown.

Analysis of development approvals in the Town Centre core (3(1) and 3(2) zoned land) between 2004 and 2014 shows that fit-outs for shops and commercial spaces were the most numerous approval types with 17 approvals. Alterations and additions to premises (16 approvals), signage (10 approvals), and new

commercial premises (7 approvals) were the next most numerous development types approved. There were two approvals for medical premises and three restaurants approved during this time. Of note was the 10 approvals given for mixed-use development, multiple dwelling housing and residential flat buildings during this period.

Although there has been comparatively minimal investment and construction activity in the Town Centre core, the surrounding medium density residential zoned land has experienced significant recent redevelopment.

Analysis of development approvals in the medium density residential zoned land between 2004 and 2014, shows that alternations and additions were the most numerous with 54 approvals issued. Of note, is the 27 approvals given for multi dwelling housing in the period. Many of the multi dwelling housing developments have been constructed.

Other notable approvals in the medium density residential area include 18 new dwellings, three dual occupancies, one residential flat building, and five approvals for various development at the Warners Bay Bowling Club.

Public investment in the Warners Bay Town Centre is comparable to other town centres in Lake Macquarie and has been predominantly focused on the Lake foreshore. There has also been some works to intersections and pedestrian areas.

### 5.4 DEMAND FOR OFFICE AND RETAIL SPACE

SGS Economics (2012) forecast that demand for commercial floor space in Warners Bay Town Centre would grow by 27,000m<sup>2</sup> in the period up to 2031, with approximately 17,000m<sup>2</sup> office space and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> retail floor space. The centre has one supermarket and the local catchment of approximately 23,000 residents is sufficient to support another supermarket (Cullen, 2013).

It is considered that there is currently a shortage of suitable commercial office floor space to expand the servicing capacity of the centre for businesses and the community. Factors that make floor space suitable include; availability of enough floor space, local demographics, cost to rent or buy, quality of floor space, access to telecommunications infrastructure, location of the business market, access to transport networks and location of competitors and support businesses.

Some recent examples that reflect the shortage of suitable commercial floor space in the Town Centre include, Auscoal's and WP Partners' decision to leave Warners Bay, and several service orientated businesses locating at the Hillsborough Road precinct including; ADW Johnson, Evolution Advisors, Interlink Management Services and Pacific National.

### 5.5 TOURISM AND RECREATION

Lake Macquarie LGA has over one million visitors each year, spending a total of \$168 million. The largest proportion of visitors are domestic day visitors (783,000), followed by domestic overnight visitors (276,000), with 7,000 international visitors each year. (Destination NSW, 2013). The number of visitors has been steadily increasing over the past decade.

The smallest travel group is the international visitors. The 7,000 international visitors to the LGA are each staying an average of 2.3 nights and contributing \$7 million to the local economy. The main reasons for international visitors travelling to the LGA are to holiday (34%), and visit family (50%), with 54% of visitors staying with friends or relatives (Destination NSW, 2013).

The domestic overnight visitors are spending an average of 2.9 nights in the LGA and contributing roughly \$100 million to the local economy. Eight-six percent of domestic overnight visitors are coming from other parts of NSW with the main reasons for travel being holiday (34%), and visiting friends/relatives (51%). The predominant accommodation type for domestic overnight visitors is staying with friends/family (49%), while 14% stay at caravan parks/camping grounds and 10% stay in hotel/motel style accommodation. The most common activities of domestic overnight visitors to the LGA include visiting friends/relatives (61%), eating out at restaurants/cafes (38%), and sightseeing (23%) (Destination NSW, 2013).

The largest travel group is the domestic day trip visitor where 783,000 visitors to Lake Macquarie contribute about \$60 million annually to the local economy. The main reasons for travel for this group are holiday (42% and visiting friends/relatives (40%) (Destination NSW, 2013). The most common activities of domestic day trip visitors to the LGA include visiting friends/relatives (41%), eating out at restaurants/cafes (37%), and shopping (14%) (Destination NSW, 2013).

**international visitor** is a foreign resident over 15 years of age who visited Australia for a period of less than 12 months and spent at least one night in the LGA.

**domestic overnight visitor** is an Australian resident over 15 years of age who stayed at least one night and were at least 40km from home.

**domestic day trip visitor** is an Australian resident over 15 years of age who went on a trip of at least 4 hours (but did not stay the night) with a round trip distance of at least 50km.

Source: Destination NSW, 2013

Table 1 provides a summary of the number and type of tourist accommodation available in Lake Macquarie LGA.

Table 1 - Summary of accommodation types in Lake Macquarie LGA.

Accommodation Type	No.	No. of Rooms/Sites/Houses
Hotels/Motels	17	419
Resort	2	128
Caravan/Tourist Parks	10	520
Bed & Breakfast	12	22
Backpackers	1	5
Holiday Letting/House/Unit	70	151
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1245</b>



There are several tourist accommodation options in and within a 5km radius of Warners Bay Town Centre including; The Warners Bay Hotel, Warners at The Bay, The Eco Inn and Pippi's at The Point. The number of bed and breakfast and private dwelling rental accommodation options within the same area is not known. However, the only two accommodation options in or within walking distance (800m) of the Town Centre are The Warners Bay Hotel and The Eco Inn.

Warners Bay Town Centre and surrounds are well catered for with recreation opportunities. The Lake and foreshore, including the lakeside shared pathway (including the red bluff over water path) attract a significant number of people for a variety of activities including, fishing, water skiing, sailing, walking, cycling, picnics and cultural events. The Warners Bay recreation precinct on Hillsborough Road offers a variety of recreational activities, including: ice skating, ten pin bowling, fitness centres, go-karting, indoor sports centre, and indoor swimming centre.

Due to the current short supply of tourist accommodation in the town centre and Warners Bay's location, natural setting and activities/events, the tourist accommodation sector is considered a growth opportunity for the Town Centre.

### 5.6 DEMAND FOR TOWN CENTRE LIVING

There is an increasing trend of people wanting to live in urban centres close to services and facilities, particularly young adults and retirees. This trend is being driven by many factors including: increasing costs (time, transport, social, housing) of living in suburbs on the urban fringe, shifts in what's important to younger adults and retirees along with changes in technology and ways of doing business.

This trend is evident in an analysis of development approvals in Warners Bay between 2004 and 2014. Of note, are the 27 approvals for multi dwelling housing and one residential flat building in the medium density residential area surrounding the town centre. Many of these projects have been constructed. Additionally, there were 10 approvals for mixed-use development, multiple dwelling housing and residential flat buildings during this period in the Town Centre core area. The most notable is the five storey mixed-use development on King Street. The 111 apartments in this development are currently selling off the plan and construction is expected to begin in late 2014 or early 2015.

As previously mentioned the proportion of residents over 55 years of age in Lake Macquarie LGA is projected to increase from 31% in 2011 to 39% in 2031 (NSW, 2014). A similar increase is expected to occur in the Warners Bay catchment. The growth in residents in the 55 plus age group will continue to apply pressure for housing close to urban centres.

More broadly, the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie LGA's have been showing signs of strong demand for town centre living as can be seen in Table 2. This table is an indicator of the broader trend that relates to Warners Bay.

Table 2 - Development Activity in Belmont, Charlestown, and Newcastle

Location	Detail	Comment
<b>Belmont</b>		
The Wharf – Macquarie Street	Mixed Use – 14 Apartments	Construction commenced.
571 Pacific Highway	Mixed Use – 113 Apartments	construction commenced
Santorini – Brooks Parade	Mixed Use – 14 Apartments	built
Deck 56 – Brooks Parade	Mixed Use – 12 Apartments	built
Belmont Central – Sharp Street	Mixed Use – 42 Apartments	built
29 Macquarie Street	Mixed Use – 17 Apartments	Approved – construction not commenced
<b>Charlestown</b>		
Sky Central – Pacific Highway	Mixed Use – 37 Apartments	built
Landmark Apartments – Pacific Highway	Mixed Use - 59 Apartments	built
Eastside – Charles Street	67 Apartments	Approved – construction not commenced
<b>Newcastle<sup>2</sup></b>		
Tattersall's Apartments – Watt Street.	Mixed Use – 53 apartments	100% sold off plan
Peniche Apartments – Watt Street	Mixed Use – 40 Apartments	
Arena Apartments – Newcastle Beach	Mixed Use – 150 Apartments	80% sold off plan
Wren Apartments – Hunter Street	Mixed Use – 18 Apartments	
Icon Central – King Street	Mixed Use – 262 Apartments	
Spire Apartments – King Street	Mixed Use – 150 Apartments	
Star Apartments – King Street	Mixed Use – 31 Dwellings	100% sold off plan

Warners Bay is well placed to capitalise on the demand for town centre living trend due to its desirable central location, high amenity and access to services and facilities.

Development viability is another key factor that forms part of the trend towards town centre living. There is a range of matters that contribute to the viability of development:

- What the market wants (e.g. size of apartments),
- What price the market is willing to pay,
- Planning controls (e.g. heights, setbacks, parking rates),
- Physical constraints (e.g. flooding, geotechnical),
- Land values, and
- Access to finance.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment is working on an Urban Feasibility Model for the Lower Hunter, Sydney Metro, and Illawarra regions. The model aims to outline the feasibility of development in

<sup>2</sup> Information sourced from Newcastle Herald, Saturday 5 July 2014.

an area based on land values, market prices, known constraints (e.g. mine subsidence, flooding) and planning controls (e.g. building height, setbacks). The model is not yet available to the public, but is anticipated to be available during the second half of 2014.

When this modelling information become available, it will form another source of information to guide the structure and desired development framework for Warners Bay Town Centre.

## 5.7 LAND OWNERSHIP

Property ownership is fragmented in the centre, particularly along The Esplanade strip (see Figure 31).

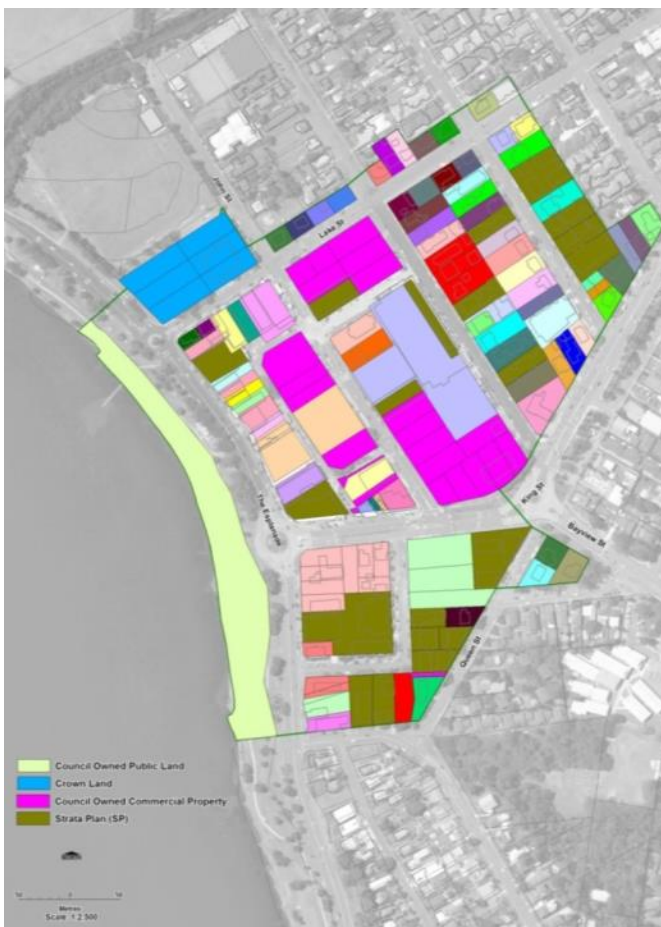


Figure 28 - Warners Bay Town Centre Land Ownership

There are six larger sites in the centre, three of which are owned by Council. The timing and form of redevelopment of these larger sites will have a significant impact on the future of the Town Centre.

Future amalgamation and development of fragmented parcels would be influenced by access, servicing and the availability of off-site parking. Redevelopment of sites on The Esplanade is constrained by the difficulty of providing on-site parking but these lots have the benefit of rear lane access. To generate a fine grain character on The Esplanade it would be desirable to enable development of existing single lots.

## 6 TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

### 6.1 TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND PARKING STUDY

A *Warners Bay Transport and Traffic Study* (GTA Consultants 2014) was prepared to inform the future planning framework and infrastructure requirements for Warners Bay.

The study was based on the principles of:

- a pedestrian environment that is safe, active, well connected, and attractive,
- a safe well-connected cycle network that supports cycling for transport,
- increased access to public transport,
- provision of adequate public car parking within the town core, and
- an effective and practical vehicle network system.

### 6.2 SCOPE OF STUDY

The brief defined the Study area, and key intersections within the context of the greater road network (see Figure 4). The tasks were to:

1. analyse transport issues within the Town Centre Study area, and including public transport capacity, parking provision, pedestrian/cycling opportunities, and vehicle circulation.
2. model existing traffic movements within the study area.
3. model two growth scenarios (shorter term and longer term) for the Warners Bay Town Centre.
4. identify transport infrastructure upgrades required to accommodate each scenario.

GTA conducted the following research, surveys and analysis:

- Examine the accident data, and investigate locations with a significant accident history in the study area.
- Review the existing bus routes and service providers, the interconnection with taxis and walking routes.
- Assess pedestrian and cycleway links and bike facilities, and conflicts with vehicular traffic and parking movements.
- Conduct a parking survey, including the number of period parking and disabled parking, for all public and private car parks within the area bounded by Lake Street, Charles Street, King Street and The Esplanade. Identify the general usage levels and areas overloaded or not working efficiently.
- Assess heavy and service vehicular movements within the car parks and the local road network, and their conflicts with general traffic and pedestrians.
- Conduct traffic counts for 12 key intersections.
- Analyse all intersections identified in Figure 33 for the present traffic volumes and for the future development scenarios A and B, using 'SIDRA' computer modelling software.

## 6.3 STATE ROADS – KING STREET AND THE ESPLANADE

King Street is the collector road for traffic from Charlestown via Hillsborough Road. The Esplanade is a busy traffic route for vehicles travelling between centres on the lake.

King Street and The Esplanade are part of the state road network that is managed by Roads and Maritime Services. They are significant corridors in the larger traffic network, with The Esplanade carrying 22,000 vehicles per day and King Street 20,000 vehicles per day (based on surveys in August 2013).

These high traffic volumes combined with intersection designs and the two lane bridge at North Creek have had an adverse impact on access to the Town Centre, its internal traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, and pedestrian access to both the foreshore and the commercial area south of King Street.

Propositions to close The Esplanade to vehicle traffic and to re-route the main network flow have been explored but are not considered tenable.

Diverting flow via King Street and Medcalf Street would substantially increase trip distance and travel time. Even assuming drivers accepted this proposal and impacts on the local residential community could be managed, this proposal would significantly increase traffic volumes, reduce intersection performance and put excessive pressure on the single lane sections of Medcalf Street. Rat running along residential streets would likely become a major issue.

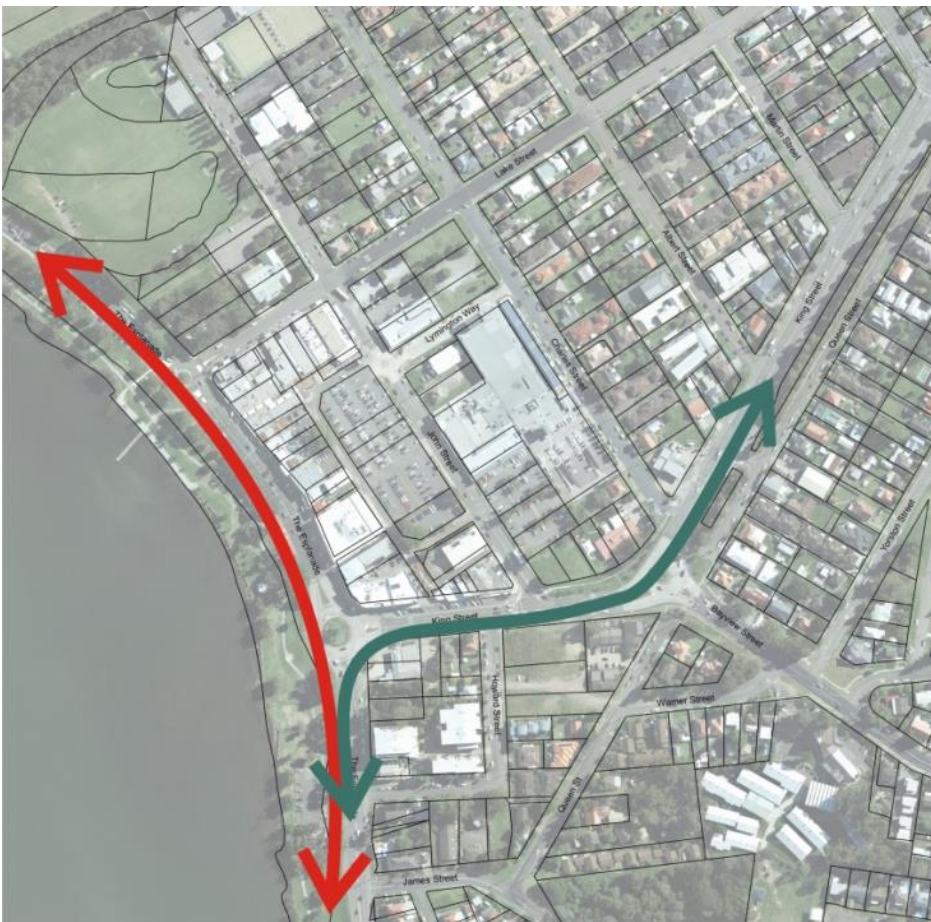


Figure 29 - Key network routes managed by Roads and Maritime Services



## 6.4 LOCAL TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

Town Centre traffic circulation is adversely affected by left only turning movement from John Street to King Street and left only from Charles Street near the King Street/Bayview Street roundabout that forces traffic out of town rather than supporting good circulation. Traffic in John Street or Charles Street heading south is obliged to circulate around Lake Street then left onto The Esplanade, which is adding to congestion at this intersection.

In addition, Lymington Way is a one-way local road that reduces the efficiency of circulation within the Town Centre.



Figure 30 - Existing intersection operations with left turn only movements at John and Charles Streets



### 6.5 CYCLING ROUTES

The topography around Warners Bay lends itself to cycle transport.

Cycling is possible from the adjoining suburbs (in an east-west direction) along Queen Street but the off road route ends east of the Bayview Street roundabout and does not connect to the foreshore or into the town centre. The link to the Foreshore could be established on King Street or via Charles Street and Lake Street.

Cycling is also possible across North Creek to the town centre using the existing footbridges at Charles and John Street but no allowance is made for cycle safe lanes on these north-south streets, which could also connect into the town centre.

Cycling for transport would be further enabled by user information and end-of- trip facilities.

### 6.6 WALKABILITY

The walkability of Warners Bay is determined by the street and state road configuration, the existing built form, road crossing facilities and the quality of footpaths and public spaces. The key factors are:

- Pedestrian areas, arcades, footpaths, ramps and crossing points are generally unattractive, poorly paved and awkward for circulation.
- Pedestrian movement across The Esplanade is hampered by the four-lane traffic flow, roundabouts, high traffic volumes and rear to kerb angle parking. Pedestrian signals have been installed mid-block on The Esplanade, between King Street and Lake Street to manage pedestrian crossing. Traffic calming measures, have been installed more recently on the road pavement to slow vehicle traffic.
- Pedestrian refuges on roundabout approaches such as The Esplanade approaching Lake Street and on King Street approaching The Esplanade are unsuitable for children and less mobile pedestrians.
- The pedestrian links that run from the John Street car park to The Esplanade trading strip, and to the foreshore are important for east – west pedestrian movement. The Lake Village Arcade (north) and the Bay Arcade (south) are activated by small shop fronts. The central link is through a building with minimal activation either side.
- The pedestrian crossing on John Street provides a convenient link form the shopping centre to the car park.
- The rough surface and the lack of clear pedestrian through routes in the John Street car park The poor quality of footpath pavements and outdoor trading areas



Figure 31 - Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Network and Facilities

## 6.7 BUS TRANSPORT

Public buses from Newcastle, Charlestown, Glendale, and Belmont service the centre.

Newcastle Buses operate the 320 service from Newcastle to Charlestown, Mount Hutton, and Warners Bay.

Newcastle Buses also operate the 363 service from Newcastle via Glendale and reaches its final destination at Warners Bay. The return service is from Warners Bay to Newcastle via Glendale.

Hunter Valley Buses operate the 269 service from Charlestown to Toronto via Warners Bay.

Generally these three services arrive hourly in Warners Bay and there is an opportunity to improve the frequency of services and possibly the efficiency of the route.

Bus patronage would also be increased by improving bus facilities in the town centre, including bus shelters, seating and provision of a layover area.

## 6.8 PARKING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Car parking is provided in three main at-grade parking areas and below the supermarket development located between John and Charles Streets.

The parking surveys (Skyhigh Parking Surveys dated 8 and 10 August 2013) show high occupancy rates in street parking spaces, and in off-street car parks across the centre for both survey periods on a Thursday from 10am to 6pm, and Saturday from 10am until 3pm.

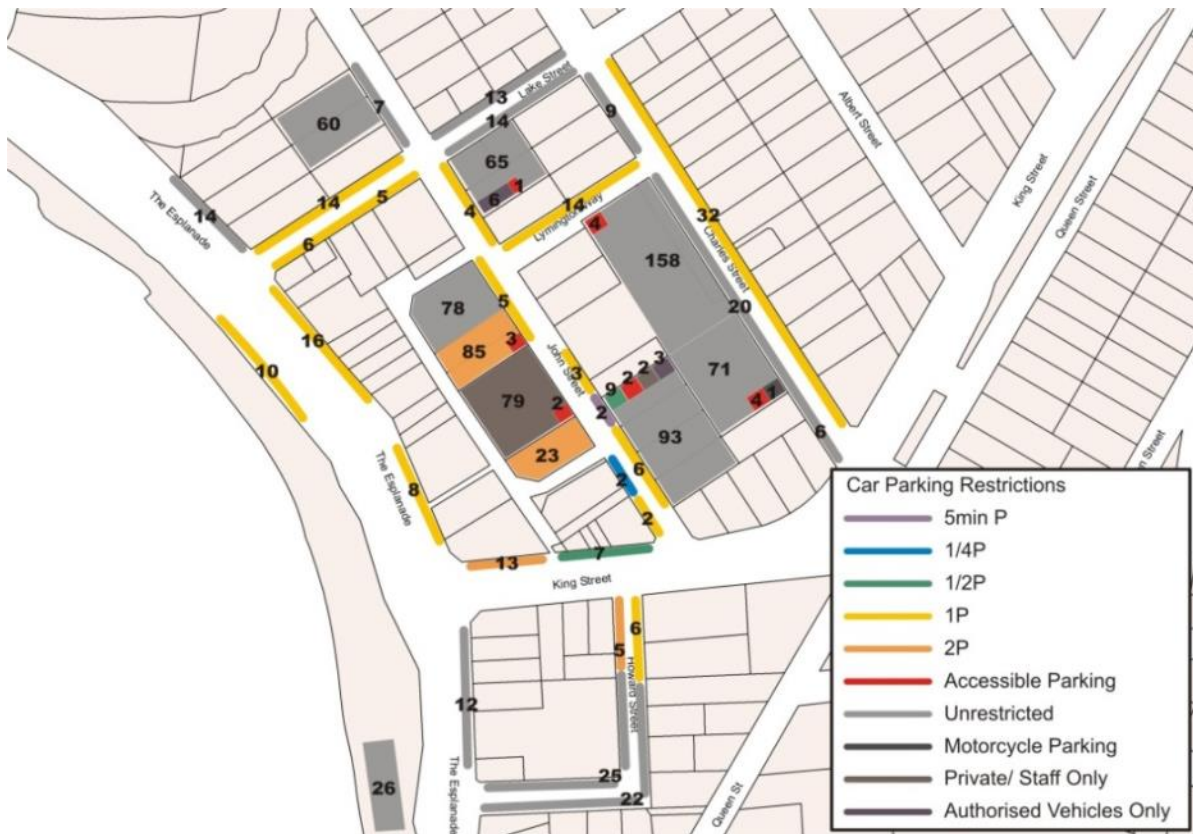


Figure 32 - Existing parking supply

The August 2013 parking survey shows Warners Bay town centre has 304 on-street parking spaces. Approximately half of the on-street parking spaces are for an unrestricted time. Overall occupancy for the on-street spaces was high at 80% or more.



In the John Street car park there are 189 public spaces. The parking area provides for an historical shortage of parking on the Dress Circle sites and is servicing local businesses. The John Street car park includes another 81 private spaces on the Auscoal owned parcel that service the retail and office building at 470 The Esplanade.

Another 72 public car parking spaces are provided in an informal gravel area at Council’s Lake and John Streets site and 60 spaces at the Performing Arts Centre. On the eastern side of John Street, adjacent to the Lake Village development, there are 114 spaces on Council owned land.

The occupancy rate for off-street parking exceeded 85% for the survey period 10am to 2.00pm on Thursday. The Thursday result shows that the town centre parking is close to capacity between 10am and 12noon and remains above effective capacity (that is when the car park appears to be full) until about 2pm as shown in Figure 36.

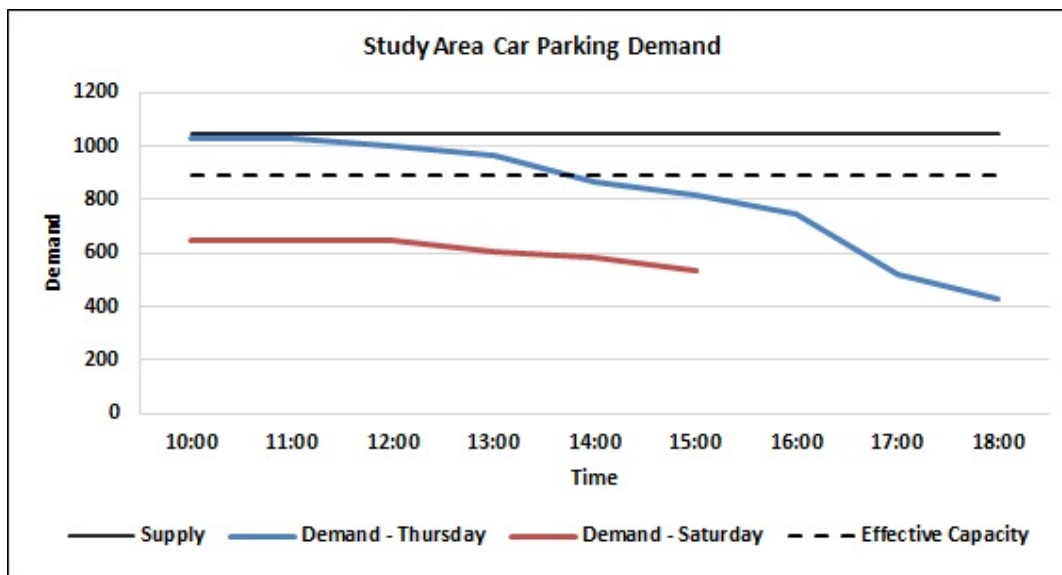


Figure 33 - Parking demand showing weekday peak

In summary, parking supply is not meeting demand at peak times in the town centre. The factors that are likely to contribute to a high demand for parking are:

- The availability of parking at no cost to the motorist
- Lack of frequent and convenient bus services
- Lack of continuous safe off-street cycling routes
- An unpleasant environment for walking
- High growth in motor vehicle ownership in Warners Bay catchment and the LGA generally

The opportunities and strategies for both reducing future parking demand and for increasing future supply are detailed in Section 8 – Town Centre Strategies.

### 6.9 THE REAL COSTS OF PARKING

#### 6.9.1 COST OF OFF-STREET PARKING SPACE

Planning controls normally identify minimum parking requirements to meet the peak demand for parking for each land use, without considering either the cost of providing the required parking spaces and the loss of potential commercial or residential floor space.

Providing free parking or parking at a subsidised rate inflates the demand for parking. In many cases this inflated demand is in turn used to set requirements for future parking.

The oversupply of free parking might be seen as a significant subsidy that makes driving less expensive than it should be, and that skews travel choices away from walking, cycling and public transport (Shoup, 2011).

Diminishing the proportion of new buildings given to parking spaces would free up land for higher end uses including services, shops and residential apartments in Warners Bay. Less off-street parking would potentially reduce vehicle trips, cut air pollution, lower oil consumption, and ease congestion.

Possible responses to minimise on-site parking include:

- set a maximum rate for parking or lower the minimum rate for parking requirements
- require contributions in lieu of parking spaces
- build shared parking facilities to consolidate parking (different land uses require parking during different times of the day, and a smaller amount of parking can be shared by town centre users)
- use green travel plans to support walking, cycling, public transport use and car sharing

#### 6.9.2 VALUE OF ON-STREET PARKING SPACE

'Driving around the block' looking for parking results in a large amount of excess driving, air pollution, accidents and traffic congestion. Because it is on a 'first-come, first-served' basis, drivers who secure a space have no incentive to give it up in a timely fashion.

The most appropriate way for cities to address on-street parking shortages is to price the spaces.

Community resistance to putting a price on previously free parking is understandable. One option is to re-invest local parking revenue in local public transport facilities, footpath improvements, and cycle paths or end-of-trip facilities.

### 6.10 WALK 21 CHARTER

Council has endorsed the Walk 21 Charter which champions the benefits of walking and everyone's right to access safe and pleasant places for walking. One of the key actions is as follows:

#### ***Well designed and managed spaces and places for people***

*Design streets for people and not only for cars, recognising that streets are a social as well as a transport space and therefore, need a social design as well as engineering measures. This can include reallocating road space, implementing pedestrian priority areas and creating car-free environments to be enjoyed by all, supporting social interaction, play and recreation for both adults and children.*

## 7 WHAT MAKES A TOWN CENTRE SUCCESSFUL

The Town Centre Strategy needs to satisfy the statutory planning objectives for Warners Bay, respond to the local community values, and provide a robust framework for investment and economic sustainability of the town centre.

### 7.1 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Successful town centres establish a competitive advantage. This may mean making the most of location and setting, the natural amenity, local cultural and recreational events, transport services, accessibility, local heritage, business niche, demographics of the local catchment, or good building stock.

For customers, the competitive centre may provide an 'extended offer' where, for example, it is possible to buy a shirt, get a haircut and meet a friend for lunch, or it may provide diversity with a single focus such as restaurants and cafes (Property Council, 2014:33).

At the same time, businesses want to establish in a competitive centre, either because there is a complementary business mix, or because the main street has a reputation for being attractive, safe and interesting, or it is known for entrepreneurial activity and innovation.

### 7.2 INVITING PEOPLE TO WALK AND TO SIT

A high level of pedestrians in the street creates not only a good social environment but a good economic environment. This means successful centres have buildings, footpaths, and streets that invite people to walk and to spend more time in the area. Successful towns provide good conditions for people to walk, stand, sit, watch, listen and talk. (Gehl 2010:118).

The desire to walk drops drastically if the route is uninteresting and feels tiring. If the route is interesting, rich in experience and comfortable, pedestrians forget the distance and enjoy experiences as they happen. A good city or town can also be recognised by the many people not walking, but sitting or staying.



Figure 34 - Places for people to sit



Figure 35 - Pedestrian friendly streets (right)





Figure 36 - Places for Sitting



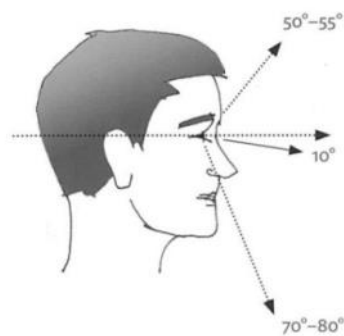
Figure 37 - Places for Meeting

### 7.3 HUMAN SENSES AND SCALE

Our horizontal field of vision means that when we are walking along, our attention is ahead and down, and we have a limited field of upward vision.

This has an impact on the experience of low rise and taller buildings. In general, the upper floors of buildings can only be seen at a distance and never close up.

The social field of vision is about 100m, which enables onlookers to get a general view of what is going on. At 70m or perhaps 60m, most people can begin to recognise others. Closer up we can bring all senses to bear.

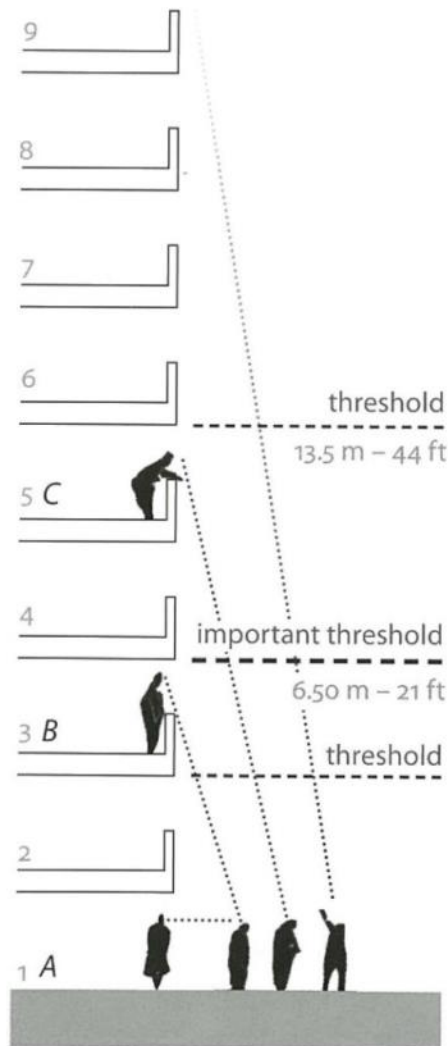


*Our sense of sight has developed to enable us to walk on a horizontal plane. We do not see much above us and only slightly more when we look down in order to avoid obstacles in our path. In addition, we typically bow our heads 10 degrees while we are walking.<sup>5</sup>*

This means that when walking along a street, it is the street space and the ground floors of buildings that can offer us interest and activity. If events, activity, people and spaces at street level provide interest, variety and detail, the experience of the street will be equally rich for pedestrians.

Figure 38 - Human field of vision

7.4 CONNECTION BETWEEN UPPER LEVELS AND THE STREET



From the street, we can only experience events that take place higher up in a building with difficulty, and by ‘craning our necks’.

For people within a building, contact with people in the street below is generally possible from the lower five floors. Contact with people in the street rapidly diminishes above the fifth floor, and disappears by the tenth floor (Gehl, 2010).

This contact between people in a building and the street below, can contribute to sociability, surveillance, safety and a sense of community.

Figure 39 - Connection between people on upper levels and people in the street (Jan Gehl 2010: 40)

## 7.5 STREET AND BUILDING DESIGN FOR PEDESTRIANS

The success of a building can be measured by its positive contribution to the life of the street or adjoining public place. The architectural design is of less consequence provided that the building is related to the human scale, and can add to the enjoyment and activity of people walking, meeting, and sitting. Ultimately, people are attracted by people activity, and the opportunity to comfortably watch other people.

Vibrant places have lots of interesting buildings or shops close together, plenty of interesting activities, places to sit, and enough people to attract more people.

Buildings and streets that attract people often have:

- narrow frontage buildings with vertical facades,
- frequent doors and windows that are clearly framed,
- awnings for human scale shade and shelter,
- detailed and interesting shopfronts,
- ground floors designed for dining, shopping or uses that are visible from the footpath,
- footpath cafes and dining,
- places to sit and watch people in the street,
- buildings with ledges, columns, nooks or steps for sitting or standing,
- posts, ledges, bollards, walls or sculptures that are good for leaning,
- balconies above that invite sitting and viewing the street, and
- soft elements like flowers, greenery, fabric awnings or banners.

It is easier to walk where:

- there is adequate footpath space,
- paths and road crossing points are convenient,
- pavements are even,
- there are ramps rather than stairs,
- bus stops are close by,
- cycle facilities are close by, and
- there are no vehicle cross overs or service areas.

There are more reasons to be part of the activity of a place if:

- there is a mix of uses – shops, footpath dining, offices and community uses,
- there is town centre living, and
- there are cultural activities and events.

## 8 ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF INVESTMENT IN THE PUBLIC REALM

*The basic hypothesis is that changes in travel patterns, spending patterns and neighbourhood desirability caused by changes in the street environment can impact businesses' and property owners' bottom lines, most directly by affecting retail sales but also by affecting, among other things, retail rents, office rents, and commercial property values.*

*Better streets mean better business. Attractive public space and better designed streets are not simply aesthetic or safety improvements. Better streets attract more people and more activity, thus strengthening both communities, the businesses that serve them and the city's economy as a whole.*

Janette Sadik-Khan

Commissioner, New York City Department of Transportation

A shift from private vehicle transport towards walking and cycle transport has may generate measurable benefits for trade, business activity and investment or it may offset costs being incurred in other areas.

There is extensive anecdotal evidence and a growing body of empirical research to indicate that investment in better footpaths, cycle ways and quality public space is responsible for:

- more walking and cycling and reducing public health costs,
- environmental services such as better air quality, noise reduction, better outdoor amenity, and fuel savings
- more social interactions and community cohesion, less social isolation
- household savings associated with lower vehicle ownership and usage
- direct increases in town centre retail trade
- indirect benefits through retail and office rents, higher occupancy rates, property values and investment
- changes in employment opportunities through rising fortunes of retail and services in a centre.

### 8.1 COMPLETE STREETS, TRAVEL MODE AND SPENDING HABITS

Changes to vehicle travel lanes or parking space in mixed use areas often raises concerns about the impact on retail trade. However recent research evidence (Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium, Portland 2012) is showing that for non-supermarket businesses in a centre:

- people walking or cycling make up a small proportion of supermarket customers
- people walking or cycling make up a much larger proportion of the customer base in non-supermarket businesses
- a person walking or cycling spends more per month in a non-supermarket business than a person arriving by car

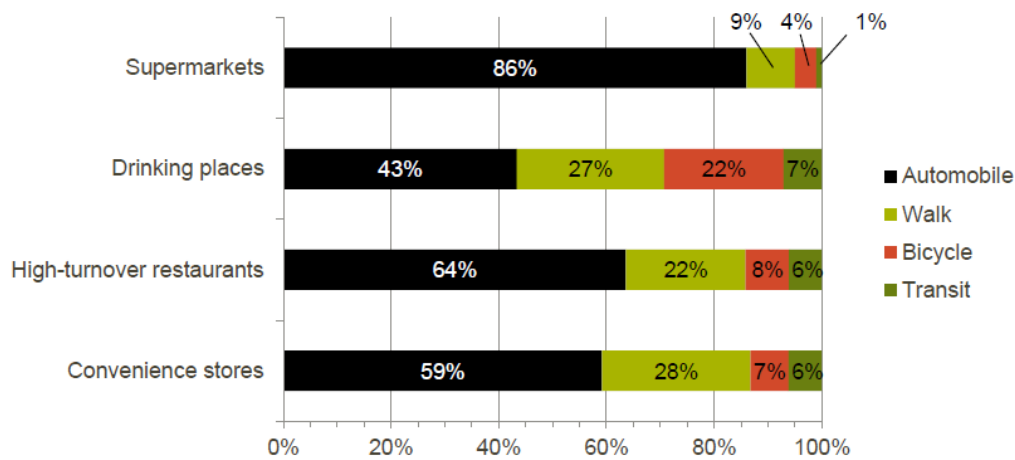


Figure 40 - consumer behaviour and travel modes in mixed use centres in Portland (Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium 2012)

The Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium surveyed 1,884 people walking out of convenience stores, restaurants and bars, and another 19,653 who'd just done their supermarket shopping. Drivers far outspent those who travelled to the grocery store by foot, bike or public transport per visit. While cyclists and walkers often spent less per visit they made more frequent trips as part of the walkable culture to 'pop into' a café, restaurant or small shop. For all of the non-supermarket businesses examined, bikers out-consumed drivers over the course of a month.

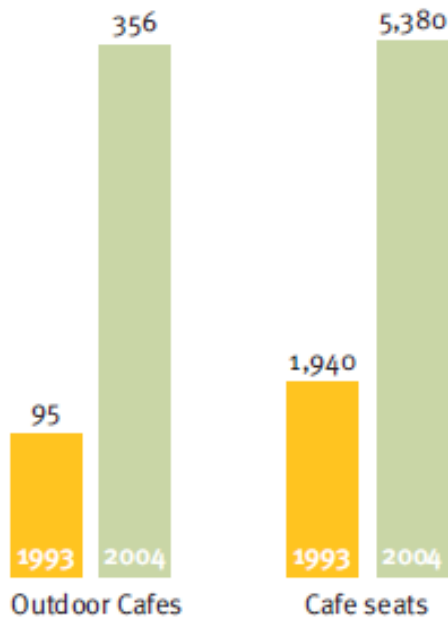
In the inner city case study for Lygon Street Melbourne (Lee and March 2010), car users averaged more overall spending per hour than bike riders. However, the small area of public space required for bike parking means that each square metre allocated to bike parking generated \$31 per hour, compared to \$6 generated for each square metre used for a car parking space.

Removing vehicle travel lanes or street parking has the potential to reduce the number of customers who arrive by car because it is less convenient. On the other hand, adding bike lanes or bike parking, improving bus connections, widening footpaths or making it easier to cross the street could increase the customer base. These strategies for 'complete streets' work extremely well in areas where intensification of activity is occurring as part of urban change.

## 8.2 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT – FOOTPATH TRADING

Comfortable, interesting, active public streets and places can become a destination in their own right. Once potential customers are already in the centre, encouraging them to linger longer results in spending more with local businesses than they otherwise would as demonstrated in Melbourne.





*Melbourne has seen a remarkable increase in the number of outdoor cafes and cafe seats over the past decade.*

Melbourne City adopted a city policy of street and public space improvement beginning in the 1980s, with the intention to invite people to stay longer and participate in the public life of the city streets and places. The city embarked on a major public seating program during the mid 1980s to mid 1990s. A sequence of laneway improvements generated a pedestrian network that has attracted many smaller café and food establishments. New squares and parks were developed at Federation Square and Town Hall Plaza and City Square. These public spaces provided pleasant seating as well as steps, planter box edges, low bollards and ledges for sitting, perching and leaning.

Following the public realm investment the number of cafes increased from 95 to 356 from 1993 to 2004. The number of seats delivered through private investment in kerbside cafes increased by 177 per cent to 5,380 as part of the rapidly expanding pedestrian based economy in the city.

Figure 41 - Melbourne cafes and café seating 1993-2004



Figure 42 - Spread of Melbourne cafe trade 1993-2004



### 8.3 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS - BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Comparisons of public realm projects in the UK, Canada and New Zealand revealed significant increases in pedestrian footfalls and associated uplift in spending (Just Economics and Living Streets 2014). Case study evidence suggests that well-planned improvements to these public spaces can boost footfall and trading by up to 40%. Investing in better streets and spaces for walking and cycling can increase retail sales up to 30%.

Evaluations of pedestrian improvements in Coventry and Bristol show a 25% increase in footfall on Saturdays and predict £1.4million benefits respectively. Improved walking routes to and from Wanstead High Street, in east London, increased footfall by 98%.

The Property Council of Australia (Mainstreets: A Best Practice Guide) add that the provision of free high-speed wi-fi is becoming a big factor main streets performance. Everyday more business and meetings gatherings are taking place in in local mainstreet cafes and restaurants.

### 8.4 BUSINESS PERFORMANCE - NEW YORK CITY FINDINGS

#### 8.4.1 NEW YORK COMPLETE STREETS

One of the most visible elements of New York City's sustainable development agenda has been the transformation of the city's streets from unwelcoming, traffic-dominated corridors to safer, more attractive public spaces that better accommodate all users. Large arterials have been transformed by the Department of Transport (DOT) into "complete streets" with dedicated lanes for bicyclists, landscaped pedestrian islands and new public spaces.

These street and public space projects have had impacts on the travel patterns of shoppers using that street or space and the study set out to measure the subsequent impact on businesses and economic activity.

#### 8.4.2 METHODOLOGY DEVELOPED BY NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

New York Department of Transport found that retail sales –specifically reported sales for street-level retail and restaurant/food service businesses –provide the most direct and reliable indicator of the health of local businesses. The use of sales tax data provided high levels of detail, accuracy and relevance along with comparisons both across time and between sites yields to objectively assessing the impacts of individual projects.

For each intervention site there was a "neighbourhood" comparison site based on similar retail mix and "similar" comparison site based on shared physical characteristics of the streets. For projects that involved the creation of a small plaza retail trade was measured for businesses up to 80 m away on the assumption that their impact reaches further than the shops immediately fronting them.

Retail trade and accommodation & food services including grocery and convenience stores, clothing stores, florists, cafes, bars, restaurants, and hotels were selected because they are likely to be the most affected—either positively or negatively—by the loss of parking or traffic lanes, improvements for pedestrians, additional public space, construction of parking-protected bike lanes and other new streetscape enhancements.

The change in sales for locally-based businesses within eleven improvement sites before and after project implementation was compared to changes in the same period for comparison sites. Measurement were made before an intervention and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year after improvement.

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### 8.4.3 CASE STUDY - WILLOUGHBY PLAZA BROOKLYN



Figure 43 - Willoughby Plaza Brooklyn

Through simple techniques such as closing the street to traffic, introducing tables, chairs and umbrellas and a few planters and granite blocks to define the space, a new place was created for Downtown Brooklyn. The area around Willoughby Plaza, while experiencing significant seasonal swings in retail sales, finished 47% higher than the baseline in the third year. The study area easily outperforms the two local comparison sites.

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### 8.4.4 CASE STUDY- ST. NICHOLAS AND AMSTERDAM AVENUE

This busy and confusing intersection was reconfigured by reducing complicated traffic patterns, adding pedestrian and bicycling space and improving parking and loading operations. A high quality public space inviting people to linger replaced excess traffic lanes while offering safer pedestrian routes to transit. The area saw a 48% increase in sales tax revenues in the second year following the changes, and it outperformed the two comparison areas and the overall borough, as shown in Figure 45 below.



Figure 44 - Nicholas and Amsterdam Streets plaza space and crossings

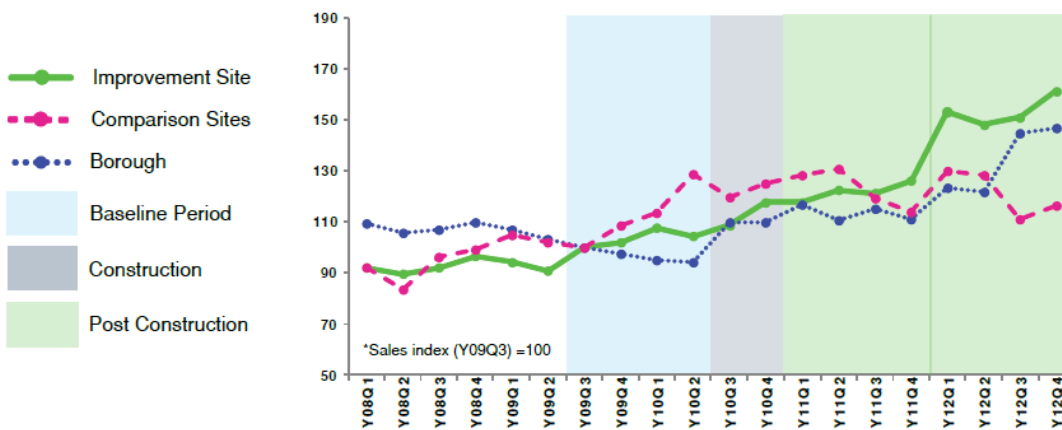


Figure 45 - Nicholas and Amsterdam Streets retail growth

## 8.5 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS- URBAN REGENERATION

Public realm improvements may have a significant positive impact on investment, tourism and business start-up rates; property and retail rents; employment; and social exclusion, measured through investment, tourism and business start-up rates and jobs creation.

Just Economics (2014) cite several case studies including:

- Dublin where the redevelopment of the Temple Bar District led to a 300% increase in employment before the economic boom;
- the new North Terrace of Trafalgar Square that was associated with a 300 per cent increase in visitors; and
- a 17% increase in retail rents from pedestrianisation in Hong Kong, after allowing for confounding variables.

However for these longer-term “ripple effects” on property values, leasing activity, business creation or closure, and employment are not so easy to quantify the part attributable to transport and public realm interventions and the part attributable to other economic factors.

### 8.6 POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS IN WARNERS BAY

Data on business impacts can now be used for project evaluation and can help address the concerns of local residents and business owners about the impact of projects on business activity, replacing anecdote or personal experience with comprehensive data.

#### 8.6.1 COMMUNITY VIEWS

Many business owners are apprehensive about changes to streets that are perceived to benefit pedestrians and cyclists while reducing convenience for drivers based on a belief that providing easy access for motorists along with ample, free parking nearby is critical to their business success.

However the local community survey conducted in 2013 showed that 48 % of 165 respondents arrived by bike or on foot. Many people would visit more often if there was less volume of traffic or slower traffic, easier crossing to the Foreshore, more space for pedestrians or bicycling infrastructure and more pleasant and interesting places to meet, sit or dine out of doors..

In 2014 many submissions expressed concern about the impact of building height on street amenity, and especially the impact of development of the John Street carpark on Postmans Lane. Twelve respondents requested a public plaza or square on the John Street carpark site with shops and cafes activating the edges.

#### 8.6.2 INTEGRATION OF A PLAZA, THE FORESHORE AND THE PERFORMING ARTS AREA

The Foreshore and Performing Arts Centre are extremely important for recreation activities and cultural events. Both areas are on the margins of the town centre and have an indirect influence on retail activity and turnover. The public plaza improvements envisaged for the town centre plaza would directly support pedestrian based retail activity. The connecting walking and cycle routes to and from the public plaza would link and integrate the activities in the complementary public domain areas.

## 9 TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES

### 9.1 WARNERS BAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

An Economic Development Strategy for Warners Bay could be making the most of Warners Bay location and setting, the natural amenity, local cultural and recreational events, transport services, accessibility, and demographics of the local catchment. It is also a means for finding and developing a niche market and the ability to capitalise on emerging trends.

Warners Bay has several key advantages in that:

- It is the only Town Centre in Lake Macquarie with the main frontage directly opposite and parallel to the Lake foreshore.
- It has a high natural amenity and desirable central location.
- The catchment population has a higher than average disposable income
- It is a mixed-use Town Centre with a growing health and personal service business niche.
- The Town Centre has good access to recreation, health and cultural facilities.
- The Town Centre is a growing desirable lifestyle destination.

There may be other advantages that make the Town Centre competitive that would be identified and explored as part of an Economic Development Strategy.

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#### 9.1.1 ATTRACTING AND SUPPORTING NEW BUSINESS

What types of businesses are desirable for Warners Bay? It is considered that Warners Bay has the potential to develop as a specialty centre with uses that are suited to smaller scale premises. This may include, as a starting point:

- cafes and restaurants,
- gourmet/sustainable/'slow' foods, and fresh local produce,
- medical and health practices,
- wellness and leisure services and classes,
- personal services such as hair and beauty businesses,
- professional services such as accountants, solicitors, or financial planners,
- specialty fashion, and
- higher-end tourist accommodation with conference/event facilities.

Additionally, the types of businesses that seek to satisfy growing global demand for the following products and services should be seriously considered:

- Food/water (production, preservation, packaging and distribution).
- Energy (production, preservation, storage and distribution).
- Education (program development and delivery).
- Health and Medicine (particularly focused on the ageing demographic).

The preparation of a strategy to investigate, target and support desirable businesses for the Town Centre is important to the long term success of Warners Bay.

### 9.1.2 RETAINING EXISTING BUSINESSES

What features, services and conditions are needed to retain and grow businesses in the centre? Identifying the needs of existing businesses is an important aspect of an economic development strategy. The types of matters that the economic development strategy could address are:

- business efficiency,
- marketing,
- accessing new markets, and
- business evolution.

### 9.1.3 PROVIDING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

What infrastructure is needed to support the types of businesses that are desirable in the Town Centre? The provision of infrastructure is critical to the growth of Warners Bay as an employment, retail and lifestyle location. The different types of infrastructure include, digital, transport and community. The adequate availability of all types of infrastructure is critical to attracting and maintaining the types of businesses that are desirable in Warners Bay.

This Framework has covered the transport and community infrastructure required however, the availability of adequate digital infrastructure needed to attract new, and retain existing businesses, appears to be lacking.

The provision of a reliable high-speed internet service for both business and customers is important to the growth and retention of businesses in Warners Bay, and the Town Centre's reputation as a lifestyle destination. A reliable high-speed internet service would support:

- efficient business operations,
- growth in niche businesses,
- on-line trading,
- more customers attracted by Wi-Fi,
- generation of more pedestrian based trade,
- potential for a digital marketing program,
- attract information intensive businesses.

The Property Council (2014) report on successful models like the City of Unley, South Australia, and its Digital Economy Strategy (2012), highlight the importance of adequate digital infrastructure to support businesses and economic development. Wi-Fi services in the public domain could be supported by free recharge points for phones and tablets that are solar or wind powered.

### 9.1.4 ATTRACTING TOURISTS AND VISITORS

The tourist and visitor market is seen as a growth opportunity for Warners Bay. The vitality of the Town Centre would be enhanced by offering residential, and tourist and visitor accommodation within the core area. The presence of residents and visitors would extend the hours that the Town Centre is active and provide natural surveillance and improved safety in streets, laneways and public places.



The lake front amenity, foreshore and water recreation make it an attractive destination for short stays, especially out of the larger Sydney metropolitan area. Visitor accommodation would cater to visitors wanting a short break, or business travellers looking to stay overnight in a high amenity location. Increased accommodation presence in the centre would support the viability of other service businesses.

A range of tourist accommodation would be suited to Warners Bay, especially a higher end boutique hotel with conference / event facilities.

The Economic Development Strategy should identify ways to capitalise on the tourist and visitor market.

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### 9.1.5 EXPANDING RECREATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY

An expanded recreation and cultural offer is seen as a growth opportunity for Warners Bay and an important aspect of economic development. The types of recreation and cultural activity may include:

- Arthouse Cinema,
- Enhanced Performing Arts Centre,
- Seniors Lifestyle and Well-being (e.g. tai chi, yoga or meditation),
- Foreshore events,
- Foreshore playground, and
- Sporting events activity.

The Foreshore Master Plan implementation aims to support the ongoing use and expansion of foreshore facilities and activities. The intention of this Framework is to provide guidance on improving the relationship and connectivity between The Esplanade trading area and the lakefront.

The recommendations of the Foreshore Master Plan include improvements to the road edge on The Esplanade to remove visual and physical barriers, and to allow easy and safe pedestrian and cycle movement to and from the foreshore and nearby sporting fields to the north.

### 9.2 MAKING PEDESTRIAN BASED ACTIVITY A PRIORITY

High levels of cycling, walking, and pedestrian based activity and trading will support the social and economic success of the Town Centre.

Elements that will attract cycling, walking, meeting, sitting, dining and pedestrian based retailing include:

- Easy and safe cycling access to the centre and end of trip facilities,
- easy and safe pedestrian circulation along footpaths, and through laneway links and across streets,
- a pedestrian plaza space (Market Square) with good sun access and wind shelter,
- high quality building frontages with small scale shop fronts,
- awnings for pedestrian scale and shelter,
- quality footpath surfaces, furniture, lighting and landscape elements,
- good physical and visual connection between ground floor activity and the street,
- pleasant footpath dining and trading space,
- setbacks for outdoor trading space as needed on pedestrian laneways, and
- temporary use of on-street parking spaces for pedestrian activity (e.g. parklets)

Development controls for the town centre need to support delivery of good quality public space and footpaths. The relative priority for pedestrian activity in each street is shown below. This should inform appropriate controls for built form, awnings, entries, public domain improvements, transport facilities and ground floor uses.

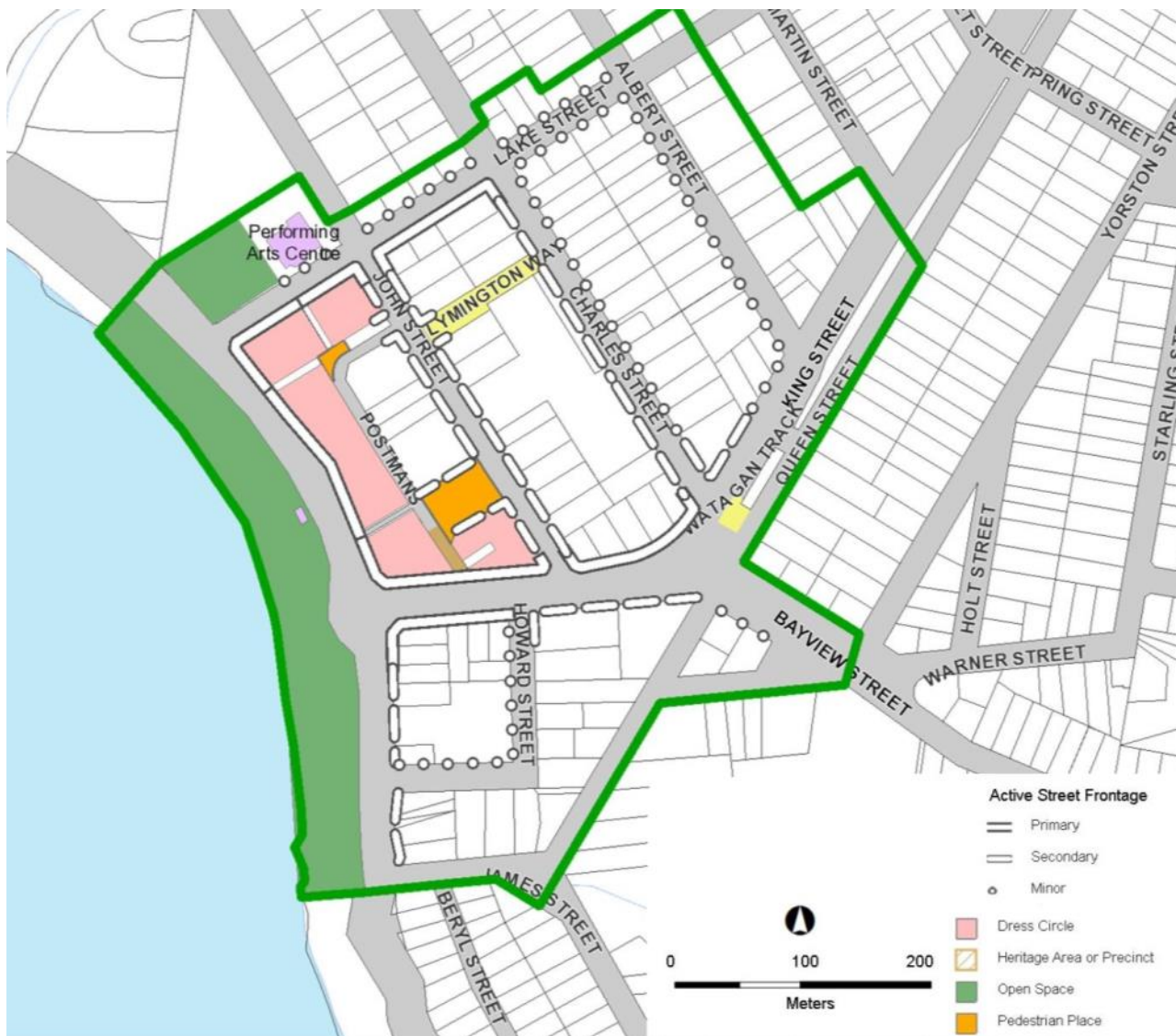


Figure 46 - Priority for pedestrian activity on the Dress Circle, Market Square pedestrian plaza and each street frontage

### 9.3 ATTRACTING INVESTMENT IN GOOD QUALITY BUILDINGS

The Town Centre has significant advantages with its unique lakeside outlook, its generous foreshore reserves, compact town form, relatively flat topography, friendly ‘village feel’, cultural and leisure activities, and its central location compared to Toronto, Belmont and Charlestown.

However many sites are undeveloped or under-developed. Buildings are poor quality and the public realm is degraded. This means that the most effective framework for the centre is to encourage investment in redevelopment and not refurbishment.

Development capacity on individual sites will be a key component to motivate the private sector to invest in higher quality buildings (Urbacity, 2013). Generally larger sites are required to achieve a good built form for buildings over four storeys as well as an efficient parking layout. This could mean that development of good quality buildings requires incentives such as off-site parking infrastructure for the Dress Circle or additional height on larger sites.

The community clearly expressed the importance of restricting height of development on The Esplanade Dress Circle to preserve village character. However, development of taller but narrow frontage buildings would be more desirable than lot amalgamation and broad footprint development.

Community feedback also indicates a level of acceptance for additional height behind the Dress Circle and south of King Street. Additional building height adjacent to existing lower scale residential dwellings north of Charles Street would have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

Development controls for the town centre should address underlying factors that may be inhibiting investment in good quality mixed-use buildings.



Figure 47 - Potential for interesting and high quality footpath café areas (artists impression by Tim Throsby)





Figure 48 - Potential for sunny 'parklets' suited to café trading or pedestrian relaxation on quieter streets

#### 9.4 MAKING A “DRESS CIRCLE”

The term “Dress Circle” was coined to describe The Esplanade strip from King Street to Lake Street, and along Lake and Kings Streets up to John Street. It is the premier location in Warners Bay and has the potential to become a sought after destination for café dining, boutique shopping and apartment living or short stays.

Along this key pedestrian strip, a pedestrian friendly character can be retained through small-scale shopfronts at street level, as well as appropriate facade design, awnings, entries and display windows, to generate a comfortable, interesting and high amenity pedestrian environment.

New development on The Esplanade could deliver high amenity streetscape and high quality office space or residential apartments and short-term accommodation on levels above the street. These new buildings would have views south-west to the lake and a sun aspect to the north-east.

This means that The Esplanade has the potential to become the destination of choice for residents and visitors across a much wider city catchment. Regeneration of the Dress Circle could serve as the catalyst for investment, development, and business growth across the whole centre (Urbacity, 2013).



Figure 49 - Potential for high quality Dress circle development facing the lake (artists impression by Tim Throsby)



Figure 50 - Dress Circle sites and locations for off-site parking

The Dress Circle sites are mostly narrow and deep lots with limited capacity for parking on-site. Generally, each lot is in separate ownership or under strata title so that opportunities for consolidation are not obvious.

Development of quality mixed-use commercial and residential buildings along the Dress Circle would require access to off-site parking facilities (Urbacity, 2013), and a built form that could be accommodated on deep narrow lots.

Given that Postman's Lane provides rear access to Dress Circle sites and the John Street car park site, there is potential to provide Dress Circle residential parking on the adjacent John Street car park site (marked Site 1). Commercial parking for the Dress Circle could be made available on the same site or the nearby sites marked 2 and 3.



## 9.5 INTEGRATING THE FORESHORE AND DRESS CIRCLE

The Foreshore is the focus of recreation and cultural activity as well as a walking and cycling corridor for all ages. The Dress Circle footpath is envisaged as the prime trading area, and a focus of pedestrian activity. Future works on The Esplanade should serve as a means to integrate the two activity areas and to maximise the benefits to the centre and its users. Specific measures include:

- signalised intersections at Lake Street/The Esplanade and King Street/The Esplanade.
- pedestrian phases at signals to support safe pedestrian crossing and to moderate vehicle speeds.
- mid-block pedestrian crossing signals and generous entry steps and ramp to the foreshore.
- safe and convenient pedestrian movement along the foreshore edge of The Esplanade.
- tree selection and planting that allows an open outlook from the Dress Circle to the lake.
- food vending within the foreshore area.

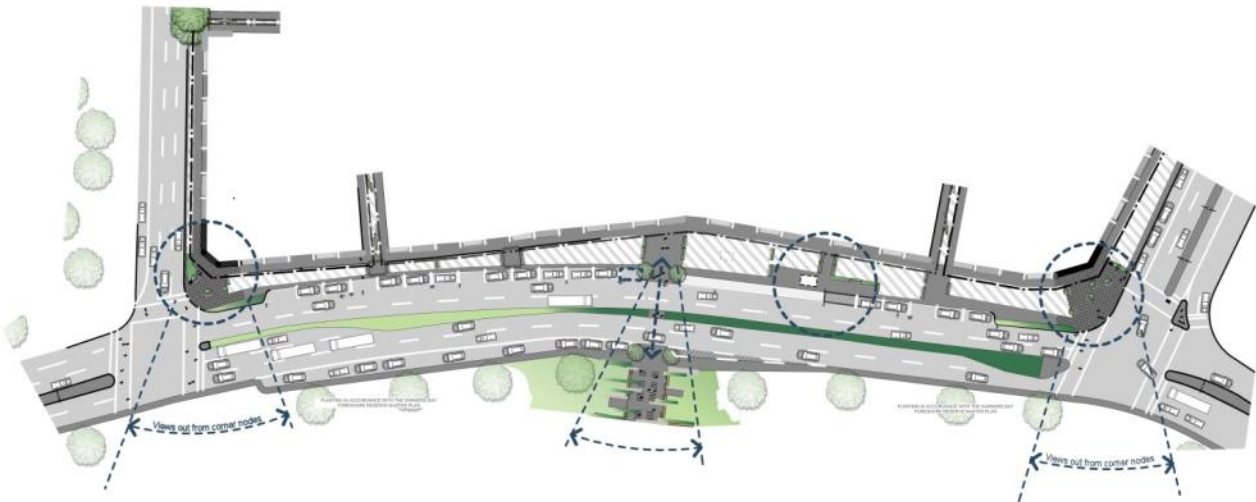


Figure 51 - Concept for The Esplanade to integrate the Foreshore and the Dress Circle

## 9.6 UPGRADING THE ESPLANADE FOR CAFÉ LIFE

The Esplanade has the potential to become a successful, active and high-amenity trading strip for boutique retail, cafes, restaurants, take away food and footpath dining.

The present traffic and parking arrangements and roadway levels detract from the pedestrian environment and create a visual barrier between the trading strip and the foreshore.

A combination of traffic and road changes are proposed to handle current traffic flow, projected growth of traffic volume, and to support regeneration and trading on The Esplanade “Dress Circle” (GTA Consultants 2014):

- Retain four travel lanes between King and Lake Streets.
- Expand travel lanes to four from Lake Street to Fairfax Road and duplicate bridge at North Creek.
- Introduce traffic signals at King Street with pedestrian and cyclist crossing phase.
- Introduce traffic signals at Lake Street with pedestrian and cyclist crossing phase.
- Replace angle parking with parallel parking on shops side. Retain parallel parking on foreshore side.
- Extend footpath area on shops side.
- Retain parallel parking on foreshore side.
- Change the kerb alignments at King Street and The Esplanade to slow traffic.
- Move bus shelter and bus stop on east side 10-20m south

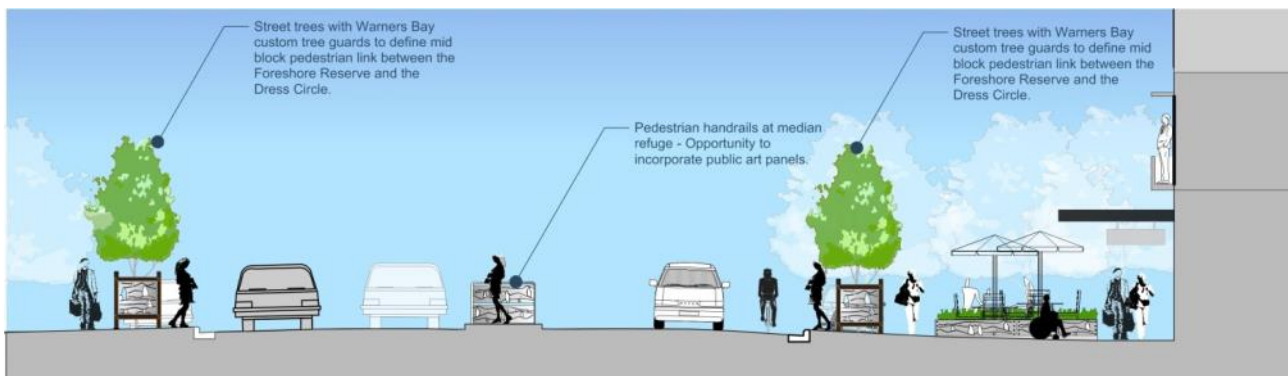


Figure 52 - Potential improvements to support outdoor trading on The Esplanade and integration with the Foreshore

Footpath improvements to support trading and amenity could include:

- Replacing angle parking with parallel parking to buffer footpath diners from Esplanade traffic on the shops side,
- extension of footpaths,
- level platforms for more outdoor café trade, and
- planters to provide greenery and divide lease areas
- seating integrated with planters

## 9.7 CREATING A MARKET SQUARE

The Dress Circle provides highly valuable outlook to the lake and the foreshore activities, but is exposed winter winds and high traffic volumes. A Market Square on part of the John Street car park site would provide the town centre with a large sunny and sheltered space that could provide:

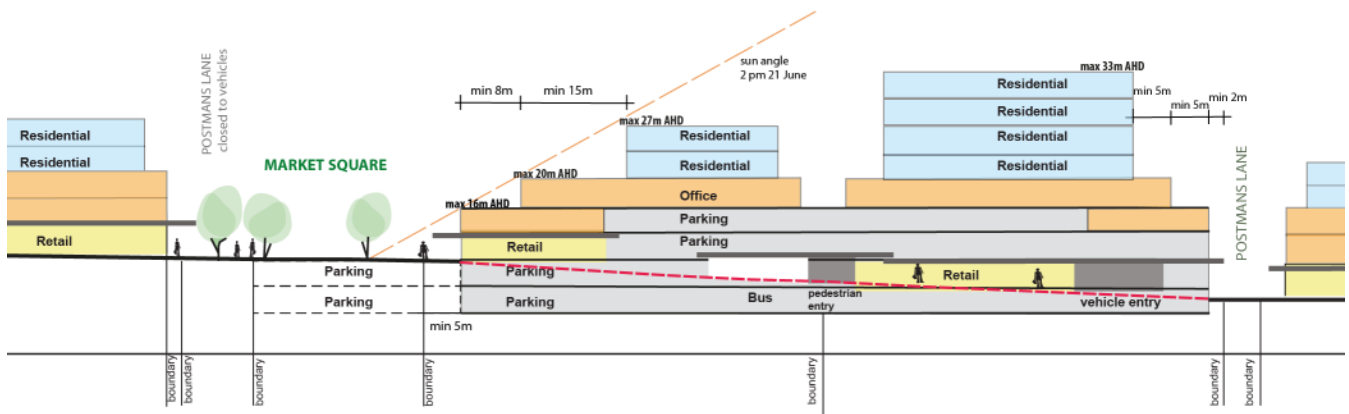
- a pleasant pedestrian destination during the winter months
- a focus for markets and community events in the town centre
- sunny outdoor dining areas
- active frontage for retail shops and cafes

- a pleasant public space for meeting and sitting
- an open pedestrian route through to the Bay Arcade and the Dress Circle
- a high quality outlook for residential apartments on upper levels

The Market Square would have sufficient scale and openness to balance the sense of enclosure from surrounding buildings. Activation of the square would be concentrated at the edges with retail trading and outdoor dining. Tree planting and seating would provide a high level of amenity for users.

The height and setbacks of surrounding development including development on the east side of John Street would maintain sun access to the Market Square, especially in mid-winter between 10am and 2pm.

The provision of the Market Square would represent a significant public benefit and the costs may be offset by development on the remainder of the car park site, as well as contributions from development on other adjoining parcels.



CONCEPT VIEWED FROM JOHN STREET

Concept for a Market Square and adjacent development for retail, office, accommodation and car parking on the existing John Street car park site

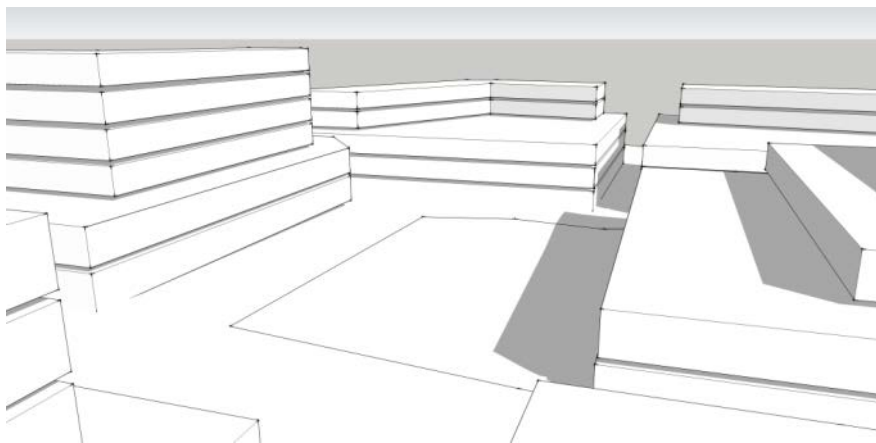


Figure 53 - Shadow analysis for Market Square viewed from John Street (12pm June 21)

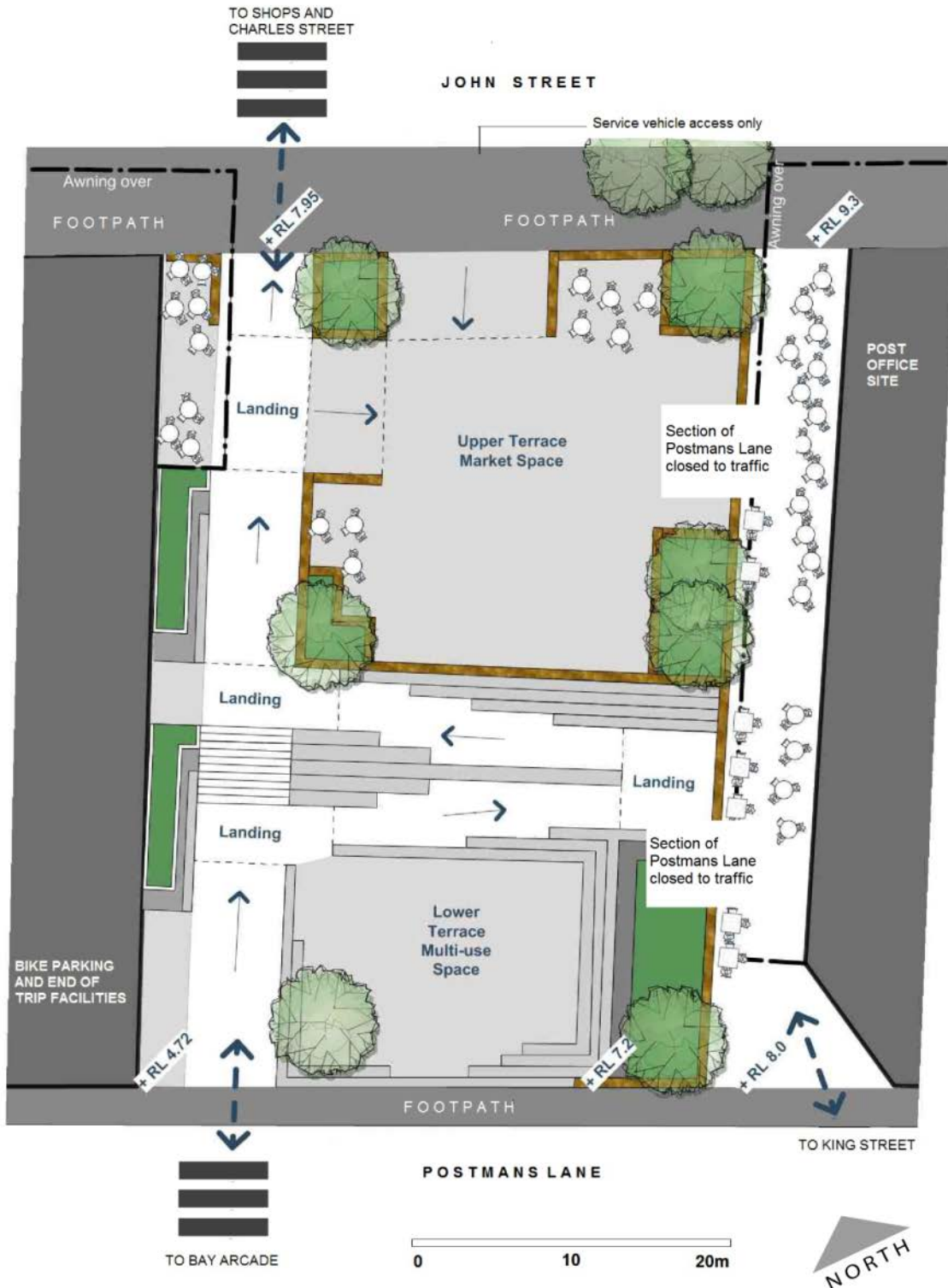


Figure 54 - Concept for a Market Square Street with sunny sheltered sitting and café trading areas, space for community events and markets, and access to the lake via Bay Arcade

### 9.8 MANAGING PARKING DEMAND

The vision for Warners Bay is a vibrant extended hours centre with high quality pedestrian spaces and buildings. The key objectives of the Framework are to create a high quality pedestrian environment in Warners Bay and to optimise Dress Circle development for residential apartments and visitor accommodation above retail, café and office space.

Council's minimum parking requirements impose significant costs on the developer and reduce the amount of useable floor space in a given town centre development. Parking areas often degrade the pedestrian environment, and limit opportunities for other community and commercial activities within a development.

Because parking is free to motorists there is no incentive to consider other choices including walking, cycling, car share, buses or taxis. The availability of free parking serves to promote dependency on the car and increase the demand for more parking.

Potential strategies for managing parking demand in Warners Bay, and at the same time improve the pedestrian environment, include:

- Improving bus services and facilities to increase public transport patronage
- Improving off-road cycle routes and on-street cycle safe lanes to support cycle transport
- Providing quality public space and footpaths to encourage walking
- more timed on-street parking spaces
- Providing parking facilities with paid off-street parking for longer stay
- Reducing off-street parking requirements for Warners Bay town centre development
- Setting a maximum rate (not a minimum rate) for residential development and allowing the market to determine the number of residential parking spaces.

Dress Circle sites have very limited capacity to provide on-site parking. However residential parking spaces could be provided on an adjacent site and commercial floor space parking at a further distance would be acceptable. In particular:

1. Provide car parking capacity distributed off-site across major sites to enable redevelopment of the Dress Circle sites and to replace existing public parking in the John Street car park.
2. Use the John Street car park site for mixed-use development with multi-deck parking, office space and small retail units fronting John Street and the Market Square.
3. Ensure the number of car spaces replace existing public parking spaces, meet the needs of new floor space within the development, and provide sufficient parking to act as a catalyst for part of Dress Circle redevelopment.
4. Free up further spaces for on-going Dress Circle redevelopment by transfer of public spaces to the two other Council owned sites at time of redevelopment.
5. Install car parking information signage on key approaches to the Town Centre.
6. Formalise on-street parking to delineate individual car spaces.
7. Provide short-term parking at key attractors to promote turnover and greater activation.

Revenue from paid parking could be invested in footpaths and cycleways.



### 9.9 INCREASING WALKING AND CYCLING TRANSPORT

Specific improvements in the public street and footpath environment would support more walking and cycling for transport, and reduce demand for car trips and parking.

The improvements for pedestrians focus on better connections from the Dress Circle to the Foreshore, the Dress Circle to south of King Street, and the Dress Circle to the Market Square and John Street retail area. Significant upgrades to the Dress Circle footpath and trading areas, and the Market Square proposal represent major improvements to pedestrian amenity, usability and accessibility.

The cycleway improvements are intended to provide safer and better-connected cycle transport routes suitable for less experienced or less confident cyclists either off-road, through public land, or along quieter streets.

Initiatives to support more walking and cycling are:

1. **Cycleways Strategy:** Revise Cycle Strategy and works program to incorporate proposed cycleway network improvements
2. **The Esplanade Crossings:** provide signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities on all approaches on The Esplanade at Lake Street and King Street.
3. **Dress Circle footpath:** Upgrade the footpath along The Esplanade between Lake Street and King Street retail shops/restaurants to create a more pedestrian friendly environment.
4. **King Street Shared Path:** Provide a 3m wide shared path along the south side of King Street between Bayview Street and The Esplanade. Although Council's Cycling Strategy 2021 recommends an on-road facility in this location, the anticipated King Street traffic volumes require a future off-road facility.
5. **Postmans Lane:** Convert Postman's Lane to a 10km/h Shared Zone with appropriate design.
6. **Lake Street On-road Cycleway:** Provide a line marked on-road **cycle-safe lane** along Lake Street between Margaret Street and The Esplanade.
7. **Charles Street Shared Path:** Provide a 3m wide shared path along the east side of Charles Street as an additional link to the King Street facility and new Lake Street facility.
8. **Charles Street Refuge:** Provide a mid-block pedestrian refuge on Charles Street, near the Warners Bay Village Centre, for safe pedestrian crossing opportunities.
9. **King Street Crossing:** Provide signalised pedestrian and cycle crossings on all approaches at the King Street/John Street intersection to better link with properties on the southern side of King Street.
10. **Bicycle Repair Stations:** Provide bicycle repair stations along the foreshore shared path and at key attractors to improve the customer experience along the foreshore and within the Town Centre.
11. **Bicycle Parking:** Upgrade bicycle parking facilities close to public transport facilities and the Dress Circle. Include one or more bike corrals in Dress Circle parking lane.
12. **Pedestrian Lighting:** Upgrade/install sufficient street lighting, particularly along the foreshore.

## 9.10 IMPROVING BUS SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The following measures are proposed to improve public transport patronage and to reduce demand for car parking.

1. **Bus services:** Engage in review of services during 2015 with bus company providers. Advocate for half hourly services from Charlestown and Glendale interchanges
2. **Bus terminus:** Provide bus terminus facility in Lymington Way
3. **John Street Integrated Bus stop:** Provide generous bus shelter and seating integrated with building design in John Street at northern end of car park site
4. **Other Bus Shelters:** Replace other shelters in John Street and The Esplanade with contemporary comfortable shelters that offer good visibility for patrons and other pedestrians
5. **Taxi:** Relocate taxi rank from Lake Street to John Street, immediately south of Lake Street. Reconfigure taxi zone in the vicinity The Esplanade bus stop.



Figure 56 - High quality bus shelters with good shelter and visibility

## 9.11 IMPROVING TRAFFIC CIRCULATION IN THE CENTRE

Suitable transport, access and parking infrastructure is essential for the Warners Bay Town Centre to accommodate increased residential and employment growth and to fulfill its Town Centre role as identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, and the Lake Macquarie City Council Lifestyle 2030 Strategy.

The modelling work by GTA Consultants is based on traffic generation from the potential development of the Dress Circle and larger site in the Town Centre, with an additional allowance for background growth in network and local traffic.

The recommendations for intersection upgrades, as well as recommendations to improve circulation and parking efficiency are as follows.

1. **The Esplanade:** Signalise intersection with King Street and Lake Street. Provide pedestrian crossings. The roundabout operation is anticipated to fall below an acceptable level of service in about 2023.
2. **The Esplanade/ Dress Circle frontage:** Convert angled parking to parallel parking and upgrade the footpath to improve pedestrian safety and amenity.
3. **King Street and John Street:** Reconfigure traffic signals at John Street to allow for full turning movements and pedestrian crossings. This is an existing Town Centre constraint and should be addressed in the near future.
4. **King Street and Bayview Street:** Realign Charles Street with King Street/Bayview Street roundabout to permit full turning movements. This would require additional land for the Charles Street approach to the roundabout and should be pursued at the time of redevelopment of the site on King Street.
5. **The Esplanade at North Creek Bridge:** Duplicate North Creek Bridge to provide two travel lanes in each direction on The Esplanade. This should be considered in conjunction with the signalisation of Lake and King Streets on the Esplanade and broader network improvements to balance network efficiency with Town Centre functions.
6. **Lake Street intersection with John Street and Charles Street:** Upgrade intersections to include signals and cycleway crossing.



Figure 57 - Proposed circulation, public space, walking and cycling facilities, and intersection upgrades

### 9.12 STRATEGIC USE OF COUNCIL COMMERCIAL LAND

Council's Property and Business Development Department holds significant commercial sites in the Town Centre, in addition to the John Street car park area. A strategic approach to development of the Town Centre infrastructure, and the delivery of new commercial and residential floor space across all sites could be a significant catalyst for town centre investment and economic growth.

The Council sites have the potential to provide town parking as well as a mix of retail, office, and residential floor space. This capacity would be subject to further investigation and modelling based on the funding and partnership options related to delivering valuable public infrastructure.

The potential community benefits would include:

- New childcare facility on another site in the local area.
- Improvement of the Performing Arts Centre facility.
- Public parking infrastructure.
- A new public plaza
- Improved network of good quality footpaths and cycle ways.
- Improved street activation and pedestrian activity.
- A model of excellence for planning and design.
- Establishing the appropriate sequence of development of Council commercial land across the centre.

As a landowner of sites within the precinct, Council's Property and Business Development Department is developing a strategy for its land holdings in the Warners Bay Town Centre, in line with this integrated Framework. The strategy must be balanced with sound commercial outcomes to deliver public infrastructure and long-term economic growth for traders, employers and landowners.

The implementation plan would need to minimise the disruption to existing businesses, to ensure ongoing provision of existing services such as childcare facilities, and manage car parking supply during any construction activities.

### 10 PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING CONTROLS

The following items establish the principles for town centre structure, use of Council commercial land, pedestrian and vehicle circulation and access, parking, building massing, building height, and building design and character.

#### 10.1 PRINCIPLES FOR TOWN STRUCTURE

The Town Centre structure is established on the following principles:

1. Integration of the foreshore and the Dress Circle along The Esplanade to support pedestrian safety, movement, activity and amenity.
2. Dress Circle as priority pedestrian based trading area fronted by small-scale retail units.
3. A central Market Square to provide sunny sheltered public space on the upper part of the John Street car park site.
4. A car parking facility integrated with street level shops on the lower part of the John Street site that will support redevelopment and activity on the Dress Circle.
5. Secondary order pedestrian activity streets that extend out from the Dress Circle and are fronted by medium-scale commercial units for retail and office, medical, or community uses.
6. John Street to provide public transport facilities, service access to parking, and some active retail frontage on both sides of the street.
7. Existing pedestrian links at the north and south ends of the Dress Circle to provide direct pedestrian access from John Street car park to Dress Circle frontages and to support pedestrian movement along The Esplanade frontage. Remove the central pedestrian lane that would not support this pedestrian flow.
8. View corridors from roads and pedestrian links to provide open and unobstructed vistas to the lake.





Figure 58 - Proposed Town Centre Structure with Dress Circle, active frontages, walking and cycling infrastructure and key street views

### 10.2 PRINCIPLES FOR USE OF COUNCIL COMMERCIAL LAND

The use and development of Council's commercial land holdings could be a significant catalyst for further investment, activity, employment and improvements in the Town Centre.

A charter, strategy or similar agreement would set out the principles to align Council's strategic planning objectives with the commercial property management objectives and address the means to:

- support the overall Town Centre Framework,
- provide a model of excellence for planning and design,
- attract a mix of uses that is appropriate to the Town Centre and community's expectations,
- contribute to the economic success and sustainability of employment and business in the centre,
- act as a catalyst for other investment and development,
- enhance the lakeside town centre character of Warners Bay,
- contribute to street activation and pedestrian based retail activity,
- Enhance. community facilities,
- provide new or improved public space and footpaths,
- improve pedestrian links and access
- improve facilities for cycling transport
- support use of public transport,
- support the parking needs of the Town Centre,
- deliver a profitable commercial return on investment through considered development that contributes to the precinct as a whole, or
- deliver planning gains.

A Charter or commercial land strategy would set out to:

1. support the overall Town Centre Strategy,
2. attract a mix of uses that is appropriate to the Town Centre and community's expectations,
3. contribute to the economic success and sustainability of employment and business in the Town Centre,
4. act as a catalyst for other investment and development,
5. enhance the lakeside town centre character of Warners Bay, and
6. deliver an acceptable return on investment or significant public benefit.

### 10.3 PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

1. Support active transport options with improvement to cycling and walking facilities as shown in Figure 58.
2. Manage vehicle movement to improve pedestrian amenity and range of uses on pedestrian activity streets.

3. Introduce traffic signals at King Street and The Esplanade, Lake Street and The Esplanade to manage longer-term growth of through traffic on King Street and The Esplanade.
4. Allow all turning movements between King Street, and John and Charles Streets to improve local Town Centre circulation.
5. Introduce signals at Lake and Charles Streets and Lake and John Streets to support safe pedestrian and cycle movement.
6. Improve bus facilities and integration with taxi services.

### 10.4 PRINCIPLES FOR PARKING

1. Manage parking demand by making walking, cycling and bus use for transport more available
2. Improve the turnover of on-street parking spaces
3. Distribute off street parking spaces across multiple sites in the town centre.
4. Provide additional spaces on the three larger Council owned sites that could service Dress Circle redevelopment.
5. Consider introducing paid parking for longer stay.
6. Establish a common parking rate for business, office and retail uses to facilitate change of use for buildings.
7. Maximise the use of all town centre car parking space across all hours.
8. Encourage development that reduces private car usage (green travel plans, car share, community buses etc.)
9. Provide new parking in multi-deck or basement locations to reduce land take and improve development yield
10. Design car parking at ground level or above to be converted to retail or commercial floor space at a later date.
11. Ensure car parking at ground level is sleeved by retail or commercial floor space along the street frontage.
12. Screen car parking above ground level with a high quality architectural façade on all elevations.

### 10.5 PRINCIPLES FOR PEDESTRIAN LANES

Pedestrian lanes are important connecting ways, public space and outdoor trading places that can thrive with the right conditions including:

- open to the sky, natural light and air
- minimum width to allow outdoor trading
- clear line of sight from entry to exit
- active edges of shops and cafes
- part shelter with awnings
- small scale retail units
- lots of entrances and windows
- planters for greenery



Figure 59 - Pedestrian lanes with natural air and light and specialty shops at footpath level.

## 10.6 PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC SPACE

The principles for a town square are drawn from hundreds of successful public places in Australia and overseas (Source: Project For Public Place, New York, Gehl Architects Copenhagen):

### 10.6.1.1 GOOD PROPORTIONS

The space is roughly as wide as long (a square) or the ratio of width to length is about 2:3 (a broad rectangle). The ratio of height of buildings and width of the square is between 1:3 and 1:2

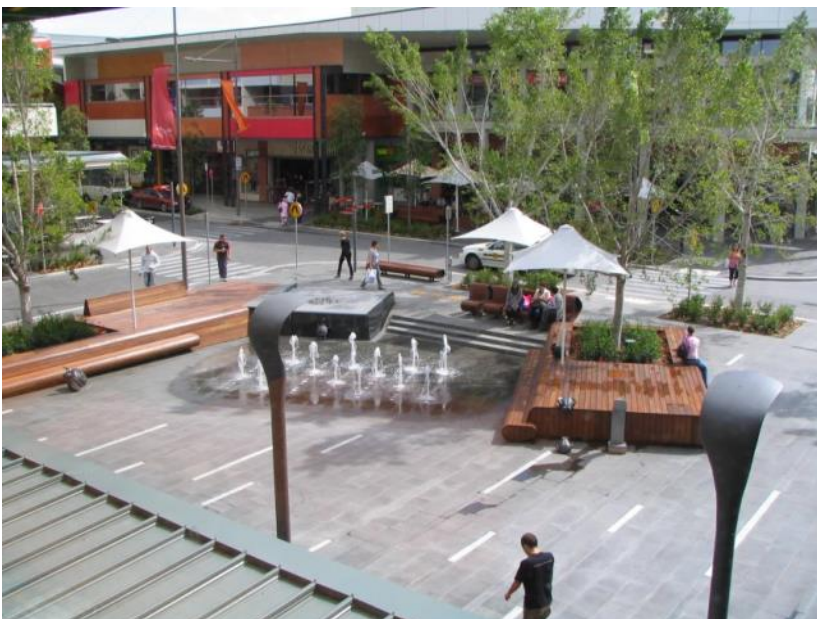




Figure 60 - Birds-eye view of Town square at Rouse Hill.

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## 10.6.1.2 PUBLIC USE AND IDENTITY

Relate the square to surrounding civic buildings, or community facilities to establish identity and purpose.



Figure 61 - Community library (right) identifies Rouse Hill Town Square

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## 10.6.1.3 EYES ON THE STREET

The square is open and lively. Overlapping day and evening functions keep it active for extended hours. Casual surveillance of the street and square from surrounding balconies, terraces and windows looking onto the square help to keep it safe. Lighting is good.



Figure 62 - Balconies overlooking public space at Wapping Wharf Bristol



10.6.1.4 ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

The public square has good pavement and is accessible for everyone. Surrounding streets are narrow, pedestrian routes and crossings are well marked, traffic moves slowly, and bus stops are located nearby.

Pedestrian routes extend out from the square to the surrounding town centre. . Routes into and out of the square are open all hours and are accessible to all.

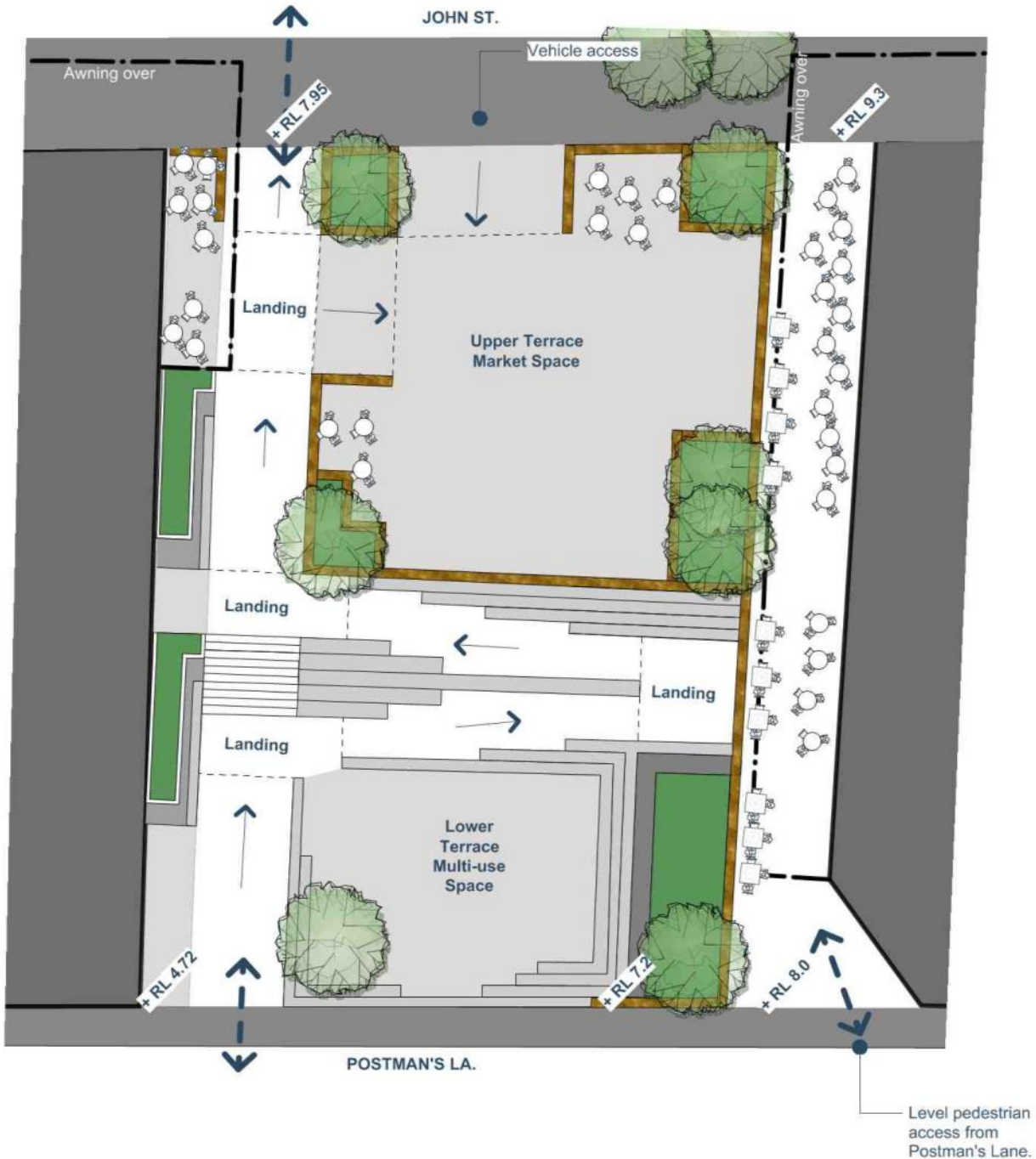


Figure 63 - Plan view of Concept for proposed Market Square, Warners Bay



Figure 64 - Facilities to improve cycle access Melbourne CBD

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#### 10.6.1.5 ACTIVITY AT THE EDGE

The square has active uses at the edges. Sitting steps, articulated building edges and ledges, awnings for shelter, cafes and kiosks, community space and libraries, a post office, cycle facilities, building entries, newspaper sellers, flower vendors. Avoid blank walls.



Figure 65 - Sitting steps on edge of public square - Stockholm Concert House forecourt





Figure 66 - Café trade on the edge - Rouse Hill Town Square and Plaza Santa Ana Madrid (right)

#### 10.6.1.6 A VARIETY OF SITTING, RESTING AND MEETING PLACES

Include a variety of seating and resting opportunities. Moveable seats allow people to personalise spaces. Include comfortable places to sit, lean or sleep. Include places in the sun and shade, water, moveable seats, rubbish bins, and lighting.



Figure 67 - Lounging and sitting along the High Line in New York City



Figure 68 - Federation Square (left) and Town Square Rouse Hill

10.6.1.7 SUN, SHADE AND WATER

Shape surrounding buildings to let in winter sun. Add trees and awnings for summer shade. Include greenery and water to soften and enliven spaces and provide play elements.



Figure 69 - Trees and water enliven Esther Short Park Vancouver

10.6.1.8 INCOME SOURCES - MARKETS, EVENTS AND MOBILE VENDORS

Partnerships support events and operations of the square. Rental income from outdoor trading, markets or other small commercial uses on the site, levies on adjacent properties, and benefit fundraisers. Provide facilities for market and events.

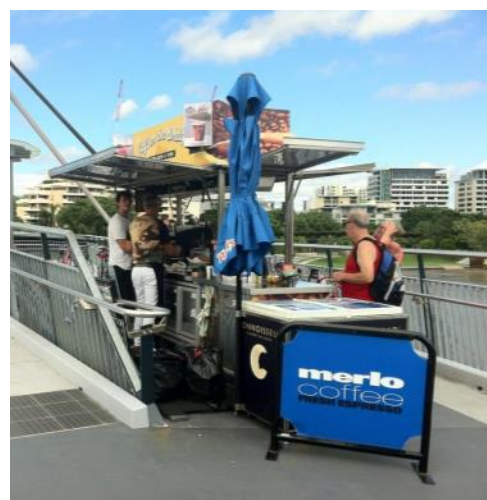


Figure 70 - Community markets Double Bay and mobile vendor Brisbane



10.6.1.9 IMPROMPTU THINGS TO DO

Include a variety of smaller attractors including play sculpture, a poster pillar, a place for buskers and artists, places for games (chess, table tennis, volleyball, and boule) and skaters.



Figure 71 - Places for Impromptu performance



Figure 72 - Busking and communal games



### 10.6.1.10 FLEXIBLE AND TEMPORARY ELEMENTS

Allow for the use to change during the course of the day, week, and year. Consider a temporary street closure, stage, power and audio visual infrastructure, and on-site storage for movable chairs, tables, umbrellas, and equipment.



Figure 73 - Pop-up Town Square Yarraville Melbourne

### 10.6.1.11 GOOD MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Good management and maintenance to keep the square safe and lively. Cater to existing and potential users and gear events to both types of people.

10.7 PRINCIPLES FOR STREET ENCLOSURE

Pedestrian experience and activity can also be enhanced by the appropriate sense of street enclosure. The sense of enclosure in a street is dependent on the sky area relative to wall area in a pedestrian’s field of vision. Street enclosure is expressed as the height of buildings relative to the street width.

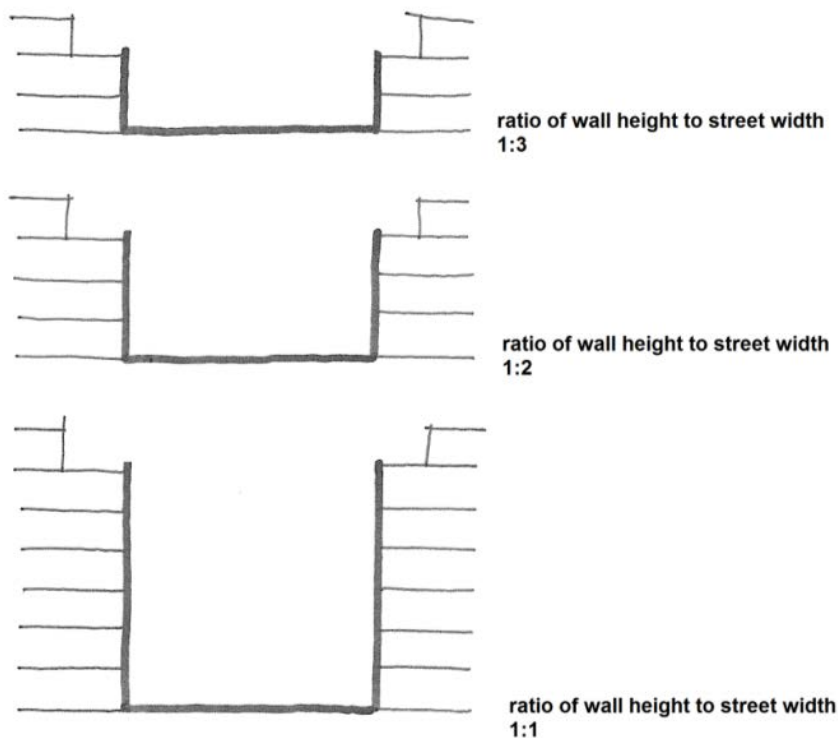


Figure 74 - Weak street enclosure (top), good sense of street enclosure (middle) and limit of comfort for enclosure (bottom)

**Weak street enclosure** is where the street is much wider than the building height. The area of visible sky is much greater than the edge wall. The diagram below shows a ratio of building height to street width of 1:3.

**A good sense of enclosure** is where there is about the same amount of visible sky and wall. The ratio of building height to street width is between 1:2 and 1:2.5.

**The limit of comfort for enclosure** is when building height is the same as street width and the sky view is quite limited. The building height to street width is 1:1.

10.7.1.1 THE ESPLANADE DRESS CIRCLE

The foreshore edge is relatively open. A street wall height of three storeys or approximately 12m, a road width of 26-28m and intermittent trees of about 12m in height on the foreshore edge would give a reasonable level of enclosure. Upper levels should be well set back to avoid limiting the area of visible sky.

10.7.1.2 KING STREET

A wider street of 32m from building to building. A three storey street wall produces a height to width ratio of 1:2.7. Upper level setbacks could be smaller to increase the amount of enclosure.

### 10.7.1.3 LAKE STREET

A narrower street of 20m from building to building. Lots on the north are shallow and form a transition to residential land. Lots to the south could have a higher street wall. Asymmetric typology could provide a reasonable sense of enclosure. Upper levels to the south should be well setback.

### 10.7.1.4 JOHN STREET

A narrower street of 20m from building to building. A three storey street wall on both sides would produce a height to width ratio of 1:1.8. Upper levels should be well set back to maintain visible sky and maximise views to Munibung Hill.

### 10.7.1.5 CHARLES STREET

A street width of 21m from building to building. This is a transition street from mid-rise buildings to villas and lower rise mixed-use development. Buildings to the east would be setback approximately 4m from the boundary and would not form a street wall. A three storey street wall to the west would provide an active edge for pedestrians. A good sense of street enclosure could not be achieved with existing constraints.

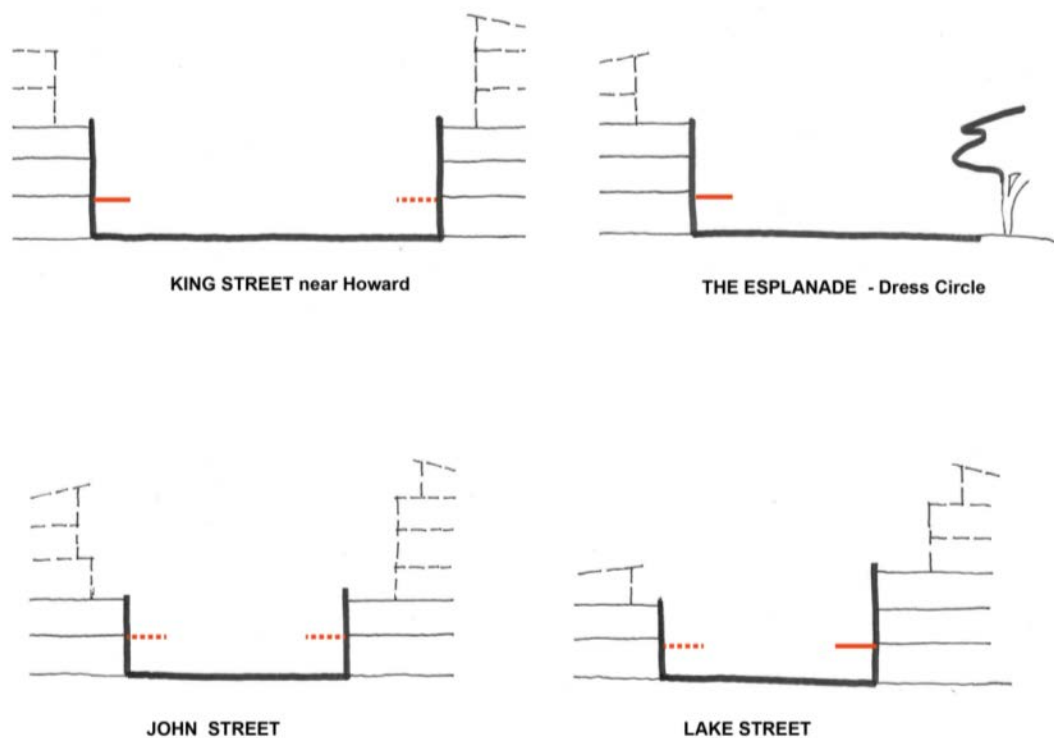


Figure 75 - Potential street wall heights and upper level setbacks to achieve comfortable sense of enclosure

### 10.8 PRINCIPLES FOR HEIGHT

The following principles are set out for building height to take into account the topographic setting, scenic quality principles from Council's Scenic Management Guidelines, the planning objectives for vibrant town centres, and the qualities of human scale development:

1. Ensure that buildings are lower than the treed ridgeline to the north-east when viewed from the lake.
2. Ensure that building heights allow contact between the building occupants and people in the street.
3. Ensure that building height and setbacks maintain sun access to public plaza
4. Establish consistent street wall height on each street that provides a comfortable sense of enclosure.
5. Setback the levels above the street wall to reduce building bulk and scale and maintain open sky view.
6. Maximise the potential of Dress Circle sites because they can deliver the highest amenity retail, office and residential floor space in the centre.
7. Maximise the use of basement level parking to reduce building bulk and height.
8. Provide a transition of height between lower scale residential development and higher buildings.
9. Locate higher buildings on larger sites to encourage investment and development of higher quality buildings and associated improvements to public domain.
10. Ensure that building heights are suitable to enable feasible development to occur when market conditions are favourable.

### 10.9 PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE HEIGHTS

The above principles have been used to establish the proposed heights in storeys and metres for the town centre, as shown in Figure 76 and Figure 81.

The revised Area Plan should include a height in storeys for each parcel, an appropriate street boundary setback at each level, as well as controls for building depth, and development form on rear lanes.

Whilst the community expressed a desire to avoid additional height on The Esplanade, redevelopment of these sites has the greatest capacity to transform the centre. Investment in redevelopment of any site is dependent on being able to achieve satisfactory floor space yields for an economic return on investment. Village character, which is a primary concern for the community, can be addressed and enhanced through the controls for building form and character proposed in the Area Plan.

The Lake Macquarie LEP2014 Height of Building Map Layer should be amended to include a maximum height in metres for each parcel. This height should take into account the desirable floor to ceiling heights for ground floor uses, upper level commercial uses, and upper level residential uses as set down in the citywide DCP 2014.

Heights north of the Market Square should be controlled by an Australian Height Datum in meters to protect sun access to the public plaza.



Figure 76 - Proposed building types with their maximum heights in storeys above ground (shown in red).

Note: See Figure 81 for an additional Height of Building Map.



### 10.10 PRINCIPLES FOR ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Warners Bay development character should reflect the high amenity waterside location and its popularity as a social and recreational destination on the lake.

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#### 10.10.1 PRIMARY ACTIVE FRONTAGES

The Esplanade is the primary active frontage. The Active Frontage Guidelines (Llewelyn-Davies *Urban Design Compendium 2000*) describe the characteristics of Grade A frontage as follows:

- More than 15 premises every 100m,
- More than 25 doors and windows every 100m,
- A large range of functions,
- No passive facades,
- Good depth and modulation in the building surface, and
- High quality materials and refined details.

Over time, the Dress Circle could evolve into Grade A Active Frontage, provided that new buildings are designed to accommodate smaller scale shop fronts, vertical scale facades, and fine architectural details.

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#### 10.10.2 SECONDARY ACTIVE FRONTAGES

The secondary active frontages should aim to meet the guidelines for Grade B frontage as follows:

- 10-15 premises every 100m,
- More than 15 doors and windows every 100m,
- A moderate range of functions,
- A few passive facades only,
- Some depth and modulation in the building surface, and
- Good quality materials and refined details.

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#### 10.10.3 MINOR ACTIVE FRONTAGES

The minor active frontages should aim to meet the guidelines for Grade C frontage as follows:

- 6-10 premises every 100m,
- A small range of functions,
- Less than half passive facades,
- little depth or modulation in the building surface, and
- standard materials and few details.

## 10.11 PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING FACADES

### 10.11.1 DRESS CIRCLE FACADES

On the Dress Circle, the facade of each site should contribute to an overall street wall built on the street boundary. To achieve this each street facade should:

1. Have a maximum width of 6-7metres, and be three storeys high.
2. Extend vertically from the footpath to the top of a continuous parapet line.
3. Be of solid masonry construction.
4. Have punched voids for windows and doors and recessed balconies.

Wider frontages should be composed of two or more tall narrow facades that complement each other but are distinguished by materials, detailing, colour, and or wall alignment.

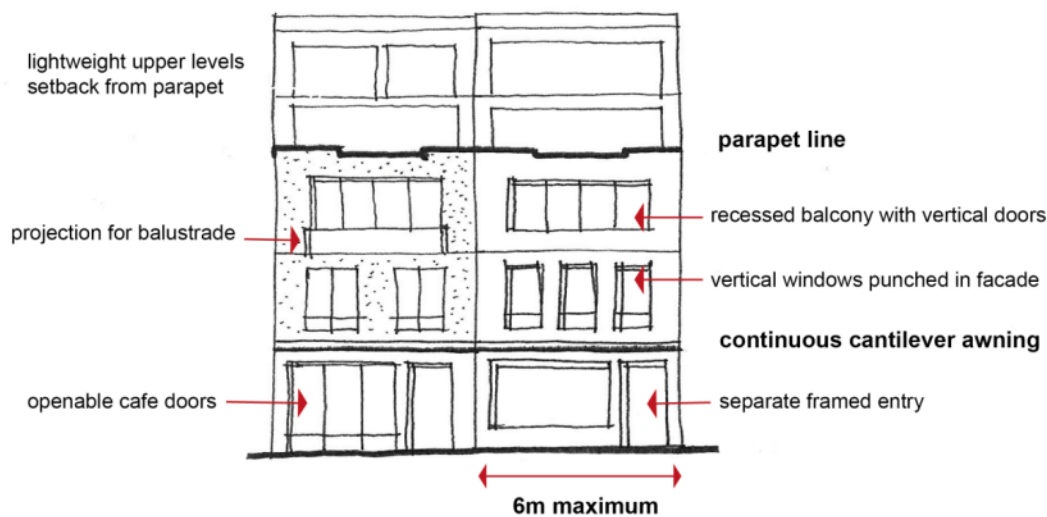


Figure 77 - Façade elements to reinforce fine grain vertical shopfronts

### 10.11.2 CONTINUOUS STREET AWNINGS

1. Provide continuous protection over the footpath.
2. Define a human scale space.
3. Provide sun and weather protection with solid, deep cantilever design.
4. Emphasise the slope of the street by stepping with the gradient.
5. Denote entries with minor variations to horizontal line.

### 10.11.3 INTERMITTENT STREET AWNINGS

1. Provide partial protection over building entries, driveway entries, street front windows and/or the footpath.
2. Define a human scale space at entries.
3. Provide sun and weather protection with solid, moderately deep cantilever design.

### 10.11.4 WINDOWS AND ENTRIES

Windows and entries onto the street should emphasise the street facade wall using the following design approach:

- Windows punched in solid masonry facade,
- Entries punched in solid masonry facade,
- Framing detail for entry doors and display windows,
- Opening walls, bi-fold doors for café trading,
- Balconies recessed in solid masonry facade,
- Parapet line of a facade used as balustrade for terraces on the next level.

### 10.11.5 SIGNAGE

Signage should be integrated with the building design and maintain maximum visibility between the building interior and the footpath. Signage is best located:

- on the building facade below awning level,
- on the face of the awning,
- suspended under the awning.

Signage above the awning and on glazed areas should be avoided.

### 10.11.6 BALCONIES

- Recessed in masonry wall if below the parapet line with minor projections for balustrades.
- Lightweight and projecting if above the parapet line.
- Small section timber and metal detail elements.
- Lightweight moveable awnings, louvers and screens for wind protection and privacy.

### 10.11.7 MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Principles for materials and finishes of buildings on The Esplanade and Dress Circle:

- Lightweight sheet materials or painted or rendered masonry.
- Mid to light neutral tones.
- No face brick.
- Lightweight screens and awnings.

Principles for materials and finishes of buildings in the urban support areas at a distance from the water:

- Lightweight sheet materials or painted or rendered masonry.
- Mid to light neutral tones.
- May incorporate some face brick areas.
- Lightweight screens and awnings.

### 10.12 PRINCIPLES FOR CAR PARK DESIGN

Any proposal for a multi-deck car park should include:

- retail floor space at street level(s) where feasible along the John Street frontage,
- quality cladding and detailing to all external car park elevations, including Postman's Lane,
- articulation of external elevations,
- public art input to the external finish or elevation,
- integration of bus stop shelters into the building mass on John Street,
- include multiple pedestrian entry points that are legible, generous and that have large awning protection.

Rooftop parking would not be acceptable.



Figure 78 - Multi-deck car parks with high quality facades and articulation

## 11 POTENTIAL PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Given the community values for Warners Bay, the potential attractions of the lakeside location, and the Planning Principles described above, Warners Bay has the potential to redevelop as a high quality built environment offering a unique experience for the community and visitors.

Redevelopment will be dependent on a clear planning scheme, the demand for new floor space with high quality services, the capacity of sites to develop and availability of off-site parking.

### 11.1 DEMAND FOR FLOOR SPACE

SGS Economics (2010) prepared a background report on the economic drivers for the local government area, which informed the preparation of the Lifestyle 2030 Strategy. Their report predicted a demand for 27,000m<sup>2</sup> commercial floor space in the Warners Bay Town Centre by 2031. SGS predict that approximately 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of this would be retail.

The Framework has investigated the potential mix of uses within new development based on LHRS targets for employment in the centre and the demand for commercial space projected by SGS Economics. The commercial space would likely include an expanding sector for medical facilities to support the needs of an aging population. The residential component of floor space reflects the Lifestyle 2030 Strategy objectives for more people living in town centres that would provide greater proximity to jobs, services, and public transport. Residential presence would also support activity, longer trading hours, and natural surveillance in the centre.

The Warners Bay suburban catchment of 23,000 people that takes in Warners Bay, Speers Point, Lakelands, Eleebana, and Valentine is sufficient to support another supermarket in the Town Centre, although this is not a necessary planning target (Urbacity, 2013).

### 11.2 CAPACITY OF SITES TO REDEVELOP

Generally, in Warners Bay Town Centre the capacity of any site to redevelop is dependent on the following factors:

- Being in common ownership.
- Site area and frontage.
- Good site access.
- Ability to provide on-site parking or availability of town parking off site.
- Sufficient permissible height to achieve viable development.
- Ground levels and ability to handle effects of inundation.
- Requirement to replace existing community infrastructure or facilities.
- Cost of site remediation.

The Framework needs to recognise these factors and identify the sites likely to redevelop in a 20-year timeframe. Town parking to service multiple land uses could be located on three of the larger redevelopment sites.





Figure 79 - Dress Circle sites and potential sites for town parking and off-site parking for the Dress Circle.

### 11.3 ENABLING DRESS CIRCLE REDEVELOPMENT

The Framework foresees the Dress Circle and the Market Square as the future social and economic hubs of the town and the main catalyst for town centre renewal and activity. Ideally these pedestrian activity areas would redevelop with a high quality mix of street level retail, and offices above with residential apartments on upper levels, all with a highly sought after outlook to Lake Macquarie or a lively public space.

Ownership on the Dress Circle is fragmented but all sites have rear access from Postman's Lane. As a result, redevelopment of individual sites is feasible if there was provision for off-site parking close by to meet the requirements of commercial and residential uses, and there was a suitable process for handling the construction phase.

### 11.4 DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY

Analysis and advice has been provided by Department of Planning and Environment through their Urban Feasibility Model (UFM) and via specific advice about Warners Bay including testing the development feasibility of selected sites throughout the town centre (Appendix 5).

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#### 11.4.1 CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

General constraints to development in the town centre:

- Market forces – availability of finance, sale price for residential units, rental returns for retail and office space.
- Construction costs – car parking, geotechnical conditions, access.
- Planning constraints – permitted building heights, car parking rates, setbacks, building design.
- Developer contributions for traffic intersection upgrades, public domain upgrades and car parking.
- Tenure, parcel size and ownership

There are also some constraints that are specific to certain areas or sites:

- Dress Circle redevelopment is constrained by:
  - difficulty of delivering on-site parking,
  - narrow fragmented sites,
  - flooding on lower sites,
  - orientation of sites overlooking the lake that only have sun access at the rear,
  - need to configure apartments fronting the lake side by side to meet the SEPP65 sun access requirements.
- Development of the John Street car park site constrained by need to:
  - replace the existing parking,
  - provide new retail, office and residential floor space that would activate John street and the Market Square,
  - maintain mid-winter sun access to Market Square.

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#### 11.4.2 URBAN FEASIBILITY MODEL

The UFM is a broad model that provides high level information about the influence planning controls have on the feasibility of development.

For Warners Bay, the UFM indicated that:

- the planning controls and market factors are currently right for development to occur on medium density residential zoned land immediately outside the town centre.
- Council's car parking rates add considerable cost to a development and act to reduce development density. A lesser rate would make development more feasible and thus more likely to occur.
- construction/financing costs, sale price for residential apartments, and rental returns for retail/commercial floor space, are the largest contributing factors to development feasibility in the

town centre. Current market sale prices and rental returns are too low to encourage redevelopment throughout the centre.

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### 11.4.3 TESTING DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY

Analysis has been undertaken to test the development feasibility of selected sites throughout the town centre based on the proposed planning controls

A hypothetical development was assumed for several site in the town centre based on the proposed planning controls. Assumptions included:

- Development controls – heights, car parking, uses based on planning documents.
- Retail/commercial floor space and rents.
- Residential unit size, number and sale prices.
- Construction costs – based on Rawlinson’s Australian Construction Handbook (2015) rates for ground floor suburban retail, suburban offices, multi storey residential units, balconies, car parking per space (underground) and car parking ground plus one storey per space.
- Development costs – interest, profit and risk, holding costs, DA costs and s94.

The value of the site was calculated and a Residual Land Value analysis was undertaken based on the value of the site if developed based on assumptions. The findings include:

- The proposed controls are unlikely to encourage redevelopment of land fronting the Esplanade in the short to medium term, primarily due to the high retail value of existing shops and small lots with fragmented ownership.
- Lot amalgamation along The Esplanade is required to conform to proposed planning controls and SEPP 65 provisions due to orientation and shape of lots.
- There is no demand for retail and office space outside the core of the town centre and removing the commercial component would encourage immediate development.
- Underground parking is uneconomic except for very large scale projects.
- Parking is a significant development cost and the parking rate of 1 per 40m<sup>2</sup> of retail/commercial space renders most fringe sites uneconomic to develop.
- The proposed controls and market conditions are suitable for development of large and/or vacant sites to occur now.
- Extra height (two storeys) for residential units in core areas could make development feasible in the short to medium term.

## 12 IMPLEMENTATION

The next section of the Framework outlines the key actions for the effective implementation of this Framework. The table below summarises the key actions and includes an indicative timeframe and major delivery body. The sections following the table provide more detail on key actions.

Table 3 - Implementation Actions

Action	Threshold	Responsible Body
Adopt Town Centre Plans Town Centre Framework Town Centre Area Plan Streetscape Master Plan	Planning Case established and supported by Council	Council Integrated Planning Department Council City Design Department
Finalise LEP 2014 Amendment for Zoning and Height of Buildings	Planning Case established and supported by Council	Council Integrated Planning Department
Development Feasibility Study for John Street Carpark Site + Market Square	Adoption of Town Centre Plans	Council Property & Business Development Department
Prepare a Strategy for Council's commercial land holdings in Warners Bay	Adoption of Town Centre Plans	Council Property & Business Development Department
Warners Bay Business Development Strategy	Adoption of Town Centre Plans	Business Chamber and Lake Macquarie Economic Development Company
Pedestrian/cyclist improvements	As needed ???	Council Assets Management Department/RMS/Developer
Dress Circle Revitalisation Works	Detailed design + Funding Opportunity	Council and other funding partner
John St car park site Market Square + Mixed use parking retail/office/ tourism/residential development	Feasibility complete Funding model supported by Council	Council, private partners, and other funding partners
Traffic intersection upgrades	As required for traffic generating development	RMS/Council/Developer
Review the Section 94 Contributions Plan for intersection upgrades, public domain and town parking facility Special rate levy etc	Short term	Council Integrated Planning and Community Planning

### 12.1 REVISE THE AREA PLAN

Revisions to the previous draft Area Plan should reflect this Framework. In particular, changes are recommended to:

1. Update the desired future character to reflect principles for town character,
2. Amend the Town Centre structure map to reflect changes in pedestrian links and crossing points, pedestrian activity frontages, amended cycle routes and connections, and intersection upgrades.
3. Update the height in storeys based on the principles for height,
4. Identify and provide controls for street and building types,
5. Identify the John Street car park as a future central multi-deck car park with potential commercial and residential floor space, and
6. Include controls and graphics for building form and design.

This is a short-term action, will be undertaken by Council's Integrated Planning Department, and ideally should be prepared in parallel with this Framework.

### 12.2 AMEND LAKE MACQUARIE LEP 2014

Currently, the Warners Bay Town Centre has been deferred from LEP 2014. LEP 2004 and DCP No. 1 will continue to apply to the Town Centre until LEP 2014 is amended to incorporate the Warners Bay Town Centre.



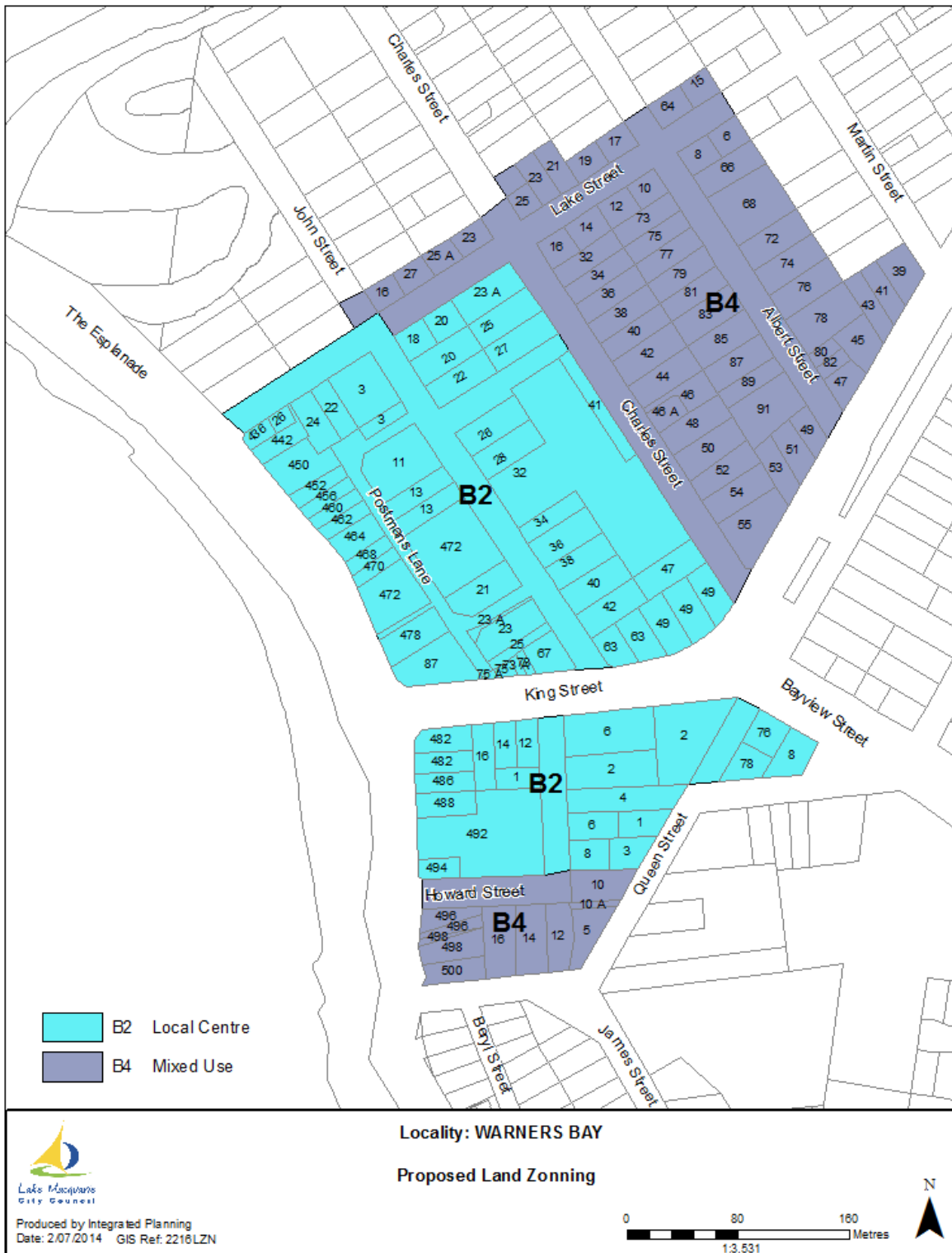


Figure 80 - Proposed Land use zones for Warners Bay Town Centre – LEP 2014

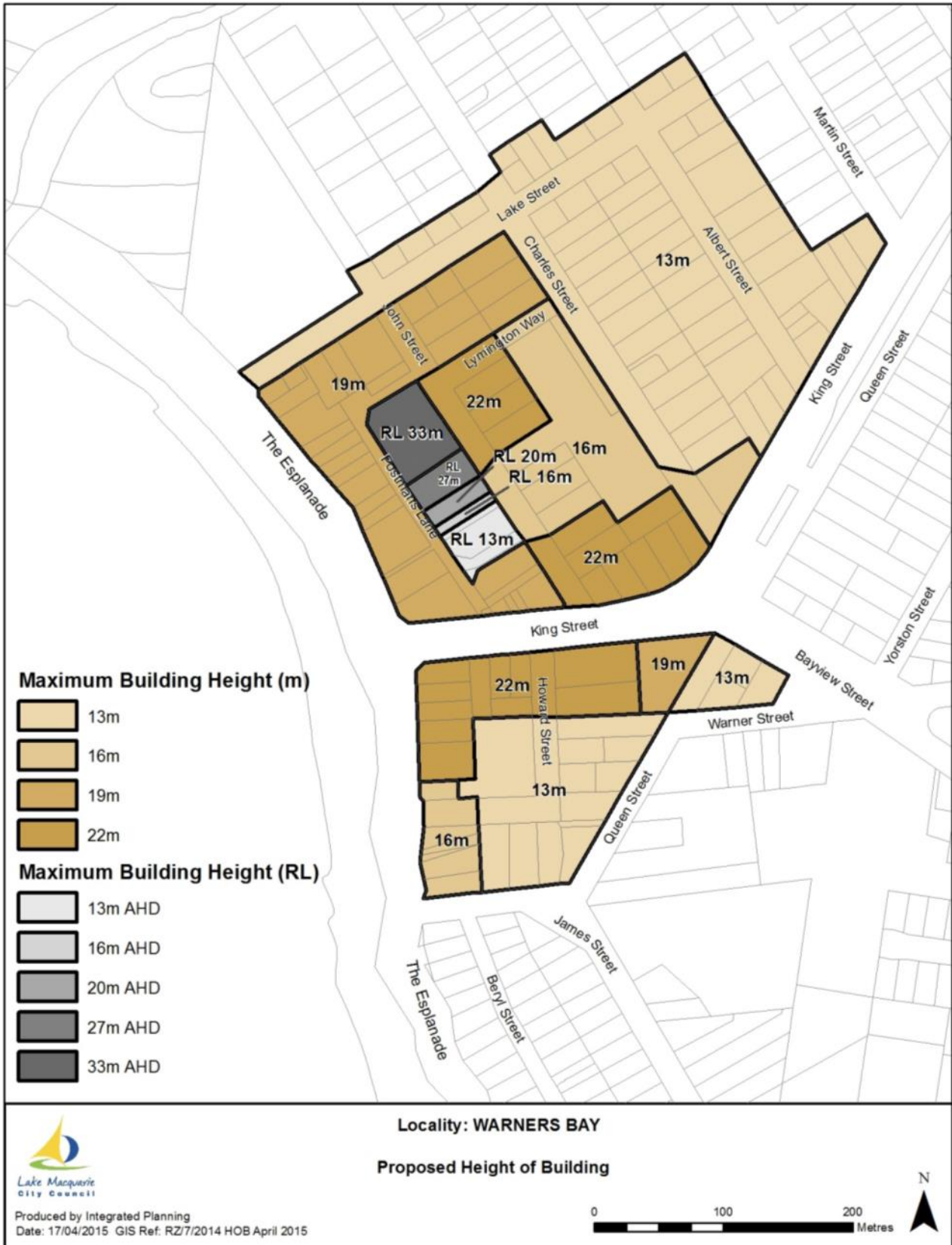


Figure 81 - Proposed Height of Building LEP2014

The proposed LEP Amendment would include:

1. The existing 3(1) Urban Core Zone should be converted to the B2 Local Centre Zone. The 3(2) Urban Centre (Support) Zone should be converted to the B4 Mixed Use Zone. This is consistent with the process followed for other local centres.
2. The property at 30A Charles Street should be considered for re-zoning from R3 Medium Density Residential to B4 Mixed Use, to enable consolidation with 25 Lake Street to enable a viable commercial development on the corner of Lake Street and Charles Street. This would support the objectives for a diversity of commercial space in the Town Centre and an active frontage along Lake Street.
3. The Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 Height of Building Map layer should be amended to include a maximum height in metres for each parcel.

An adopted Area Plan for Warners Bay Town Centre would become effective when the LEP 2014 Amendment is finalised.

The maximum number of storeys on each parcel as determined in the revised Area Plan, is converted to a maximum height in metres and carried into a draft LEP Amendment to the Height of Building Map Layer for Warners Bay. The conversion from storeys to metres would be based on the adopted allowances for floor-to-floor heights for different uses.

The Height of Building layer for properties to the north-west of the proposed Market Square are governed by Reduced Levels in metres above the Australian Height Datum (AHD) to protect sun access to the public plaza area in mid-winter.

This is a short-term action and will be undertaken by Council's Integrated Planning Department and ideally should be prepared in parallel with this Framework.

### 12.3 DEVELOP A STREETScape MASTER PLAN

A Streetscape Master Plan would guide and facilitate long-term improvements to public footpaths, street planting, lighting, outdoor dining areas, pedestrian lanes and public transport infrastructure.

The Master Plan would be particularly important to identify and resolve the arrangement of parking, café trading areas and pedestrian movement on The Esplanade.

This is a short-term action, will be undertaken by Council's City Projects Department, and ideally should be prepared in parallel with this Framework.

### 12.4 IMPROVE ON-STREET PARKING USAGE

The expansion of timed on-street parking spaces would increase utilisation of these spaces and encourage all-day parkers to car pool, cycle, or catch the bus. Formalising on-street parking spaces with line marking would avoid loss of spaces.

Time restrictions and line marking of currently unrestricted parking spaces on The Esplanade, Lake Street, Charles Street and Howard Street can be undertaken in the short term to address parking demand.

### 12.5 PREPARE A COUNCIL COMMERCIAL LAND HOLDING STRATEGY

Council's Property and Business Development Department holds significant commercial sites in the Town Centre. A strategic approach to development of town centre infrastructure and the delivery of new commercial and residential floor space across all sites could be a significant catalyst for town centre investment and economic growth.

The strategy must also be balanced with sound commercial outcomes to deliver an enhanced long-term Warners Bay precinct that seeks to address all stakeholder needs. The strategy should:

- reflect the objectives of this Framework,
- outline appropriate staging of development on different sites,
- identify the best use of each site to support the delivery of this Framework, and
- address town centre uses (e.g. child care centre, car parking, recreation, community facilities).

It is considered that the strategy needs be prepared in the short-term. Council's Property & Business Development Department is the key delivery body for this action.

### 12.6 ESTABLISH A WARNERS BAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

To realise the full potential of, and plan for sustainable economic growth in Warners Bay, an Economic Development Strategy should be prepared. The strategy would likely consider and address the following:

- Articulate and build on the competitive advantage of Warners Bay,
- What type of businesses does Warners Bay want/need to attract,
- How to retain current businesses,
- How to attract and support new businesses,
- How to attract tourists and visitors,
- What infrastructure is required to support those businesses (e.g. digital, transport, community infrastructure),
- What are the growth industries for the Town Centre (e.g. tourist and accommodation, high tech medical services), and
- What are the key recreation and cultural event opportunities (e.g. music in the podium).

It is acknowledged that the strategy could apply more broadly, such as to the entire Lake Macquarie LGA.

It is considered that the best placed parties to prepare such a strategy is the Warners Bay Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Lake Macquarie Economic Development Company.

Ideally, the strategy would be prepared in the short to medium term.

### 12.7 IMPLEMENT DRESS CIRCLE REVITALISATION WORKS

The coordinated delivery of works to revitalise the eastern side of The Esplanade is considered necessary. The proposed works to the footpath, dining areas, and parking areas have the ability to transform this section of The Esplanade. The full benefit of the proposed works will only be obtained if a budget is allocated and they are delivered in a coordinated timely manner. A funding source needs to be identified to undertake the works. This is a short to medium term task that will involve Council and/or another funding partner.

### 12.8 DEVELOP A MARKET SQUARE AND CAR PARKING FACILITY

The John Street car park site has the potential to provide significant community benefits in the form of public space and public car parking.

The site could accommodate a high quality Market Square and adjacent parking facility with retail, office, and residential floor space. This public infrastructure project could unlock the development potential of the Dress Circle, provide an active public space fronting John Street, and support a residential presence in the Town Centre. This strategic use of Council lands could contribute to the up lift of property values and the delivery of significant public infrastructure.

Any development on this site would be subject to further investigations, feasibility assessment, and funding opportunities, to achieve a best overall use of all Council parcels for the Town Centre. This is a medium to long-term task that may involve Council and/or another funding partner.

### 12.9 TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC UPGRADES

The upgrade of intersections and improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities are required to support the growth and change in Warners Bay. The upgrades are supported by a Traffic and Transport Study undertaken by GTA Consultants (2014). The key changes recommended to manage the growth of Warners Bay include:

1. Improve facilities for bus stops, taxi ranks, cycle routes and footpaths
2. Provide for all turning movements at the King Street and John Street intersection.
3. Signalise The Esplanade and Lake Street intersection.
4. Signalise The Esplanade and King Street intersection.
5. Realign roundabout at King Street/Bayview Street/Charles Street to permit full turning movements.
6. Signalise Lake Street/John Street and Charles Street/Lake Street intersections
7. Duplicate North Creek Bridge.

These timing and funding of these improvements would be subject to active transport programs, traffic generation by private development, and growth of RMS network traffic. In many cases, a project planning and implementation will involve Council, the Roads and Maritime Services, and developers with input from the local traffic committee.



### 13 CONCLUSION

Warners Bay has the potential to thrive and become an increasingly popular destination that meets the needs of the many varied stakeholders and visitors to the Town Centre.

This Framework has comprehensively examined the factors that will influence the growth and change of Warners Bay Town Centre over time. The Framework provides a holistic and robust set of strategies and planning principles that seek to:

- retain the relaxed lake side character that Warners Bay is known for,
- ensure the Town Centre is easy to access by walking and cycling,,
- ensure the town centre has attractive, vibrant and safe public domain areas,
- provide for sustainable economic development and competitive business,
- develop a town centre that becomes a destination of choice,
- accommodate apartment living and parking,
- establish appropriate building heights,
- ensure provision of good quality buildings,
- satisfy demand for retail and commercial floor space,
- better connect the Town Centre with the foreshore, and
- provide a vision for how Warners Bay Town Centre may grow and change over time.

The Framework provides a balanced plan that addresses community feedback, responds appropriately to forces driving change, and provides opportunity for landowners, business owners, and visitors.

This Framework provides the invitation for all players to contribute to a vibrant mixed use town centre that encourages people to walk, to sit, and to stay. It envisages a town centre that will provide a better way to move about, a better way to meet and socialise, a better way to trade and conduct business, and a better way to participate in local community life.

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15 APPENDIX 1 – WARNERS BAY DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS (ABS, 2001 AND 2011 CENSUS)

	2001				2011				Catchment Change (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change (2001 - 2011)	Catchment Change Rate (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change Rate (2001 - 2011)
	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%				
<b>Population *Census not ERP.</b>												
Total number of people	22,583		177,619		23,792		189,006		1,209	11,387	5.4%	6.0%
Male	10,962	48.5%	86,887	48.9%	11,563	48.6%	92,311	48.8%	601	5,424	5.5%	5.9%
Female	11,620	51.5%	90,732	51.1%	12,229	51.4%	96,695	51.2%	609	5,963	5.2%	6.2%
Median Age	39		38		42		41					
<b>Age Profile</b>												
0-4 years	1,312	5.8%	11,494	6.5%	1,292	5.4%	11,293	6.0%	-20	-201	-2%	-2%
5-9 years	1,672	7.4%	13,044	7.4%	1,502	6.3%	11,426	6.0%	-170	-1,618	-10%	-12%
10-14 years	1,750	7.8%	13,230	7.5%	1,616	6.8%	12,451	6.6%	-134	-779	-8%	-6%
15-19 years	1,706	7.6%	12,718	7.2%	1,695	7.1%	12,979	6.9%	-11	261	-1%	2%
20-24 years	1,161	5.2%	9,629	5.4%	1,254	5.3%	10,807	5.7%	93	1,178	8%	12%
25-29 years	1,091	4.9%	9,967	5.6%	961	4.0%	9,766	5.2%	-130	-201	-12%	-2%
30-34 years	1,339	6.0%	11,290	6.4%	1,043	4.4%	9,869	5.2%	-296	-1,421	-22%	-13%
35-39 years	1,611	7.2%	12,330	7.0%	1,431	6.0%	11,762	6.2%	-180	-568	-11%	-5%
40-44 years	1,829	8.1%	13,359	7.5%	1,733	7.3%	12,532	6.6%	-96	-827	-5%	-6%
45-49 years	1,737	7.7%	12,741	7.2%	1,754	7.4%	12,926	6.8%	17	185	1%	1%
50-54 years	1,706	7.6%	12,190	6.9%	1,841	7.7%	13,396	7.1%	135	1,206	8%	10%
55-59 years	1,497	6.7%	10,014	5.7%	1,714	7.2%	12,657	6.7%	217	2,643	14%	26%
60-64 years	1,046	4.7%	8,279	4.7%	1,676	7.0%	12,296	6.5%	630	4,017	60%	49%
65-69 years	886	3.9%	7,383	4.2%	1,405	5.9%	10,215	5.4%	519	2,832	59%	38%
70-74 years	817	3.6%	7,238	4.1%	964	4.1%	7,919	4.2%	147	681	18%	9%
75-79 years	681	3.0%	5,882	3.3%	802	3.4%	6,521	3.5%	121	639	18%	11%
80-84 years	403	1.8%	3,713	2.1%	616	2.6%	5,375	2.8%	213	1,662	53%	45%
85-89 years	181	0.8%	1,796	1.0%	336	1.4%	3,316	1.8%	155	1,520	86%	85%
90 years +	69	0.3%	888	0.5%	157	0.7%	1,499	0.8%	88	611	128%	69%

	2001				2011				Catchment Change (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change (2001 - 2011)	Catchment Change Rate (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change Rate (2001 - 2011)
	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%				
<b>Employment</b>												
Working full-time	6,257	57.1%	42,218	54.5%	6,899	57.4%	50,373	57.1%	642	8,155	10%	19%
Working part-time	3,738	34.1%	25,785	33.3%	3,985	33.1%	27,816	31.5%	247	2,031	7%	8%
Unemployed	700	6.4%	7,393	9.5%	461	3.8%	4,659	5.3%	-239	-2,734	-34%	-37%
Not in labour force	6,446	28.5%	57,595	32.4%	6,798	28.6%	59,276	31.4%	352	1,681	5%	3%
Total labour force	10,956	100.0%	77,504	100.0%	12,023	100.0%	88,251	100.0%	1,067	10,747	10%	14%
Unemployment Rate	6.08%		9.50%		3.7%		5.3%		-2.4%	0	-39%	-44%
<b>Private Dwelling Structure</b>												
Separate house	7,215	87.1%	57,647	80.1%	8,187	79.4%	60,962	78.5%	972	3,315	13%	6%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	322	3.9%	4,859	6.7%	1,149	11.1%	5,117	6.6%	827	258	257%	5%
Flat, unit or apartment:	199	2.4%	2,614	3.6%	288	2.8%	3,743	4.8%	89	1,129	45%	43%
Other dwelling (e.g. tent, caravan, houseboat, shop top flat)	6	0.1%	1,457	2.0%	14	0.1%	702	0.9%	8	-755	133%	-52%
Not stated	41	0.5%	433	0.6%	10	0.1%	702	0.9%	-31	269	-76%	62%
Unoccupied private dwellings	503	6.1%	4,976	6.9%	661	6.4%	6,399	8.2%	158	1,423	31%	29%
Total Private Dwellings	8,286		71,986		10,309		77,625		2,023	5,639	24%	8%
<b>Household Structure</b>												
Lone Resident	1,581	19.2%	14,512	22.1%	1,860	19.3%	16,829	21.4%	279	2,317	18%	16%
Two people	2,837	34.5%	22,925	34.9%	3,253	33.7%	25,264	32.1%	416	2,339	15%	10%
Three people	1,360	16.5%	10,610	16.1%	1,294	13.4%	10,967	13.9%	-66	357	-5%	3%
Four people	1,599	19.4%	11,041	16.8%	1,621	16.8%	11,060	14.0%	22	19	1%	0%
Five or more people	853	10.4%	6,643	10.1%	809	8.4%	6,435	8.2%	-44	-208	-5%	-3%
Not Applicable	NA		NA		813	8.4%	8,262	10.5%				
Total No. of Households	8,230		65,731		9,650		78,817		1,420	13,086	17%	20%



	2001				2011				Catchment Change (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change (2001 - 2011)	Catchment Change Rate (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change Rate (2001 - 2011)
	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%				
<b>Selected Medians</b>												
Median monthly housing loan repayments	\$1,032		\$899		\$1,891		\$1,733		\$859	\$834	83%	93%
Median weekly rent	\$183		\$174		\$300		\$255		\$117	\$81	64%	47%
Median weekly individual income	\$399		\$349		\$616		\$520		\$217	\$171	54%	49%
Median weekly family income	\$1,082		\$899		\$1,781		\$1,396		\$699	\$497	65%	55%
Median weekly household income	\$957		\$649		\$1,498		\$1,117		\$541	\$468	56%	72%
Average household size	2.8		2.6		2.7		2.5		-0.1	-0.1	-2%	-4%
<b>Qualifications</b>												
Postgraduate Degree	320	1.4%	1,577	0.9%	607	2.6%	3,320	1.8%	287	1,743	90%	111%
Year 12 or Equivalent	6,057	26.8%	36,670	20.6%	8,135	34.2%	52,526	27.8%	2,078	15,856	34%	43%
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	289	1.3%	1,466	0.8%	335	1.4%	1,903	1.0%	46	437	16%	30%
Bachelor Degree	1,693	7.5%	8,983	5.1%	2,663	11.2%	14,911	7.9%	970	5,928	57%	66%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	1,318	5.8%	7,982	4.5%	1,888	7.9%	12,059	6.4%	570	4,077	43%	51%
Certificate	3,877	17.2%	29,286	16.5%	4,412	18.5%	36,679	19.4%	535	7,393	14%	25%
<b>Home Ownership</b>												
Owned Outright	4,221		30,446		3,970		27,178		-251	-3,268	-6%	-11%
Owned with a Mortgage	2,458		18,297		3,146		24,907		688	6,610	28%	36%
Private rental	1,212		10,343		1,476		15,977		264	5,634	22%	54%
Being Purchased Rent / Buy Scheme			360		12		85			-275		-76%
Occupied Rent Free					56		478					
Occupied under Life Tenure					21		334					
Not Stated			3,963		969		9,858					
State housing authority	97		3,600		79		3,459		-18	-141	-19%	-4%

	2001				2011							
	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%	Warners Bay Catchment	%	Lake Macquarie LGA	%	Catchment Change (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change (2001 - 2011)	Catchment Change Rate (2001 - 2011)	LGA Change Rate (2001 - 2011)
<b>Vehicles per Dwelling</b>												
None	340	12.40%	4,693	21.07%	371	4.89%	5,026	7.35%	31	333	9%	7%
One Motor Vehicle	928	33.84%	8,164	36.66%	1,725	22.75%	24,666	36.05%	797	16,502	86%	202%
Two Motor Vehicles	1,111	40.52%	7,118	31.96%	3,719	49.06%	26,347	38.51%	2,608	19,229	235%	270%
Three or more Motor Vehicles	363	13.24%	2,294	10.30%	1,766	23.30%	12,382	18.10%	1,403	10,088	387%	440%