BRUNSWICK HEADS: INTRODUCTION

Brunswick Heads boat harbour is situated at the mouth of the Brunswick River on the north coast of New South Wales. This small, unspoilt coastal village is just 15 minutes north of Byron Bay and 30 minutes from the Gold Coast, making it an ideal location for visitors wanting a quieter coastal experience.

The boat harbour infrastructure was built between 1959 and 1962 to support the commercial fishing industry. Since that time, little has changed with respect to the facilities, but the harbour now supports a more diverse range of commercial and recreational vessels. The harbour is connected to the village both visually and by public walkways, making it a destination for both the local community and visitors to the area.

The master plan for Brunswick Heads boat harbour began in 2012 with the recognition that, with multiple uses in a relatively small space, some planning was needed to ensure not only best use of the space available, but to provide a shared vision and a template for future development.

Recognising the best way forward was through the development of a master plan with broad community input, two stakeholder workshops were held.

The Roads and Maritime Services Regional Boating Plans and Tweed–Clarence Boating Plan (2014) highlighted the need for a proactive and coordinated approach to managing the future needs of Brunswick Heads boat harbour and the master plan. In 2015, Roads and Maritime Services and the Department of Industry committed funding and resources to commence the master planning process.

The process of developing a master plan commenced with the engagement of principal consultants Ardill, Payne and Partners. The consultants’ reports and records of the workshops have been shared with the community by email and through the project website.

Three successful community and stakeholder workshops were held in March 2015, November 2015 and September 2016. Workshop participants were directly involved in planning the layout of key components of the boat harbour. The broader community were engaged through a ‘Have Your Say’ survey available online and in the local community from February to April 2016. Over 170 submissions were received.

All information received from the workshops and submissions has been considered and forms the basis of this masterplan.

THE VISION

To provide affordable and appropriate improvements to boating safety, access and infrastructure for local people and visitors

THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To improve boating safety, access and infrastructure; revitalise and activate the harbour precinct; provide supporting infrastructure and improved amenity to create safe access and connection for the community
THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACE

Brunswick Heads: ‘simple pleasures’

Brunswick Heads has a low-key coastal charm and is known as a place of “simple pleasures”.

The main street has an eclectic street scape with a strong visual connection to the water. Parkland and open space provides the community with good access to the river and beach.

Adjacent to the boat harbour is a separate reserve used for parking, access to the boat harbour and the boat ramp.

Brunswick Heads is ideally located for holiday makers with boats. There were around 14,000 vessels registered in the Tweed–Clarence area in 2015, and this number continues to increase. The Brunswick Heads estuary hosts a range of activities such as power boats, kayaking, sailing and fishing. The estuary is relatively small, which means that at times there are some conflicts of use.

The Byron Shire is a popular leisure destination with both residents and visitors, and tourism is a key driver of economy. In 2014 a total of 1,376,000 people visited Byron Shire, of whom 681,000 stayed overnight.

Brunswick Heads has a resident population of nearly 1,800 people, and the boat harbour, it’s a popular place for leisure and recreation as it is easy to access from the village centre by footpath, cycleway, road or water.

The master plan provides strategic direction on improvements to access and infrastructure for the boat harbour. It also aims to improve boating safety for locals and visitors alike.

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1 Destination NSW LGA Profile 2014
The boat harbour

Construction of the Brunswick Heads boat harbour infrastructure began in 1959. It was built on Crown land to support the commercial fishing industry and was completed in 1962.

The uses of the boat harbour have changed over time and the arrangement of the site and its infrastructure no longer meet community needs.

Informal public walkways connect the boat harbour to the village, with native vegetation and wetlands forming a backdrop to the west.

The site provides a large area of public open space and natural areas that, along with the landmark Norfolk Island Pines, provide visual connectivity and physical access to the waterfront, and commercial and retail activities.

Boating on the Brunswick River

The mouth of the Brunswick River is protected by rock training walls and breakwaters. The river opens to the Pacific Ocean at Brunswick Heads.

The Brunswick River and its tributaries are highly valued for their beauty and are used for activities such as power boating, fishing, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming and snorkelling.

With a large and growing number of boat registrations—some 14,000 recreational vessels were registered in Brunswick Heads and the surrounding villages in 2015—there can sometimes be conflict between users, particularly during peak periods such as school holidays.

Increasing numbers of recreational boaters means there is also a shortage of mooring and vessel storage in the region. It is hoped that planning can help to resolve some of these issues.
THE STUDY AREA

Master plan study area is outlined in orange

Source: Google Earth - Department Finance, Services & Innovation 2016 NOT TO SCALE
THE VISION

The vision for Brunswick Heads boat harbour is to provide affordable and appropriate improvements to boating safety, access and infrastructure for local people and visitors. The precinct will be reactivated and revitalised with the support and involvement of local people and through improved land-use planning that will:

- embrace the unique local concept of ‘simple pleasures’
- encourage appropriate and sustainable private and public investment in development that complements established lifestyle, tourism and commercial activities
- prioritise public access to the riverfront and open space
- enhance environmental, economic and social benefits from the boat harbour.

The “simple pleasures” theme was developed by the Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce as a reflection of village values and lifestyle. This theme has also been adopted for the development of the masterplan.

THE OBJECTIVES

The Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan will:

- capture the solutions for the boating infrastructure objectives
- optimise land use within the boat harbour
- prioritise public access to waterfront and public-domain areas
- improve waterfront amenity and connectivity with the town centre
- integrate with the plan of management for Massey Greene Holiday Park
- provide safe and effective traffic flow that eliminates or reduces usage conflicts and safety risks for vessels, pedestrians and vehicles
- provide adequate and appropriately located vehicle and trailer access and parking without impacting visual amenity
- provide required parking for visitors and locals
- respect and enhance native vegetation management
- promote walking, cycling and recreational marine activities.

The boat harbour precinct will be activated and revitalised by planning for development that:

- reflects the local character and concept of ‘simple pleasures’
- is of an appropriate scale and mix
- is affordable and commercially viable
- creates a unique destination with strong appeal for locals and visitors
- protects public access to the river and public domain areas
- is supported by the local community
- respects the natural environment.

Boating safety, access and infrastructure will be improved by providing:

- boat launching and retrieval systems for boats with trailers that allows safe and separate access to still water for motorized and non-motorised vessels
- safe vehicle and pedestrian access that delivers good traffic flow and required levels of parking for vehicles and boat trailers
- a modern boat harbour with required amenities, secure moorings and pontoon access for both long-term, short-term and casual use
- affordable and appropriate infrastructure that meets or exceeds current design, safety and environmental standards, and will meet the demand from local and visiting commercial, recreational and community vessels
- emergency retrieval for large boats in safe water.
MASTER PLAN FOR PROPOSED SITE STRUCTURES

The master plan diagram on the following page shows a series of numbered points on the map that correspond with the legend below.

1. **Boat ramps.** Retain and upgrade the existing ramp and install an additional ramp and pontoon. Install rock groyne(s) or similar to slow the river current after a detailed review of environmental factors. Improve the fish cleaning station and shelter areas. Maintain and upgrade the Sonny Coles Memorial Pavilion.

2. **Car and trailer parking.** Formalise 32 car parking spaces. Improve the road and parking surface. Improve drainage by applying water-sensitive urban design to protect existing vegetation and manage run-off. Retain as much existing vegetation as possible.

3. **Disused slipway.** Remove the old slipway, provide a new revetment along the foreshore and backfill to increase public open space and improve foreshore access.

4. **Public domain.** Public open space area with park and/or picnic facilities, shade trees and playground. The existing memorials will be retained or relocated within the public domain parkland.

5. **Riverfront access.** Provide an informal walking trail to the end of the breakwaters. Remove woody weeds and regrowth. Install river front seating and picnic facilities.

6. **Gangways and moorings.** Remove all gangways and moorings and replace with floating marina pontoons. Stockpile and reuse hardwood timber materials for future public domain artwork or furniture.

7. **Community-use building/s.** Remove the existing storage sheds and decommission and remove the existing fuel facility. Construct new community-use building/s (up to 800 square metre floor area) to include public toilets, showers, storage, meeting rooms and office space (for marina operators and community service organisations involved in the boat harbour). This will require detailed design work and further consultation.

8. **Car Parking.** Public car parking spaces (29) will be included for the community-use building and marina patrons.

9. **Vegetation to be retained.** Protect and manage existing vegetation such as endangered ecological community and other native vegetation.

10. **Vegetation to be removed.** Remove vegetation for formalised parking and provide compensatory planting in a location to be confirmed.

11. **Foreshore promenade.** A wide paved area with shade trees, seating and art, which provides public access around the foreshore and restricted vehicle access.

12. **Timber walkway.** Retain existing timber walkway and repair for safe pedestrian access (subject to condition assessment and further consultation).

13. **Private property.** Provide a right-of-way access from the public road with reciprocal rights for public access and services and utilities. Site development and parking will be contained within the lot.

14. **Car parking.** Provide on-street car parking spaces (38) on unformed section of public road to support public access to the boat harbour and public open space, additional parking (6) inside the boat harbour entrance and further parking (7) to support the non-powered water craft launching area. Disabled parking will be provided.

15. **Large boat crane lift-out area.** Dedicated space, including concrete pad and mooring poles, to enable mobile crane entry and access to allow for retrieval of vessels from the water and transport off-site. All vessel maintenance and repairs must be undertaken off-site.

16. **Non-powered water craft launching area.** Beach enhancement for public launching of non-powered craft. Upgrade the vehicle access and parking to this area (subject to further detailed design).

17. **Breakwaters.** Existing rock breakwaters will be maintained to protect assets within the boat harbour.

18. **New moorings.** A floating pontoon system to be installed in an east-west orientation for the mooring of boats into the prevailing winds. Size and configuration of berths is subject to detailed design. Fuel (ULP) and effluent pump out facilities to be installed. Short term and emergency berths to be available. Office space for marina management to be provided if required.

19. **Existing timber wharf.** Retain existing timber wharf (subject to condition assessment and further consultation).

20. **Public loading pontoon.** Install a general use pontoon for loading and unloading, fishing and emergency services (subject to detail design of marina and further consultation).
**VISUAL AXIS**

**V1. Core visual axis (North–South)**  
Create a clear line of sight between the main access, along the public foreshore promenade, to the water and the commercial area and community-use building.

**V2. Core visual axis (East–West)**  
Create a clear line of sight along the public foreshore promenade to the community-use area and existing site vegetation.

**V3. Secondary visual axis**  
Create a clear and direct line of sight between the public pathway on the Old Pacific Highway and the boat harbour.

**V4. Outlooks**  
Provide opportunities for views to various parts of the water from public open-space areas such as the breakwaters, parklands, jetties and community-use buildings.

**V5. Passive surveillance**  
Undertake weed management and under-pruning to achieve strong visual connections between the boat ramp precinct and the public-domain, open-space areas.
SAFE ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS FOR PEOPLE

P1. Connect to existing pathways
Provide a pedestrian and cycle pathway network that connects to the existing pathways and the village centre. Connect to the foreshore pathway that is located along the front of the holiday park. Connect to the existing pathway along the Old Pacific Highway that provides access to the village centre. Connect to the existing trail that provides access to the adjoining bushland area.

P2. Foreshore promenade
Provide a wide and flat public path along the edges of the boat harbour. The promenade provides public access to the waterfront, access to the jetties, shaded seat areas and a place for informal recreational fishing.

P3. Raised boardwalk
Further investigate the opportunity to install a raised boardwalk through the existing site vegetation that connects the community-use buildings to the car/trailer parking and boat ramp area.

P4. Informal pathway connection
Provide informal pathways to points of interest.

P5. Pathway network
Provide a safe pedestrian connection that minimises the potential for conflicts with vehicles.

P6. Shared pedestrian and vehicle area.
ACCESS AND PARKING FOR VEHICLES

V1. Primary vehicular access
Upgrade the existing site access as required.

V2. Car with trailer parking
Provide 32 spaces for parking of cars with attached trailers. Adopt water sensitive urban design strategies to protect root zone of vegetation and manage run-off. Retain as much of the EEC vegetation as possible.

V3. Car parking for community building and marina users.
Provide 29 spaces including some short-term spaces for loading/unloading accessible spaces.

V4. On-street car parking
Provide on street car parking (38 spaces) on unformed section of public road to support access to the harbour and public open space. Option to reconfigure the design shown to provide car parking from the internal access road, which would result in a reduced number of spaces and reconstruction of the public pathway.

V5. General public car parking on-site
Provide seven (7) spaces.

V6. Shared pedestrian and vehicle area provide a shared pavement area for vehicle and pedestrian access to the holiday park and to the non-powered craft launching area, including general parking (7 spaces) and short term loading bays (2 spaces).

V7. Access to private property

V8. Vehicle access to foreshore promenade
Restricted to emergency vehicles and specialised loading activities only.

V9. Vehicle access to boat lift out
GREEN SPACE AND LINKAGES

G1. Existing wetland
Retain and protect existing wetlands (State Environmental Protection Plan (SEPP) 14 and land subject to DRAFT SEPP).

G2. Existing Endangered Ecological Community (EEC)
The extent of the EEC is to be determined by survey at a detailed design stage. Approximate area scaled from the aerial photograph is 2760 m² across the three patches. Retain as much of the EEC as possible. Some EEC vegetation removal is proposed to accommodate car/trailer parking near the boat ramps (approximately 1000 m² cross hatched). Retain threatened Cryptocarya species within a vegetated area where possible five (5) specimens may require removal. Undertake compensatory planting within the site where shown and also off-site at an area and rate to be determined.

G3. Vegetation expansion area
Expand existing vegetated area (hatched).

G4. Managed parklands
Undertake tree planting within the public domain area to provide shade, amenity and canopy habitat connections. This vegetation will be managed for amenity and safety purposes.

G5. Existing pine trees retained
Retain existing Norfolk Island Pines as significant character elements of the village.

G6. Existing fig tree retained
The ownership of the fig tree is to be determined by boundary survey. The fig tree is to be retained and incorporated into the detailed design as a significant amenity tree.

G7. Other vegetation and landscape plantings to be removed (cross hatched)

G8. Existing Coast Cypress to be retained

G9. Foreshore promenade
Embellish waterfront areas with shade trees, maintaining views to water. Retain existing Cupaniopsis.
## PROPOSED FACILITIES UPGRADE

The table summarises proposed improvements to facilities. The proposed facilities have been identified as a desirable for future planning purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed facilities upgrade</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Existing*</th>
<th>Proposed**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The table summarises the proposed improvements to facilities within the boat harbour precinct.</td>
<td>PARKING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Existing column details the facilities currently in place.</td>
<td>Public formal parking for cars—in the boat harbour</td>
<td>25 spaces</td>
<td>13 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently parking for boats and trailers near the boat ramp is informal with space for about 10 vehicles with trailers. The access road to the boat ramp is a gravel track. Excluding customer parking on private property, there is little formalised parking for cars in the boat harbour (only about 25 spaces). In peak visitor times, cars and trailers park on grassed areas.</td>
<td>Public parking for cars—on the unformed street</td>
<td>38 spaces</td>
<td>32 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** The Proposed facilities have been identified as a desirable for future planning purposes. Nose-in angled parking for cars with trailers will be provided along the improved access road to the boat ramp (36 spaces). This will require minimal clearing of native vegetation.</td>
<td>Public Parking for cars with trailers</td>
<td>32 spaces</td>
<td>29 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The majority of additional formal parking for cars will be located on the unformed road reserve south of the footpath and cycleway (38 spaces). Again, there is minimal disturbance to native vegetation and open/green space near the waterway can be maintained and enhanced for visitors.</td>
<td>Total public parking spaces</td>
<td>25 spaces</td>
<td>83 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The increase in open public space is achieved largely by revitalising the former slipway site and locating additional carparks along the unformed roadways.</td>
<td>Parking for marina customers and community-use buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL PARKING</td>
<td>25 spaces</td>
<td>106 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PUBLIC DOMAIN—OPEN/GREEN SPACE (approximately)</td>
<td>2350 m²</td>
<td>3700 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOORINGS FOR BOATS</td>
<td>Eastern side</td>
<td>10 berths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western &amp; Southern sides</td>
<td>24 berths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total moorings</td>
<td>34 berths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOWING MARINA BERTHS (Subject to further market assessment and design)</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>36 berths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>34 berths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total floating marina berths</td>
<td></td>
<td>70 berths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY-USE BUILDINGS</td>
<td>Community-use building</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public toilets</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showers</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office space</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting rooms</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pump-out facilities for boats</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diesel fuel</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decommissioned</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>Subject to further consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unleaded petrol</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACHIEVING THE VISION

Where to from here

The Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan provides a community vision and a strategic approach that will encourage and facilitate future development and improvement to the boat harbour infrastructure and boat ramp.

This document provides a strategic view of the boat harbour and how it could connect to the village and facilitate and improve current land uses adjacent to the site.

The master plan has been developed in consultation with a range of government agencies, organisations, community groups and the community of Brunswick Heads. This means that all stakeholders can use this document in support of their priorities. Specific assets within the harbour such as the timber wharf and moorings, will be regularly assessed to determine condition and most efficient management arrangements for how those assets are managed.

All projects identified are for future planning and funding purposes and will be implemented on a project by project basis in collaboration with organisations and proponents.

Timing of implementation of projects will be guided by available budget and resources and may require investment by both public and private sector.

Implementation of specific projects identified in this master plan are subject to normal design and approval processes by the appropriate organisation.

The boat harbour is managed by the Department of Industry—Lands & Water either directly or by way of tenure. Byron Shire Council manages the boat ramps as the Crown Reserve Trust Manager.