



Richmond
Valley
Council



MID
RICHMOND
PLACE PLANS



DRAFT

PART A
MID RICHMOND
PLACE PLAN

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Richmond Valley Council recognises the people of the Bundjalung Nation as custodians and traditional owners of the land upon which we live and work. Council values and appreciates their continuing cultural connection to land and pay respect to Elders past and present, as well as to young Aboriginal leaders of tomorrow.

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CHAPTER A



INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE PLAN PROCESS

Why prepare a place plan?

The future of Mid Richmond communities is evolving rapidly. Our towns and villages are constantly being shaped by a broad range of regional and local influences which affect our lifestyles and wellbeing. At the heart of any plans for our future must be an understanding of local people and places, the challenges they face and their unique opportunities.

Planning for Mid Richmond’s future requires to consider economic, social and environmental influences across local, regional and national scales. These include population growth and housing demand, wider economic conditions and employment trends, regional infrastructure investment, natural disaster events and climate change.

The Mid Richmond’s celebrated coastal and riverine landscapes are particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and the increasing risk presented by more frequent and severe natural hazard events. Recent events experienced across the region, like the 2022 floods and the 2019 and 2020 black summer bush fires, have combined with other stresses like COVID-19 and a regional housing crisis to test the resilience of our region’s people and its places.

In this context, a broad reaching and forward thinking approach to planning for our towns, villages and communities is vital. This is achieved through a range of State and Council strategic plans and policies which inform Richmond Valley’s land use and development, environmental sustainability and infrastructure including the North Coast Regional Plan 2041, Community Strategic Plan 2040, Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 and the Growth Management Strategy 2023. These plans are translated into statutory controls for land use zoning and development through Council’s Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan (see Figure 1 opposite).

These plans and policies address Richmond Valley’s entire Local Government Area (LGA). To ensure this strategic planning framework is responsive to local people and places, it is essential to consider the different opportunities each of our towns and villages possess, as well as the specific challenges they face looking ahead.

This requires a more detailed understanding of the needs and aspirations of local residents and business, the history, structure and character of their settlements and the varying levels of resilience and adaptability of each to the impacts of natural hazards and a changing climate.

This is the important role of place plans. They establish a better understanding of each community’s aspirations and the opportunities and challenges which are unique to their town or village. This informs decision-making and planning which is more responsive to local residents, the places they live and work and the environmental influences which shape their townships.

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK



Figure 1
Richmond Valley
Council planning policy
framework

Figure 1 illustrates the planning policy framework for the Richmond Valley and where the Mid Richmond Place Plans fit. As shown, the Place Plans will form a key part of Council’s land use planning strategies and inform key actions and statutory plans for growth and development. In particular, the Place Plans will be used to inform the preparation of any subsequent locality specific precinct plans or master plans and any future amendments to the LEP, which acts as the principal planning scheme for the LGA.

What is a place plan?

The Mid Richmond Place Plans are part of Council's strategic planning framework which informs long-term planning for the towns and villages within our region. They address a 20 year planning horizon which can best capture long term opportunities and respond to challenges which our communities face.

THE GOALS OF PLACE PLANNING ARE TO:

Establish a clear vision and land use planning direction for individual towns or villages

Increase local economic development opportunities, job creation and housing options

Identify strategies to enhance township function and liveability and improve essential infrastructure and community facilities

Improve resilience to natural hazards

Place plans are developed through place-specific research and analysis of local communities and informed by engagement with local residents and businesses.

This Place Plan is presented and structured around the core objectives of the place planning process which includes:

- Developing an evidenced-base understanding of local communities and their towns or villages through place analysis and engagement with local residents and businesses (see Part A - Chapter A and Part B - Chapter C)
- Understanding the challenges we face from natural hazard events and the planning pathways to ensure our communities maximise resilience and adaptability (see Part A - Chapter B)
- Establishing guiding principles which capture a vision (see Part B - Chapter D)
- Identifying strategies for each town or village to achieve the vision addressing:
 - Township structure and form
 - Environmental influences
 - Economic and demographic contexts
 - Built environment and public realm function and quality
 - Social and community wellbeing (see Part B - Chapter D)
- Preparing an implementation plan which identifies actions, responsible entities and a program of delivery (see Part B - Chapter E)

A LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP



RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL

Council is responsible for the preparation and administration of the LGA planning policy framework. Council's planning policy framework is informed by the North Coast Regional Plan 2036 and Council's Community Strategic Plan, as well as a range of State, regional and local plans, policies and strategies.

The preparation of this Place Plan was undertaken in partnership with the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) to ensure strategies and implementation actions are aligned with, and support, concurrent disaster-focused regional planning activities being delivered by the RA.



NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

The RA was established following the 2022 NSW Independent Flood Inquiry. The RA is responsible for preparing and implementing a State Disaster Mitigation Plan to provide guidance about the mitigation of disasters across NSW.

The Plan outlines how the rising costs of disasters can be addressed by refocusing government policy towards risk-reducing actions, and details how government agencies can work together to help communities prepare for worsening bushfires, heatwaves, floods, storms and coastal erosion.

PLACE PLAN PRINCIPLES

A Vision for the Future of Mid Richmond's villages

These principles have been developed through the place planning process undertaken concurrently for Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill and Evans Head. They have been informed by engagement with Council and the community as well as research and analysis of the Mid Richmond context and individual towns and villages.

Collectively, these principles present a guiding vision for the towns and villages of Mid Richmond and establish a place planning framework for the development of strategies and implementation actions which directly address the opportunities and challenges of each settlement.



Shaping our Village's Future

VILLAGE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER

Valuing the unique identity of each place - from the people, to culture, to physical assets and the environment

Embracing opportunities which strengthen communities and the local economy in a well-considered and sustainable way

Living with the Landscape

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protecting and embracing the region's celebrated natural qualities

Anticipating and preparing our towns and villages for more natural hazard events in the future

Living sustainably and protecting our environment

Revitalising our Local Economy

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Strengthening economic ties between the Mid Richmond towns and villages to support a prosperous regional economy

Ensuring everyone has access to the goods and services they need through a connected network of regional centres

Recognising the importance of tourism in strengthening the local economy and promoting the region's natural qualities

Enhancing Village Places and Spaces

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES

Balancing well-considered growth and continued investment in infrastructure with the risks of living in a changing climate

Supporting place-driven design for the built environment and public spaces which reflect local identity, meets community needs and provides economic benefits

Supporting our Community and Lifestyles

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Creating great places to live which encourages community connection and wellbeing

Encouraging 'risk-smart' living in the river towns and villages which helps to build resilience and support continued flood recovery

Strengthening cultural understanding and reflecting Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives into planning and design outcomes

WE ARE PART OF A CONNECTED NETWORK

Our regional relationships

While each of Mid Richmond's townships and communities are unique, they are physically connected, share complex relationships within a regional economy and possess a strong sense of shared regional identity.

A CONNECTED NETWORK OF UNIQUE PLACES

Understanding the social, economic and physical relationships between our towns and villages is required to ensure our communities have appropriate levels of access to goods and essential services, to determine where and how future growth is best accommodated and how we might support a healthy local economy which is split across a number of business and employment centres.

All of our villages provide some basic services and goods which support the day to day needs of their residents. However, access to a full range of essential and discretionary goods, services and amenities requires travel further afield to Casino or outside of the LGA to Ballina, Lismore or Yamba. Typically, this includes access to certain foods, specialised health care, financial services, education and sporting or recreational activities.

Important at this scale too is understanding the rich mix of places and unique township characters which collectively contribute to Mid Richmond's image. Protecting our diversity and nurturing the unique qualities of each township is not only important to local communities but can also support a more robust local tourism industry.

Finally, the communities of the Mid Richmond have shared experiences of flood and bush fire and the prolonged recovery process which follows these events. Other stresses such as COVID-19 and the highway bypass have also united us through common challenges. Together, we must now plan ahead for the elevated risks associated with more common and extreme weather events as a result of climate change.

All these regional relationships and influences bind the people and townships of Mid Richmond to each other in a complex, yet locally-understood way.

ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The roles and relationships of Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater and Rileys Hill and Evans Head change when viewed through the different lenses of local economy, access to services and housing demand.

Drawing from an analysis of regional relationships and influences (see opposite), key assumptions which have informed preparation of this Place Plan, are:

- There is a wider regional economy which provides Mid Richmond communities with employment opportunities and access to higher order services. This includes major towns outside of Council's area
- Service catchments - or how far residents are willing to travel - to access goods and services are large
- Coraki has stronger reliance on Casino and Lismore for goods and services while Evans Head, Woodburn, Broadwater and Rileys Hill are more co-dependent with Ballina
- Evans Head, Woodburn, Broadwater and Rileys Hill are likely to appeal to the same housing market and 'lifestyle' seekers, while Coraki exists as a more traditional country village structured around a local community and 'natural change'
- Tourism drives a local economy in Evans Head as does the sugar and rural industries of inland areas. Both of these are likely to contribute employment opportunities and benefits to the wider regional economy

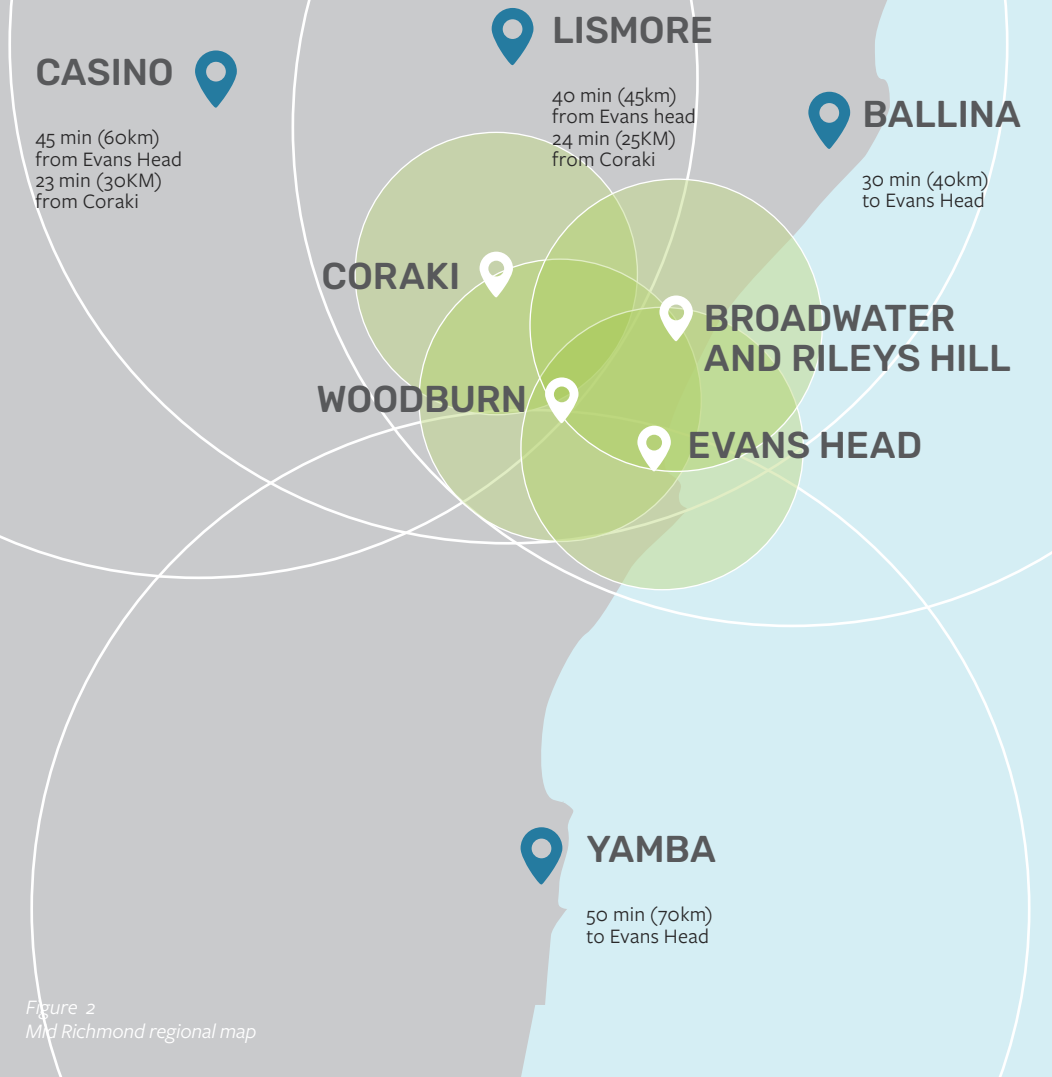


Figure 2
Mid Richmond regional map

REGIONAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Observations and assumptions

As of the 2021 Census, there are 7,167 local workers in Richmond Valley LGA, 5,300 (74.0%) also live in the area¹. Casino contributes the lion's share of jobs in the region (4,750 in 2021). The townships of Coraki and surrounds (supporting 300 jobs) and Woodburn and surrounds (supporting ~200 jobs) offer a diversity of main employment drivers with manufacturing and hospitality being the leading employers². Broadwater and surrounds offer 200 jobs which is heavily associated with the sugar mill and associated energy chain. Evans Head supports 690 jobs with a significant percentage being in tourism and hospitality.

While large percentage of the local workers also live within the Richmond Valley, the Mid Richmond townships are not highly self-contained in terms of employment and their work age populations significantly exceed local job numbers.

Additionally, there are limited industries and job types within the townships and it can be assumed that a proportion of residents travel out of their local area for employment in their chosen field or higher earning opportunities

It is assumed that the townships are part of a regional (Mid Richmond) economy with the larger economic centres of Ballina, Lismore, Casino and possibly Yamba providing a significant proportion of jobs

¹ Id Consulting, Richmond Valley Council Economic Profile, available online: <https://andandeeconomy.id.com.au/andrichmond-valleyandworkers-place-of-residence-occupation>.

² Sea and Star Advisory, Richmond Valley Economic Development Strategy

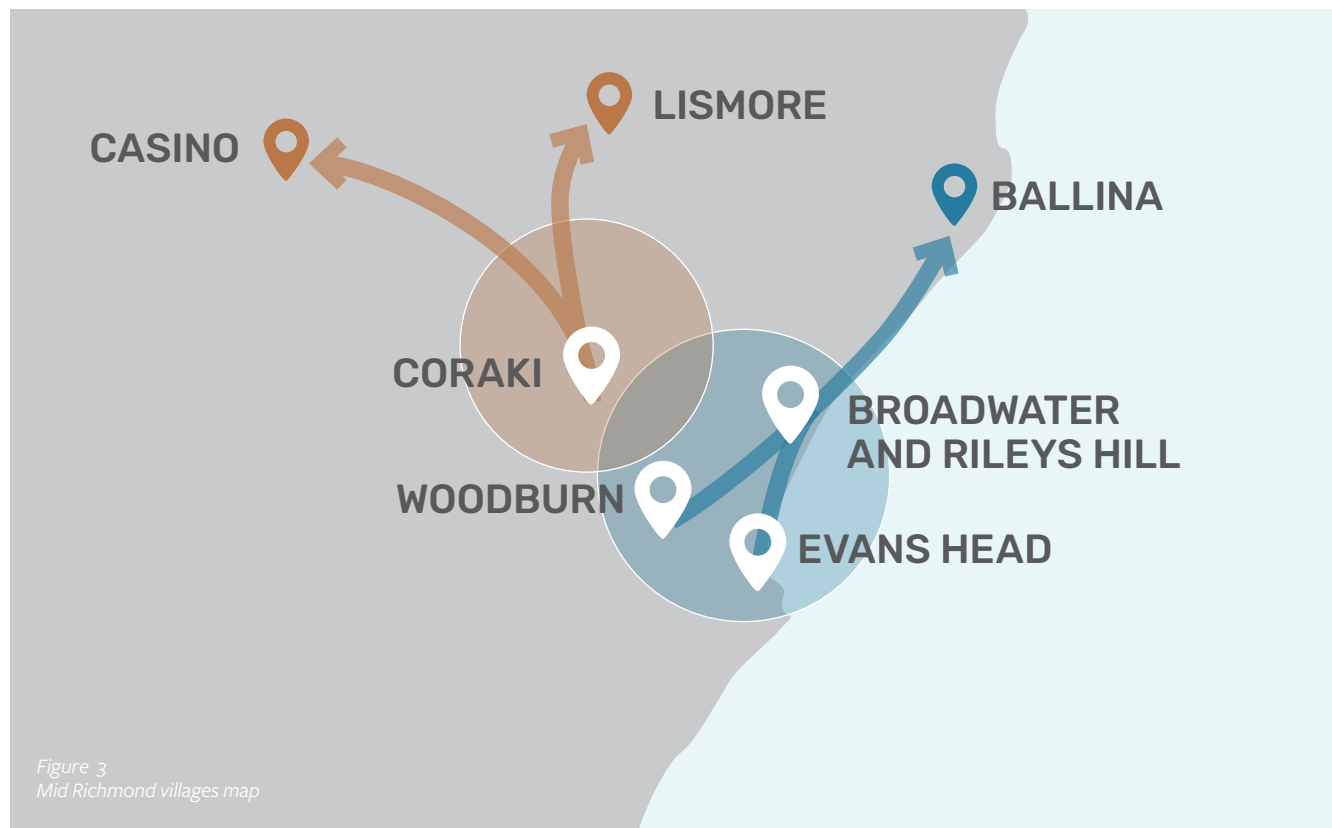


Figure 3
Mid Richmond villages map



Figure 4
Mid Richmond tourism map

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Observations and assumptions

Locally, the townships have limited access to essential services such as health and education, retail and commercial businesses and higher order social and entertainment activities

In terms of physical connection and service catchments, Coraki is serviced by Casino and Lismore. Evans Head, Woodburn and Broadwater are serviced by Ballina

Evans Head also performs an important role in the local economy. While not providing the breadth and depth of goods and services as Casino or Ballina, as a somewhat larger centre it can sustain independent groceries, some more specialised retail and food offerings, as well as professional services like accountants



HOUSING, LIFESTYLE CHOICES AND TOURISM

Observations and assumptions

Evans Head possesses the highest average house price, which was \$1.23m in the 2021and2022 financial year, declining to \$1.075m in the 2022and2023 financial year. There are overflow affordable housing opportunities in the townships Broadwater (\$400,000 in the 2021and2022 financial year) and Woodburn (\$360,000 in the 2021and2022 financial year, recovered to \$382,500 in 2022and2023 financial year) (Source: Broad Property Research and Advisory Pty Ltd).

Evans Head (and possibly Woodburn and Broadwater) would appeal to the sea-change and tree-change markets and some demand for housing would come from this market segment

Given its regional location away from the coast, Coraki's modest housing demand is more likely generated from natural growth rather than lifestyle seekers and migration

Evans Head's coastal location and landscape setting drives a regional tourism economy and stronger demand for housing. Importantly, Evans has performed a role historically as a periodic tourism destination for Casino residents and those from the surrounding rural areas over school holidays and summer



COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS AND IDEAS

How we engaged

Place planning is a process which engages local people so we can embed their knowledge, values and aspirations in plans for the future of their community.

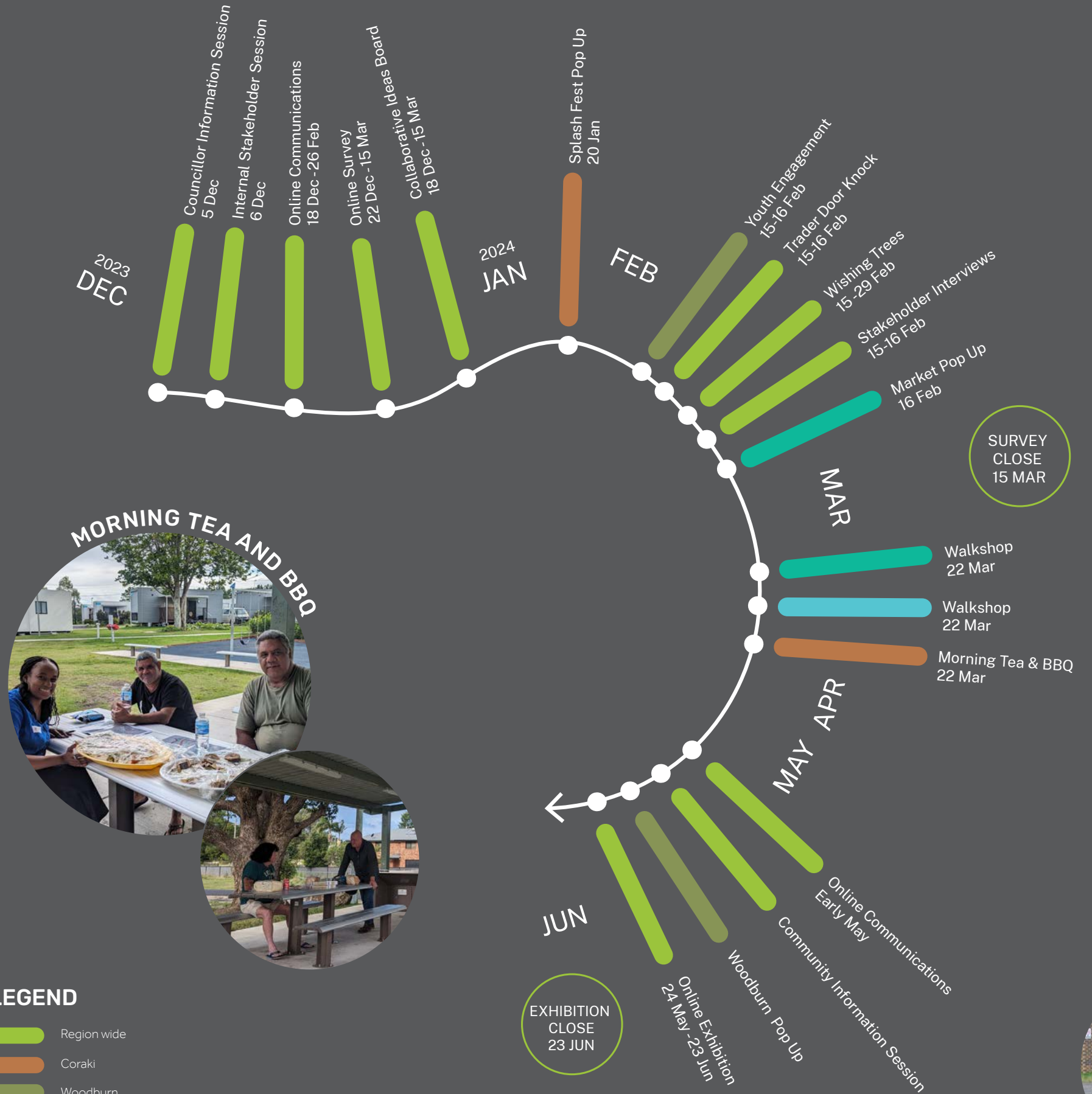
Informing the preparation of this Place Plan, Council has undertaken a wide range of engagement activities over a four month period from December 2023 through to March 2024. These activities included one-on-one discussions with residents, workshops, a local community event, stakeholder meetings and an online survey to ensure we connected with the broadest range of local people, business operators and community groups.

The following pages provide a snapshot of these activities and the feedback generated.

LEGEND

- Region wide
- Coraki
- Woodburn
- Broadwater and Riley's Hill
- Evans Head

Figure 5
Community engagement timeline





STAKEHOLDER SESSION

The initial engagement activity involved workshop sessions which allowed targeted stakeholders to provide feedback through discussion and interactive activities. The stakeholder group was asked to consider strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for each village. There were two workshops held, the first on 5 December in Evans Head with Councillors and the second on 6 December in Casino with internal stakeholders.



WALKSHOPS

A “walkshop” activity was conducted as part of the engagement, which allowed key stakeholders to participate in a guided walking tour of their village. Activity sheets were completed by participants to collate ideas as the vision was discussed in context to key areas visited. Walkshops were carried out for Evans Head, Broadwater and Rileys Hill on 22 March 2024.

WALKSHOPS



ONLINE SURVEY

An interactive, online survey was developed in close collaboration with Council, to reach far and wide across the region – accessible for all abilities and ages. It was designed to capture broader local community insights around the project, while also being location specific so that responses could be related to the relevant town or village. This location information will enable place-based community knowledge, ideas, and feedback to grow the conversation. The Place Plan survey was in market for a timeframe of 4 months, from December 2023 to March 2024.



IDEAS BOARD

A feature-rich, interactive ideas board which enables community knowledge, ideas, and feedback to grow the conversation was accessible via Council’s web page. The board was live from the 11 December 2023 to the 15 March 2024.

The online board functioned as a collaborative board where the community could see (moderated) comments from each other and either ‘like’ the comments to express their agreement or submit another comment. A total of 40 ideas were generated through this board with 186 likes in support.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Various local schools were provided with wishing trees, printed surveys and activity sheets. Targeted stakeholder interviews were offered with all school principals and were undertaken with Woodburn Public School and Evans River K-12 principals in February 2024.



TRADER DOOR KNOCKS

Trader door knocks were carried out in Evans Head, Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill and Coraki. These door knocks allowed local businesses to be introduced to the project, meet members of the project team and be invited to share any early questions. These were conducted by Council officers and project team members over the 15 and 16 February 2024. Following the two days and where requested, some traders were followed up with individual conversations.

- Social Media promotion via Council channels
- A dedicated project page on Council’s website
- Promotion via Council networks
- Promotional postcard
- Cross promotion through all other engagement methods and touch points



ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

The traditional custodians of the Mid Richmond region are the Bundjalung peoples. The Place Plans are informed by stakeholder and community engagement, with a focus on engagement with the Aboriginal communities in Coraki and the Coraki Pod Village.

This engagement was held over three sessions including SplashFest pop-up, targeted engagement and morning tea and BBQ lunch in Coraki during the consultation period from January - March 2024.



SPLASHFEST POP-UP

This engagement activity involved an open invite pop-up during the day which allowed community to provide feedback through digital means via the online survey or physical through interactive pop-up activities and conversations. This pop-up was held during SplashFest at Coraki’s Windsor Park on 20 January 2024 from 11am to 4pm.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS AND IDEAS

What we heard

Once our engagement activities were completed, all the valuable feedback from our communities was collated together and analysed to inform the preparation of place plans.

Key themes are the most common opportunities and challenges we heard and are, therefore, of the highest importance to our community collectively. They are grouped into categories so they can directly inform the strategies and actions developed in this Place Plan (see Chapter D).

Key insights are specific ideas and aspirations our community identified which can improve the village and enhance their lifestyles.

KEY THEMES

SETTLEMENT PLANNING



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



GROWTH MANAGEMENT

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE



FLOOD RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE



RECREATION



PUBLIC REALM AND AMENITIES



TRANSPORT NETWORKS

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT



HOUSING



SOCIAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES



SAFETY



HEALTH SERVICES

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT



LOCAL BUSINESS



TOURISM

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



PROTECTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



REGION WIDE

Overall the communities in the Mid Richmond are intrinsically connected, with a great sense of belonging through vast connections which tie the towns and villages together.

Many residents expressed they would not want to live anywhere else and showed a great sense of pride of the region. Key opportunities mentioned were to focus on affordable housing, attracting younger families stay in the region and delivering better connected transport networks between the towns and villages. One of the main key concerns raised was the flood recovery and resilience for each of the affected towns and villages, which have caused a lot of the other issues such as long term sustainability.

KEY INSIGHTS

Deliver the three villages cycleway

Attracting younger families to move to the region

Increased flood recovery and resilience planning required

Longer-term sustainability for the villages and region



**GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**



**FLOOD RECOVERY
AND RESILIENCE**



HOUSING



TRANSPORT

WOODBURN

Despite the residents of Woodburn going through uncertainty post-flood, the community resonated a strong desire to stay due to strong community connections, schools and local businesses that are considered valuable to their village.

Key concerns around the closed down services such as the IGA and service station were highlighted.

Key Insights

Wants certainty on its future - community wants to stay if that direction is confirmed by the RA

General preference towards adaptation rather than buy backs

Need for local supermarket and service station



**FLOOD RECOVERY
AND RESILIENCE**



**PUBLIC REALM
AND AMENITIES**



LOCAL BUSINESS



HOUSING

BROADWATER & RILEYS HILL

The close knit community at Broadwater and Rileys Hill love their villages and believe there is great potential to build destinational appeal for tourism, to capitalise on the close proximity of the beach and accommodation options at Evans Head.

Key concerns were limited housing options for key workers, lack of footpath connectivity and closed down services such as the school, bowling green and cafe.

Key Insights

Provision of footpaths and public realm improvements along main streets of Rileys Hill Road and Pacific Highway

New boat ramps at Rileys Hill Road or other end of town

Riverfront activation to attract visitors

Explore and identify opportunities for destinational offering like rum distillery, tours of the mill, fishing tours etc



HOUSING



**PUBLIC REALM
AND AMENITIES**



LOCAL BUSINESS



TOURISM

EVANS HEAD

The residents and locals in Evans Head love their town for the coastal scenery and amazing beaches that help drive tourism, but also provide many recreational opportunities.

Key concerns were around limited affordable housing due to increased holiday rentals, lack of services or retail options and recreation spots for youth.

Key Insights

Management of population growth in an appropriate gentle density in certain locations

Need to support further tourism opportunities such as river cruises and kayak tours

Bowls Club and Fishing Co-op are potential key opportunity sites



**GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**



TOURISM



HOUSING



**SOCIAL FACILITIES
AND SERVICES**

OUR COMMUNITIES

Who we are and how we are growing

We are part of a wider Northern Rivers economy which includes our neighbouring towns and villages of the Mid Richmond as well as the larger surrounding centres of Casino, Ballina, Lismore and beyond. We share extensive social and economic connections and relationships across this regional network.

Our village and community is unique and understanding who we are, where we work and how we live is vital to making good decisions about our future.

REGIONAL POPULATION AND ECONOMY

WHO WE ARE



23,565

TOTAL RVC POPULATION (AS AT 2021)



46

MEDIAN AGE RICHMOND VALLEY

43

MEDIAN AGE REGIONAL NSW



HIGHER PROPORTION OF PEOPLE IN YOUNGER AGE GROUP (0-17 YEARS)

21.9%

RICHMOND VALLEY

21.4%

REGIONAL NSW



HIGHER PROPORTION OF PEOPLE AGED 60 YEARS AND OVER

32.3%

RICHMOND VALLEY

29.1%

REGIONAL NSW



IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

7.9%

RICHMOND VALLEY

6.6%

REGIONAL NSW

HOW WE LIVE



10,673

TOTAL RVC NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS (DWELLINGS AS AT 2021)



THOSE LIVING IN DETACHED HOMES

81.5%

RICHMOND VALLEY

80.6%

REGIONAL NSW



THOSE LIVING IN MEDIUM DENSITY DWELLINGS

14.4%

RICHMOND VALLEY

14.6%

REGIONAL NSW



THOSE LIVING IN HIGH DENSITY DWELLINGS

0.1%

RICHMOND VALLEY

2.9%

REGIONAL NSW



AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE (NUMBER OF PEOPLE)

2.39

RICHMOND VALLEY

2.41

REGIONAL NSW

OUR ECONOMY



\$950 million

RVC GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (2022)



1,837

LOCAL BUSINESSES (2022)



8,168

LOCAL JOBS (2022)



LEADING INDUSTRY SECTORS (VALUE ADDED) AS AT 2022

15.4%

MANUFACTURING

13.4%

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING

11.7%

HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

EVANS HEAD

EVANS HEAD POPULATION AND ECONOMY

WHO WE ARE



2,907

POPULATION
(2021)



52
YEARS

MEDIAN AGE



5.6%

IDENTIFY AS
ABORIGINAL

2.1

PERSON PER
HOUSEHOLD

AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD
SIZE

Community groups and events

A diverse range of sporting, social and cultural community groups and events are held in Evans Head with some highlights including Evans Head Farmers Market and Evans Head Rotary Christmas Parade and Carols.

HOW WE LIVE AND WORK



\$1,642

MEDIAN MONTHLY
MORTGAGE
REPAYMENTS



\$321

MEDIAN
WEEKLY RENT



\$1,086

APPROX. MEDIAN
WEEKLY INCOME



TOP 5
OCCUPATIONS

1. PROFESSIONALS
2. COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL SERVICE WORKS
3. LABOURERS
4. MANAGERS
5. TECHNICAL AND TRADES WORKERS



WOODBURN

WOODBURN POPULATION AND ECONOMY

WHO WE ARE



678

POPULATION
(2021)



40

YEARS

MEDIAN AGE



5.5%

IDENTIFY AS
ABORIGINAL



2.5

PERSON PER
HOUSEHOLD

AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD
SIZE

Community groups and events

A diverse range of sporting, social and cultural community groups and events are held in Woodburn with some highlights including Festival of the Waters, Woodburn Carols by Candlelight and Spring Orchid Show.

HOW WE LIVE AND WORK



\$1,560

MEDIAN MONTHLY
MORTGAGE
REPAYMENTS



\$335

MEDIAN
WEEKLY RENT



\$1,386

APPROX. MEDIAN
WEEKLY INCOME



TOP 5
OCCUPATIONS

1. LABOURERS
2. TECHNICAL AND TRADES WORKERS
3. COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL SERVICE WORKS
4. CLERICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORKERS
5. PROFESSIONALS

BROADWATER & RILEYS HILL

Community groups and events

A diverse range of sporting, social and cultural community groups and events are held in Broadwater and Rileys Hill with some highlights including Broadwater Christmas Tree Light Up and events held at the Broadwater Community Hall.

BROADWATER & RILEYS HILL POPULATION AND ECONOMY

WHO WE ARE (BROADWATER)



524

BROADWATER POPULATION (2021)



2.2

PERSON PER HOUSEHOLD

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE



49

YEARS

MEDIAN AGE



181

RILEYS HILL POPULATION (2021)



2.4

PERSON PER HOUSEHOLD

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

HOW WE LIVE AND WORK (BROADWATER)



\$1,539

MEDIAN MONTHLY MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS



\$250

MEDIAN WEEKLY RENT



\$972

APPROX. MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME



TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS

1. LABOURERS
2. COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL SERVICE WORKS
3. TECHNICAL AND TRADES WORKERS
4. MACHINERY OPERATORS/ DRIVERS
5. PROFESSIONALS



Building a
More Resilient
Village

The Challenges
Facing Our
Community

What a
Changing
Climate Means
For Us



BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE



CHALLENGES FACING OUR COMMUNITY

Mid Richmond has experienced firsthand the impacts of climate change through various and sometimes overlapping events, including the 2017 floods, 2017-20 drought, 2019 bushfire season and, most recently, the 2022 floods.

While these events have shown the strength and resilience of local communities, climate change projections for the North Coast region indicate several changes in the near (2030) and far future (2070) to temperature, rainfall, and fire weather and risk¹, leading to an expected increase in the severity and frequency of natural hazard events.

Natural hazards, in particular drought, floods and bushfires, can have devastating impacts on local businesses and communities in the Mid Richmond. This is in part due to our low-lying floodplains, extent of vegetated areas, and reliance of local industries on catchment area resources.

Potential impacts extend from a loss in productivity of local agriculture and manufacturing industries to physical damage to infrastructure and the built environment, as well as social impacts from lived experiences and direct or indirect trauma of natural hazard events.

FLOOD

Reliance upon the river systems has sustained the region's settlements over time and supported Coraki's rich history and heritage as one of the great river ports of the 19th century.

The Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023 notes the Richmond River is one of NSW's largest coastal rivers with an overall catchment area of approximately 6,900 km² (which is just over double the land area of the entire Richmond Valley LGA)². The Wilsons River and Bungawalbin Creek are notable tributaries of the Richmond River and significant catchments in themselves³.

Coraki is positioned on the banks of the confluence of both the Richmond River and Wilsons River, meaning that flooding to the town is influenced by flows from either or both catchments. In a major flood, water crosses the main street and enters low-lying areas of the town. Local flooding in the Bungawalbin Creek system can also cause extensive rural inundation south-west of Coraki. The locals refer to this area as 'the backwater'.

A large proportion of the town (around 77%) is inundated during a 1% AEP⁴ (plus climate change) event, with nearly all of this inundation classified in the 2023 BMT flood study as H5 hydraulic hazard, representing the second-worst hazard vulnerability level where flooding is unsafe for vehicles and people, and buildings require special engineering design and construction.

The 2022 flood event destroyed or damaged 300 properties (69%) in Coraki. 94 properties were assessed as having severe damage or worse. Major employers' premises were rendered inoperable and stock and operational assets were lost. The scale of damage forced some business activities to other premises as the only practical solution to sustain operations - some of these businesses were critical to the region's recovery⁶.

² BMT (2023), 'Richmond Valley Flood Study', p.21, available via <https://andandrichmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/andservicesand/floodand>

³ Ibid.

⁴ AEP stands for 'Annual Exceedance Probability' and is the chance of a flood of a specific size occurring in any one year, expressed as a percentage. For example, a 1% AEP flood has a 1% or 1 in 100 chance of occurring in any given year. Similarly, a 0.2% AEP flood, which is a rarer event, has a 1 in 500 chance of occurring in any given year.

BUSHFIRE

While an LGA-wide bushfire risk assessment has not been completed at present, the Richmond Valley LGA is highly exposed to bushfire hazard given the extent of State Forest, State Conservation Area, National Parks and other vegetated private property.

Prior to the 2022 floods, the Richmond Valley was severely impacted by bushfire events which started in August 2019 and burnt a total area of 142,741 hectares of land and affected 48.6% of the LGA. These fires had a devastating impact on the community, residential and agricultural land, and the local economy.

Land which can support a bushfire or is likely to be subject to bushfire attack is identified on Council's Bush Fire Prone Land (BFPL) Map (certified in February 2015). The mapping identifies bushfire prone vegetation as either Vegetation Category 1 (the highest risk for bushfire) or Vegetation Category 2. Buffering of 100 metres or 30 metres, respectively, is applied to the bushfire prone vegetation.

For Coraki, the western edge of the town is mapped as subject to Vegetation Category 1 and Category 2, particularly around the western ends of Union and Surry Streets west to the Box Ridge housing settlement.

⁶ Sea and Star Advisory (2022), 'Richmond Valley Flooding Economic Impacts Statement', available via <https://andandrichmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/andwp-content/andwp-content/andwp-content/uploads/and2022and04andRV-Flooding-EIS-PUBLIC-REPORT-April-2022.pdf>

⁷ Richmond Valley Council (2020), 'Rebuilding the Richmond Valley: Community Revitalisation Plan from 2019 Bushfires', available via <https://andandrichmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/andwp-content/andwp-content/uploads/and2020and02andRebuilding-Richmond-Valley-Revitalisation-Plan-s-1.pdf>

CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS PREDICT THE FOLLOWING FOR THE NORTH COAST REGION BY 2030 AND 2070¹:



TEMPERATURE

- ▲ Increase in average maximum temperature from up to 1°C (2030) to 2.4°C (2070)
- ▲ Increase in number of hot days from up to 10 days (2030) to 20 days (2070)
- ▲ Increase in frequency, intensity and length of heatwaves from up to 1.5 events (2030) to 4.5 events (2070)



RAINFALL

- ▲ Increase in autumn and spring average rainfall
- ▼ Decrease in winter average rainfall
- ▲ Decrease in summer average rainfall in the near future (2030), and then an increase in the far future (2070)



FIRE WEATHER AND RISK

- ▲ Increase in fire risk during summer, autumn and winter (projected increases in average and severe Forest Fire Danger Index values)
- ▼ Slight decrease in fire weather during autumn

¹ See Office of Environment and Heritage (2021), 'North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation report' and Office of Environment and Heritage (2019), 'North Coast Climate Change Snapshot', available via <https://andandwww.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/andmy-regionandnorth-coast>

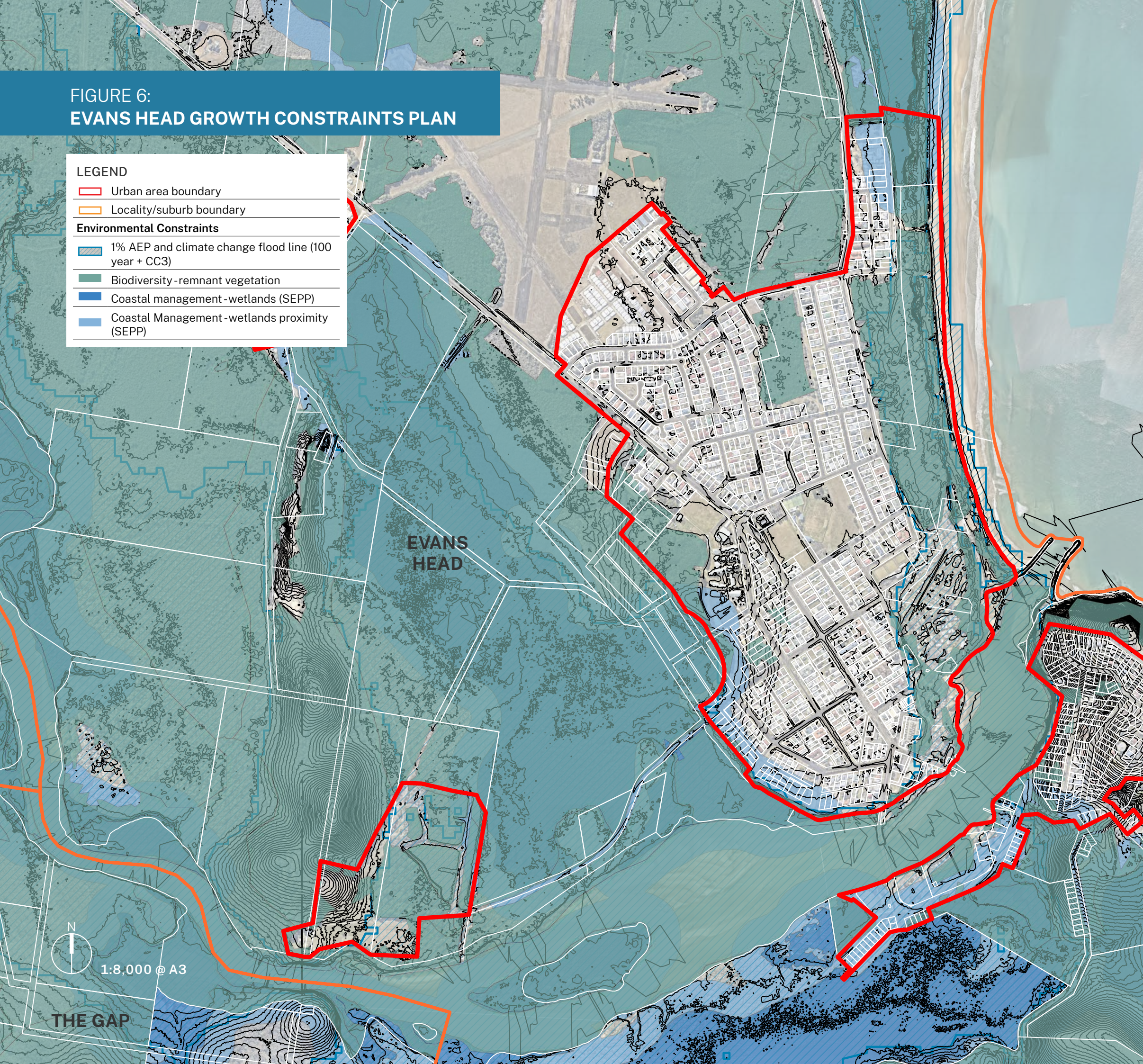
**FIGURE 6:
EVANS HEAD GROWTH CONSTRAINTS PLAN**

LEGEND

- Urban area boundary
- Locality/suburb boundary

Environmental Constraints

- 1% AEP and climate change flood line (100 year + CC3)
- Biodiversity - remnant vegetation
- Coastal management - wetlands (SEPP)
- Coastal Management - wetlands proximity (SEPP)



FLOOD RISK

The primary source of flooding to Evans Head is from the Evans River, which bisects the town and conveys floodwater overland (and over the Tuckombil Canal) from the main Richmond River floodplain.

Local drainage challenges also exist throughout the town, as experienced during the 2022 flood event.

The northern side of the town proper is largely immune to flooding up to and including the 1% + CC AEP event, with the primary flooding impacts to the east around the public park space (from the RSL north) and caravan park through to the reserve on the eastern side of Beech Street.

Flood impacts are greatest on the southern bank of the river, along Ocean Road and further west out of town at Doonbah along the Woodburn Evans Head Road.

According to the 2023 BMT study, the flood behaviour in Evans Head is more variable than that experienced by the Mid-Richmond river towns, with lower hazard characteristics in evidence in and around Evans Head, with H5 and H6 classifications focused adjacent the river during the 1% AEP + CC event.

Floodway conveyance in Evans Head is also focused primarily adjacent to the riverbanks, with flood impacts in the likes of the Caravan Park and Beech Street reserve classified primarily as flood storage .

COASTAL HAZARD RISK

As a coastal town, Evans Head is exposed to coastal erosion (such as open coast and estuarine erosion), coastal inundation from storm surge, and permanent inundation due to sea level rise in the low lying areas.

Sea level rise impacts in Evans Head at 2100 are projected to affect much of the low-lying public areas of town, such as the Caravan Park, the Coast Guard Park on the southern side of the River, and the Co-Op. Lower-lying areas of Ocean Drive may also be inundated by sea level rise.

BUSH FIRE RISK

Evans Head is arguably the town within the study area of greatest concern from a bush fire perspective.

Its urban area is substantially surrounded by Category 1 vegetation of Bush Fire Prone Land, and its evacuation routes (Woodburn Evans Head Road and Broadwater Evans Head Road) run through areas of substantial vegetation, including the Broadwater National Park. The rural residential areas of Doonbah along Woodburn Evans Head Road are also identified as Category 1 and 2 vegetated areas.

The Northern Rivers Bush Fire Risk Management Plan identifies Strategic Fire Advantage Zones around the town (particularly to the west) that can provide areas of fire protection advantage (to aid containment of fires) to reduce the speed and intensity of bush fire and reduce the potential for spot fire development.

**FIGURE 7:
WOODBURN GROWTH CONSTRAINTS PLAN**

LEGEND

- Urban area boundary
- Local government area (LGA) boundary
- Locality/suburb boundary

Environmental Constraints

- 1% AEP and climate change flood line (100 year + CC3)
- Biodiversity -remnant vegetation

FLOOD RISK

Like Coraki, major flooding in Woodburn is dominated by flows from the Richmond River and its associated floodplain, but can also be influenced by Rocky Mouth Creek.

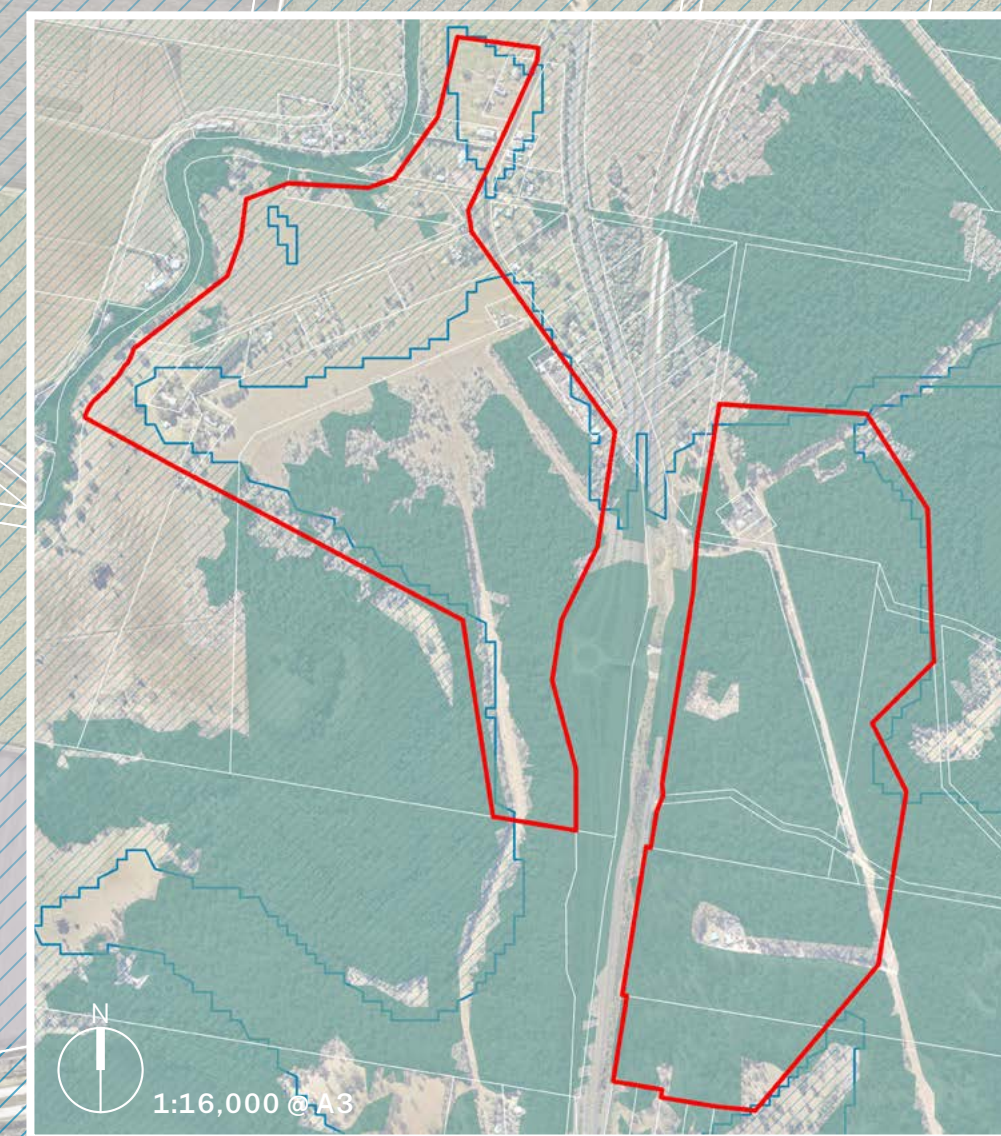
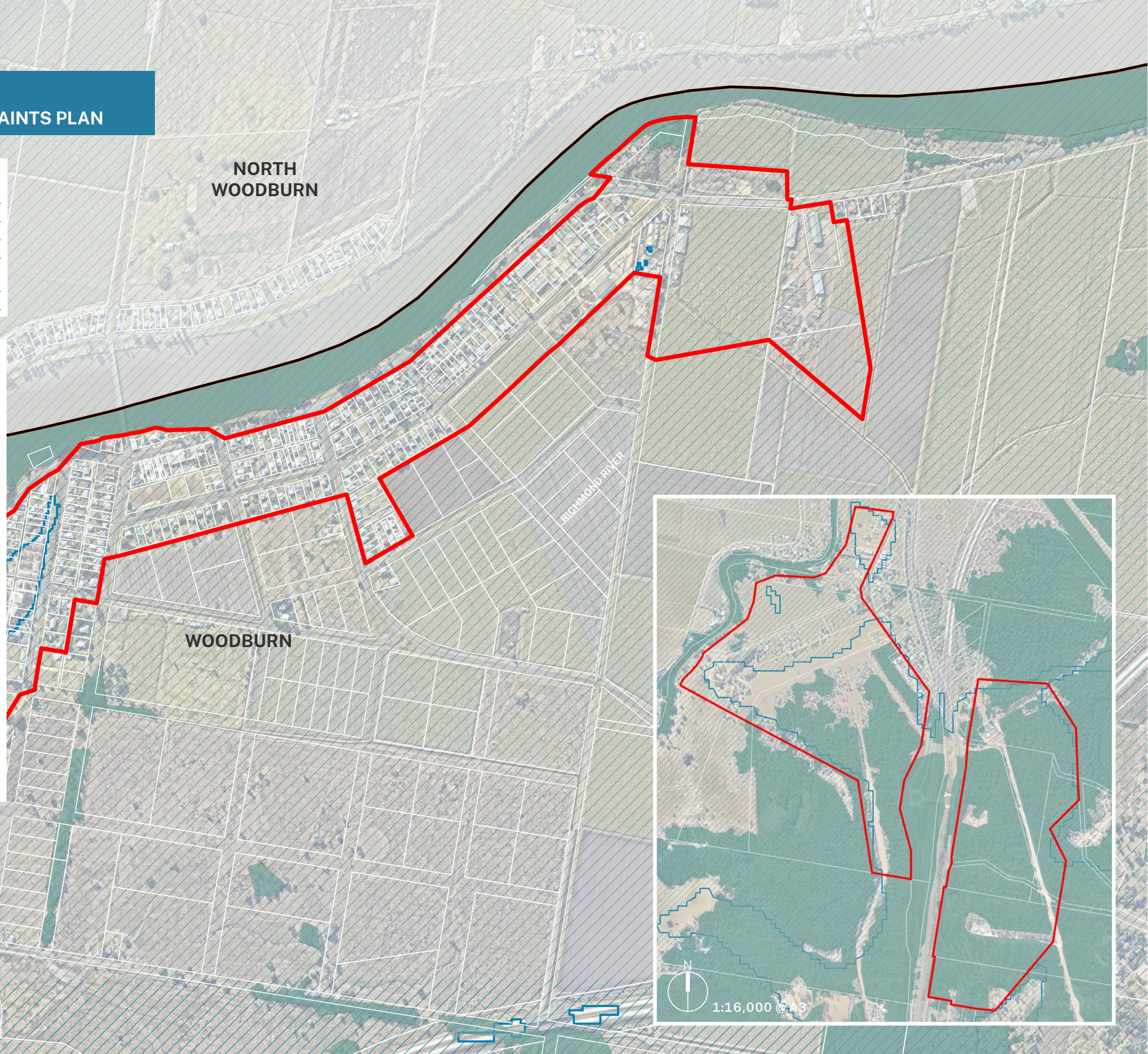
Nearly the entire town is classified in the 2023 BMT study as floodway during a Richmond River 1% AEP event, and H5 hydraulic hazard during both 1% and 1% + CC events. Events such as this leave the town isolated for several days.

Flood warning times are relatively long, with the Woodburn community usually getting 2 to 3 days notice of impending flooding.

In 2022, flooding exceeded the record levels of 1954 by around two metres. 154 properties (84 per cent) were either destroyed or damaged. 118 properties were assessed as having severe damage or worse. Despite design that placed assets above the record levels of 1954, major businesses saw huge asset & inventory losses in the many millions of dollars, with much of it simply washed down the river. The businesses face uncertain paths to recovery, despite products & services essential to rebuilding & restoring the region. (Source: Richmond Valley Flooding Economic Impact Statement)

COASTAL HAZARD RISK

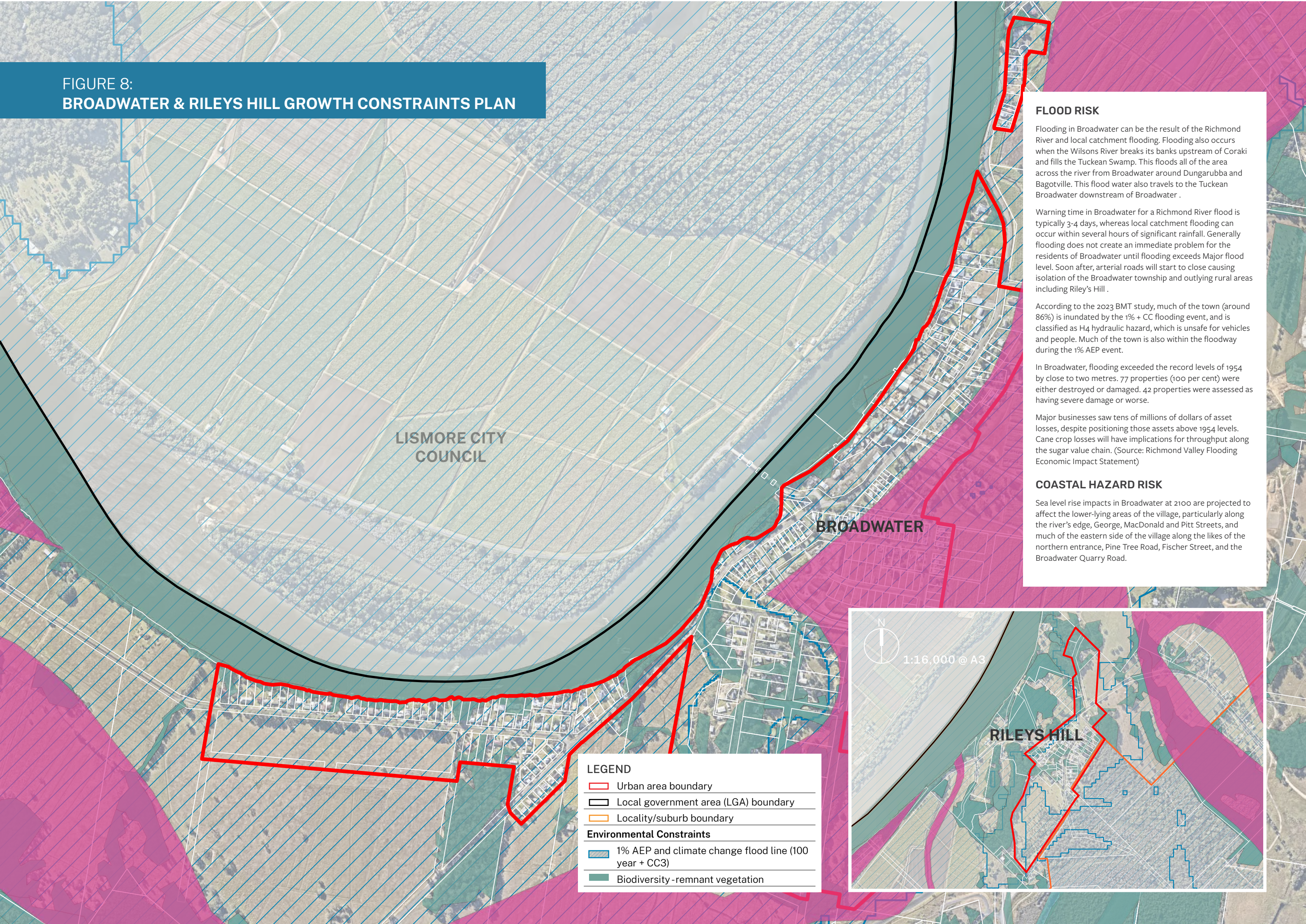
Sea level rise impacts in Woodburn at 2100 are more pronounced than at Coraki, with impacts propagating from the Evans River estuarine environment west across the Woodburn Oval and potentially into the southern side of town on Wagner, Donaldson, Richmond and Alfred Streets. The higher elevated riverbank locations of Woodburn Street and River Street are projected to be less impacted.



1:8,000 @ A3

1:16,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 8:
BROADWATER & RILEYS HILL GROWTH CONSTRAINTS PLAN**



FLOOD RISK

Flooding in Broadwater can be the result of the Richmond River and local catchment flooding. Flooding also occurs when the Wilsons River breaks its banks upstream of Coraki and fills the Tuckean Swamp. This floods all of the area across the river from Broadwater around Dungarubba and Bagotville. This flood water also travels to the Tuckean Broadwater downstream of Broadwater .

Warning time in Broadwater for a Richmond River flood is typically 3-4 days, whereas local catchment flooding can occur within several hours of significant rainfall. Generally flooding does not create an immediate problem for the residents of Broadwater until flooding exceeds Major flood level. Soon after, arterial roads will start to close causing isolation of the Broadwater township and outlying rural areas including Riley's Hill .

According to the 2023 BMT study, much of the town (around 86%) is inundated by the 1% + CC flooding event, and is classified as H4 hydraulic hazard, which is unsafe for vehicles and people. Much of the town is also within the floodway during the 1% AEP event.




In Broadwater, flooding exceeded the record levels of 1954 by close to two metres. 77 properties (100 per cent) were either destroyed or damaged. 42 properties were assessed as having severe damage or worse.

Major businesses saw tens of millions of dollars of asset losses, despite positioning those assets above 1954 levels. Cane crop losses will have implications for throughput along the sugar value chain. (Source: Richmond Valley Flooding Economic Impact Statement)



COASTAL HAZARD RISK

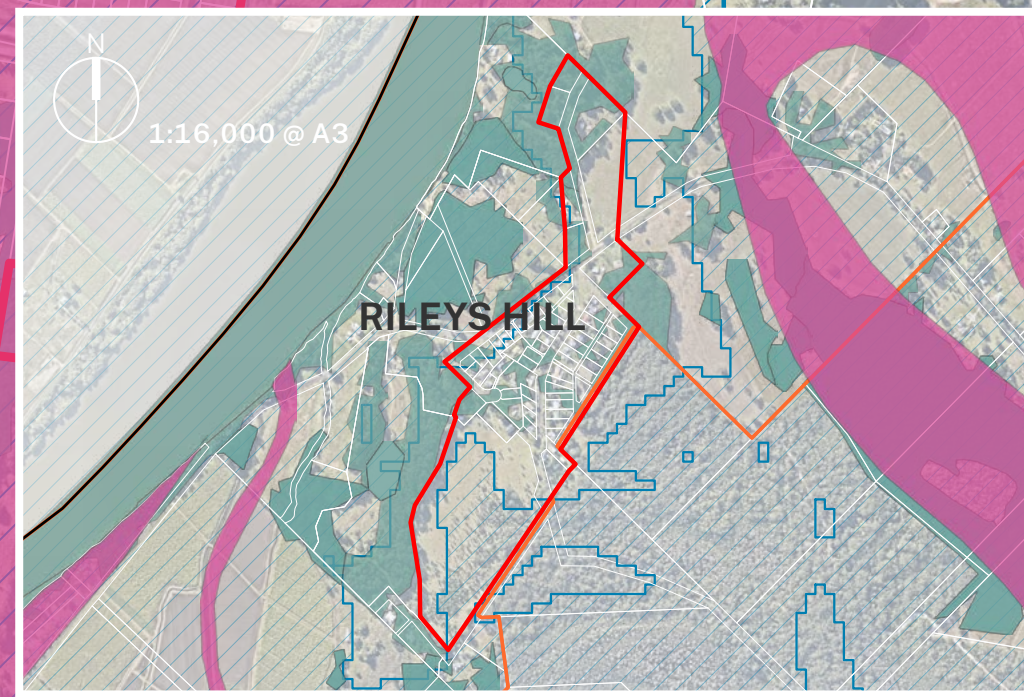
Sea level rise impacts in Broadwater at 2100 are projected to affect the lower-lying areas of the village, particularly along the river's edge, George, MacDonald and Pitt Streets, and much of the eastern side of the village along the likes of the northern entrance, Pine Tree Road, Fischer Street, and the Broadwater Quarry Road.

LEGEND

-  Urban area boundary
-  Local government area (LGA) boundary
-  Locality/suburb boundary

Environmental Constraints

-  1% AEP and climate change flood line (100 year + CC3)
-  Biodiversity-remnant vegetation



PATHWAYS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Planning for Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that *climate resilient development is the means to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all*⁸. Climate resilient development means reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and the effective management of natural systems and the urban environment.

Building long-term resilience for the Richmond Valley is a key priority of our post-event recovery journey⁹. Like most towns and cities across Australia, Mid Richmond communities are located in, or very close to, areas of natural hazard risk and high environmental value, and so decision-making about growth and development can be challenging.

Notwithstanding, it is recognised that land use planning is a critical tool and can be the most effective mechanism for avoiding or reducing exposure to natural hazards¹⁰. In particular, spatial plans like the Mid Richmond Place Plans can consider natural hazard risk upfront in the planning process and define preferred directions for growth and resilient outcomes which respond to natural hazard exposure and consider potential impacts on existing and future communities.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CLIMATE RESILIENCE'?

Climate resilience (also referred to as 'disaster resilience') means the capacity of Mid Richmond communities to:

- prepare for, absorb and recover from natural hazards, and
- learn, adapt and transform in ways which enhance these capacities in the face of future events (Natural Hazards Research Australia (2020))

Building climate resilience is a shared responsibility across the whole of society and its systems, including:

- **The social environment** – people and households can increase their awareness of climate risks relevant to their locality, actively prepare for future events, and participate in strengthening community cohesion
- **The economic environment** – the economic base can be diversified to minimise vulnerability to natural hazard risks, and local businesses can be supported to develop business continuity plans and capabilities
- **Settlement pattern** – a risk-based land use planning approach can be used to identify where development should and should not occur depending on the natural hazard risk profile of the land and its intended use
- **Built environment and infrastructure** – buildings, assets and essential community infrastructure can incorporate risk management responses to mitigate risks and support ongoing functionality
- **Natural environment** – nature-based measures such as ecosystem restoration, revegetation and urban greening can be adopted to provide natural defences and reduce natural hazard risks

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION PATHWAYS APPROACH

Resilient land use planning policy and guidelines all point to needing to approach urban growth differently when planning for adaptation and resilience. Commonwealth policy drivers in particular are advancing expectations of decision-makers who are traditionally outside the disaster management discipline (including land use planning decision-makers) to make risk-informed decisions which arrest and ultimately reduce risk in the built, social, economic and natural environments over time.

Internationally recognised and pioneered concepts for resilience planning can be drawn upon to drive sustainable land release and resilient built form outcomes under the Mid Richmond Place Plans. The CSIRO has developed a useful resilience planning tool, known as the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach (RAPTA)¹¹, to provide simple pathways for action in uncertain decision-making contexts – like flood recovery or climate adaptation.

The pathways are referred to as resilience and adaptation pathways which Maintain, Modify or Transform a situation dependent on risk levels, local values, rules, and suitability (see Figure 9 below). Some are simpler solutions in accordance with the 'Maintain' pathway – which supports reinvesting in existing urban areas where compatible with the risk, but building back better to properly reflect that level of risk.

Others are more complex – such as following a 'Transform' pathway, where new, sustainable development can be provided in new locations over the longer term beyond the floodplain extent, bushfire or coastal hazard risk areas, and areas of environmental value.

The *resilience and adaptation pathways* approach has been applied to each settlement under the Mid Richmond Place Plans to inform decision-making across all systems of society to support a more resilient settlement pattern and built form over time.

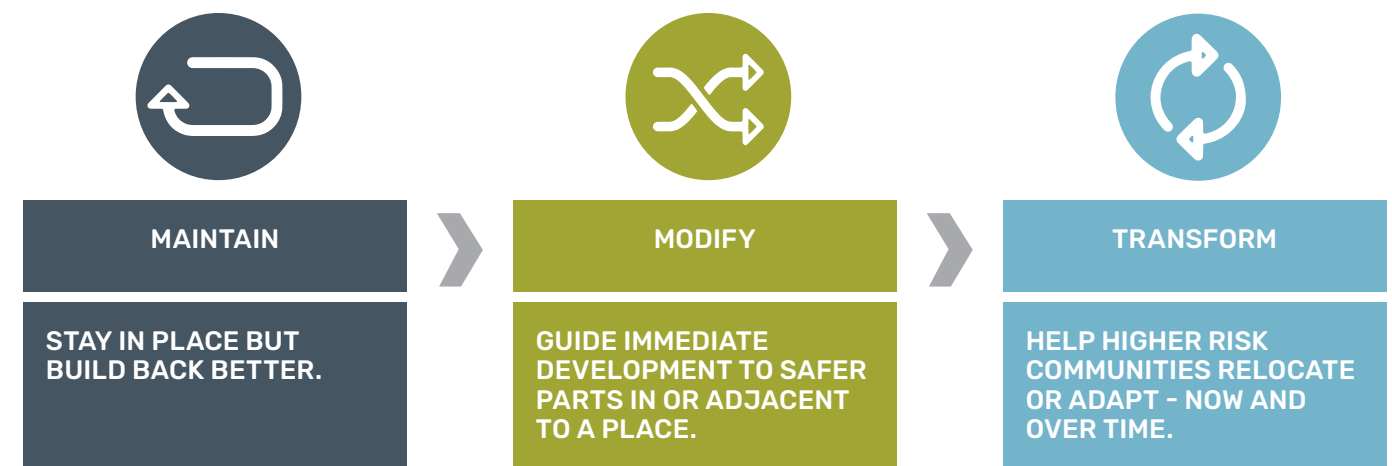


Figure 9 Resilience and adaptation pathways from the CSIRO RAPTA process

⁸ IPCC (2023), 'Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers', available via https://andandwww.ipcc.ch/andreportandand6andsyranddownloadsandreportandIPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

⁹ Creating resilient communities and adapting to climate change are key priorities and directions identified in various Council strategic and statutory plans, including, but not limited to, the CSP, Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020, Growth Management Strategy 2023, Recovery Plan 2022-25, and Community Preparedness and Resilience Plan 2021.

¹⁰ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2020), 'Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities' handbook, available via <https://andandknowledge.aidr.org.au/andresourcesandhandbook-land-use-planning>

¹¹ CSIRO (2019), 'The Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach (RAPTA)', available via <https://andandresearch.csiro.au/andandrapta>



PATHWAYS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Applying the pathways approach

Thinking in pathways of action enables a resilience and adaptation approach which can flex or change over time as different triggers (such as another event) or circumstances (such as more funding) become apparent.

It also helps to understand the process a community can go through to advance resilience or adaptation, and the pros and cons of doing so.

Given pathways in the real world can diverge or come together over time, so can the paths taken towards resilience and adaptation.

This style of planning provides a means to align recovery and future resilience planning activities in the short term, ahead of the release of the Disaster Adaptation Planning (DAP) process of the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

Council will continue to undertake its various roles in emergency management preparedness and recovery, undertaking flood risk management activities, administering and reviewing its local environmental planning documents, and otherwise providing more risk information and awareness activities as funding to do so is made available by State and Commonwealth recovery and resilience programs.



MAINTAIN

THE MAINTAIN PATHWAY

The Maintain pathway promotes:

- Continued use of existing urban land to support housing provision
- Resilient design of property to help mitigate risk
- Strong focus on community reconnection and services support post-event
- Short term improvements in socio-economic wellbeing like bringing increased tourism to drive business support

It does not generally:

- Help a community be resilient long term, but is good for getting 'back to normal'
- Address longer term issues of repeated events or long-onset issues
- Involve substantial mitigation works
- Explicitly promote new development in unsafe and inappropriate locations



MODIFY

THE MODIFY PATHWAY

The Modify pathway promotes:

- Utilisation of land which is lowest risk and begins to address climate resilient development principles to reduce residents' exposure to risk
- Supporting continued growth of existing settlements but in a resilient and sustainable way using mitigation as a core principle of risk reduction
- Re-thinking how much a town can and should grow due to risk, and the role it performs in its 'hinterland'
- Strong role for increased investment by government

It does not generally:

- Stop a community from experiencing extreme or long onset risks
- Guarantee a community will be sustainable long term, unless safe growth can occur which supports ongoing town viability
- Succeed without community-driven commitment to place



TRANSFORM

THE TRANSFORM PATHWAY

The Transform pathway promotes:

- Acceptance that the place is unsafe in the short, medium or long term and action is required to move or adapt to avoid or limit that risk
- A full 're-think' of what the town is, what it looks like, and where it should be
- A new urban approach to maximise long-term socio-economic sustainability and ensure future residents are not exposed to intolerable risk
- Coordinated community, local government and State and Federal cooperation

It does not generally:

- Happen without policy commitment across government or substantial funding and implementation commitment of government
- Result in the long term continued habitation of the place

MAINTAIN



STAY IN PLACE BUT BUILD BACK BETTER

Get back to normal as soon as possible
Re-connect community members with each other and with local services

PROS

People can rebuild their properties – including retrofitting and raising
Neighbours and communities can stay together
People can ‘get back to normal’ quicker
Some infrastructure upgrades possible – e.g. drainage improvements, road raising
Focus on community events and catalysing tourism to drive community wellbeing

CONS

Residents will be hit again – maybe worse + community remains at risk long term
Property rebuilds might not be above recent flood level
No significant investment in flood mitigation infrastructure
Insurance will be expensive or unavailable
People might not want to stay or re-invest in town
Can town out-grow its flood-prone reputation? Attract new residents and investment?

SPEED AND COMPLEXITY

Faster process for recovery than other pathways
Less complicated and lower effort to deliver

STAKEHOLDERS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

Largely resident and community member-driven
Some government support needed (e.g. funding for delivery of infrastructure upgrades and/or housing retrofit programs)

MODIFY



STAY IN PLACE BUT IMPLEMENT FLOOD RISK REDUCTION PROJECTS

Modify the built environment to address treatable flood risks
Encourage changing expectations of town services and function

PROS

People can rebuild their properties – including retrofitting and raising
Neighbours and communities can stay together
Greater government investment in flood risk mitigation and management measures (e.g. levees, evacuation routes) to address some aspects of flood risk
Increasing likelihood that insurance can still be offered

CONS

Residents will be hit again – and flood risk treatments might not address the risk
Property rebuilds might not be above recent flood level
Uncertainty over feasibility and cost of mitigation infrastructure – significant urban growth may be required to pay for investment
Not guarantee insurance will be available
A pathway to prolong the ‘life’ of the town, but may not support its long-term commercial or social viability

SPEED AND COMPLEXITY

Maintain pathway still needed for initial recovery tasks
This pathway then builds on those tasks, lengthening time to implement
Pathway involves inter-dependent decisions and processes, such as speed of FRM process, and commitment to delivery of funds by government

STAKEHOLDERS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

Stronger role for local government to drive flood risk management outcomes
Significant role for State and Commonwealth to support with funding
Significant resident and community member-driven involvement to advance non-infrastructure items, such as community events

TRANSFORM



HELP HIGH RISK RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES RELOCATE OR ADAPT – NOW AND OVER TIME

Move or fundamentally change the place through long term adaptation to climate driven events

PROS

People can be truly safe from events if relocated away
Neighbours and communities can stay together if relocated in a managed way
Greatest level of government-led investment
Strong likelihood that adapted locations and properties will be insurable
Strongest chance for long term town socio-economic viability and population and economic growth
Lowest amount of long-term reconstruction obligation

CONS

Largest quantum of funding required
Most disruptive (either in short or long term) to residents
Place will not look like it does currently – either it won’t be there, or will alter its character
No long-term guarantee of government commitment to investment in delivering planned relocation or adaptation

SPEED AND COMPLEXITY

Can take the longest, and is the most complex – particularly if there is no clear community and governmental commitment to transform
Pathway involves very complex inter-dependent decisions and processes, such as the speed of the adaptation, authorising environment from community, authorising environment from government, and commitment to delivery of funds by government

STAKEHOLDERS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

Critical role for community to lead transformation process
Strong role for local government to support and create environment for community-led decisions
Critical role for State and Commonwealth to support with funding
Significant resident and community member-driven commitment over the long term to advance the socio-economic prosperity of the town

Figure 10
Pathway approach diagram

