



Richmond
Valley
Council



MID
RICHMOND
PLACE PLANS



PART B
EVANS HEAD

The Town
Character

Our Shared
History





Our
People

Our Regional
Relationships in
the Mid Richmond

WHAT SHAPES OUR TOWN



C1

OUR SHARED HISTORY

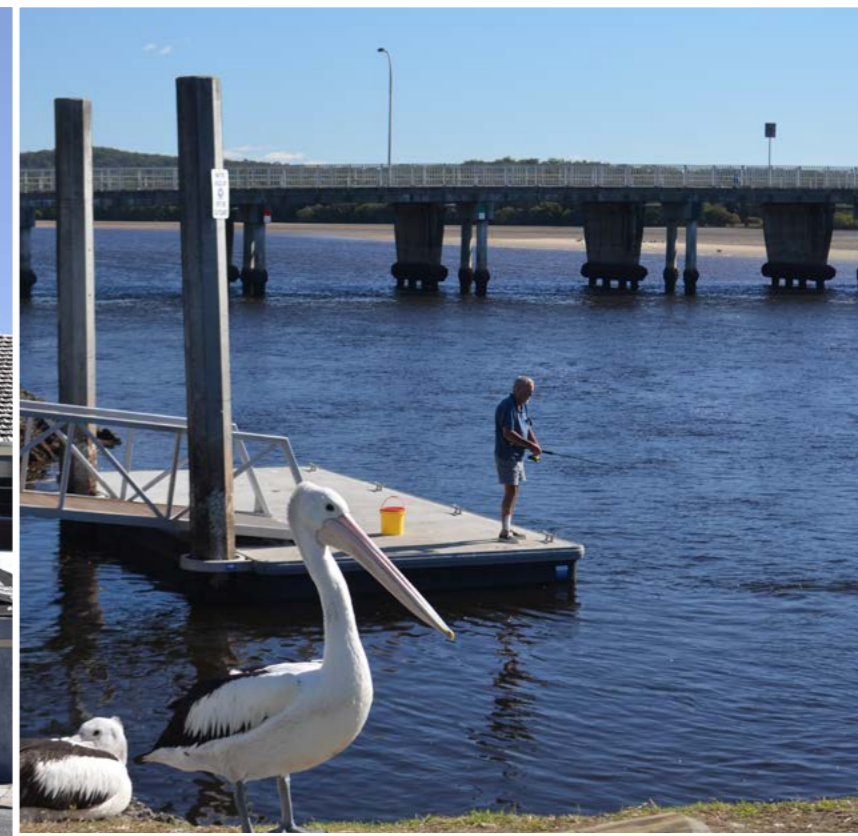
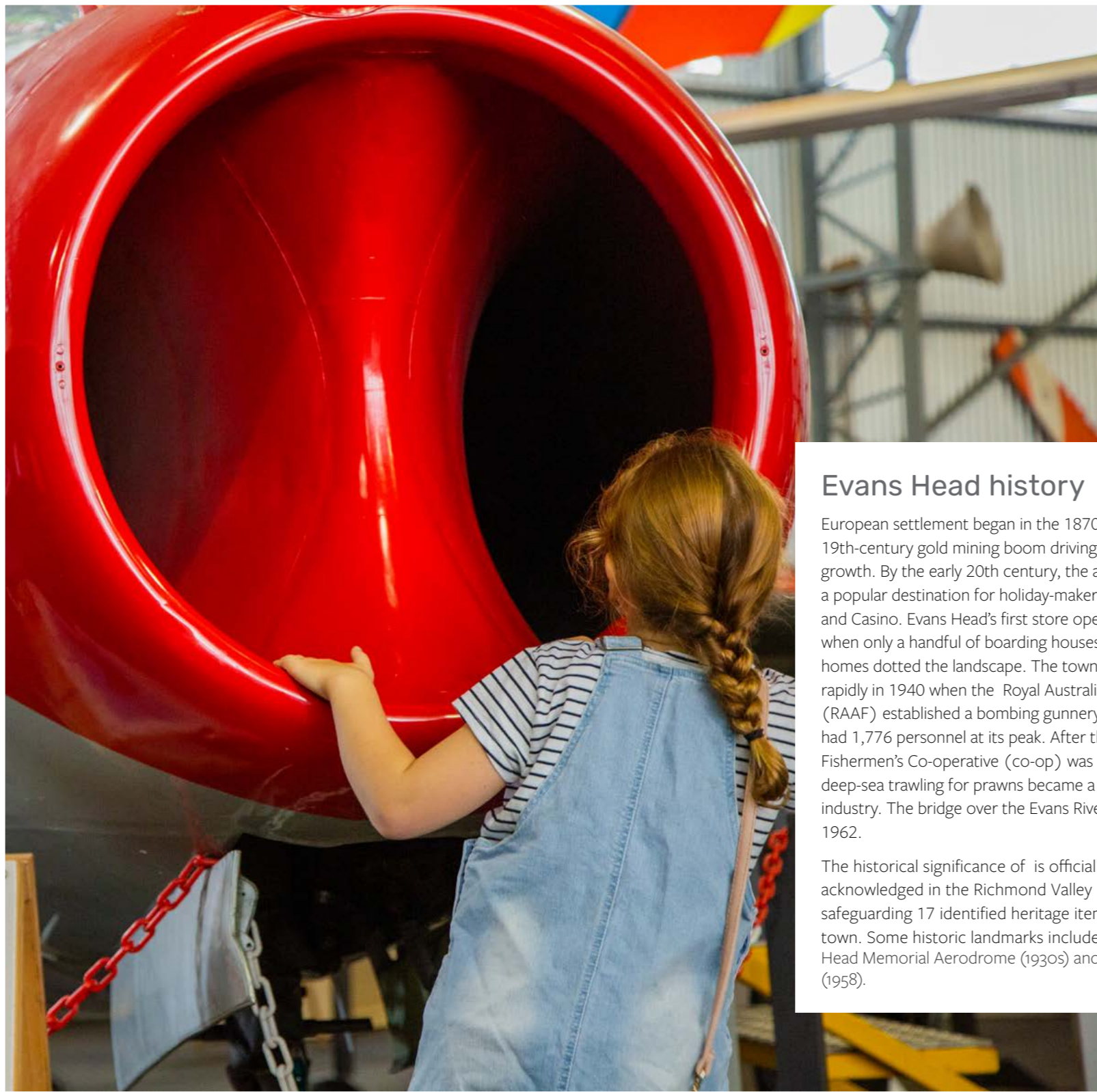
The stories we are connected to



Cultural heritage of our traditional owners

The Bundjalung Nation, original custodians of the northern coastal region of NSW, including the Richmond Valley, have a profound history spanning over 12,000 years throughout the wider Valley.

Evans Head holds great cultural and historical significance for the Bundjalung People and the wider Bundjalung Nation, which extends north to Ballina, west to Casino, and south to Iluka.



Evans Head history

European settlement began in the 1870s, with the late 19th-century gold mining boom driving the town's growth. By the early 20th century, the area became a popular destination for holiday-makers from Kyogle and Casino. Evans Head's first store opened in 1919 when only a handful of boarding houses and private homes dotted the landscape. The town expanded rapidly in 1940 when the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) established a bombing gunnery school that had 1,776 personnel at its peak. After the war, the Fishermen's Co-operative (co-op) was formed, and deep-sea trawling for prawns became a rapidly growing industry. The bridge over the Evans River was built in 1962.

The historical significance of is officially acknowledged in the Richmond Valley LEP 2012, safeguarding 17 identified heritage items within the town. Some historic landmarks include the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome (1930s) and Illawong Hotel (1958).



TOWN CHARACTER

What makes us unique

The natural environment has influenced and shaped the settlement form of Evans Head, maintaining a compact township that hugs the coast and Evans River estuary. The spectacular coastal setting and the abundant recreation opportunities afforded by the beaches, river and headlands have attracted tourists for 100 years. Tourism, aviation and commercial fishing industries have all played a role in shaping the town and the community.

Key elements which contribute to the function and character in Evans Head include:

- Its compact settlement scale, bisected by the Evans River and strongly defined by the coastline and coastal heathlands of the Broadwater and Bundjalung National Parks
- A distinctive community heart comprising a high street-based retail core and a mix of commercial and community services
- Two regional connector roads - Broadwater Evans Head Road and Woodburn Street - the latter establishing the major movement spine through the town
- An expansive waterfront precinct of open spaces, mixed community and recreation facilities and caravan and cabin parks
- Centrally located sports precinct
- A simple grid network of wide residential streets
- Airport and industrial estate forming the northern town extents



Mix of detached house forms reflecting different eras of development



Commercial and community buildings

- A traditional high street-based retail core with 1-2 storey retail buildings. A frame of commercial and community services
- Locally significant destinations typical of coastal townships such as the RSL, SLSC and bowls club
- The heritage listed Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome
- The harbour precinct including the fishing co-op and marine rescue
- Relatively new light industrial structures clustered into an employment precinct



Entertainment



Typical 1-2 storey commercial

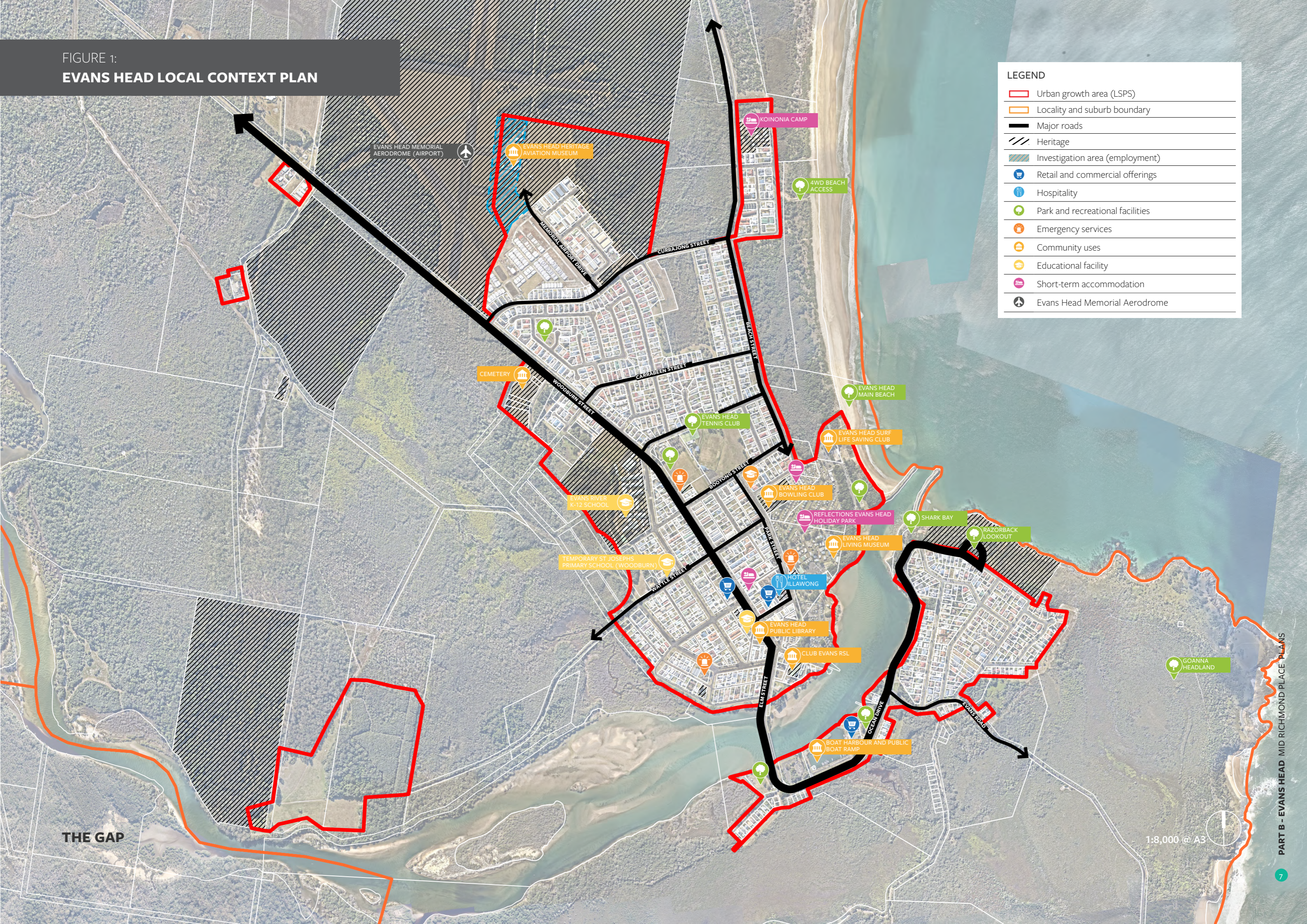


Mixed use commercial



Community and civic buildings

FIGURE 1:
EVANS HEAD LOCAL CONTEXT PLAN



LEGEND	
	Urban growth area (LSPS)
	Locality and suburb boundary
	Major roads
	Heritage
	Investigation area (employment)
	Retail and commercial offerings
	Hospitality
	Park and recreational facilities
	Emergency services
	Community uses
	Educational facility
	Short-term accommodation
	Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome

THE GAP

1:8,000 @ A3



Low scale 2-storey urban form

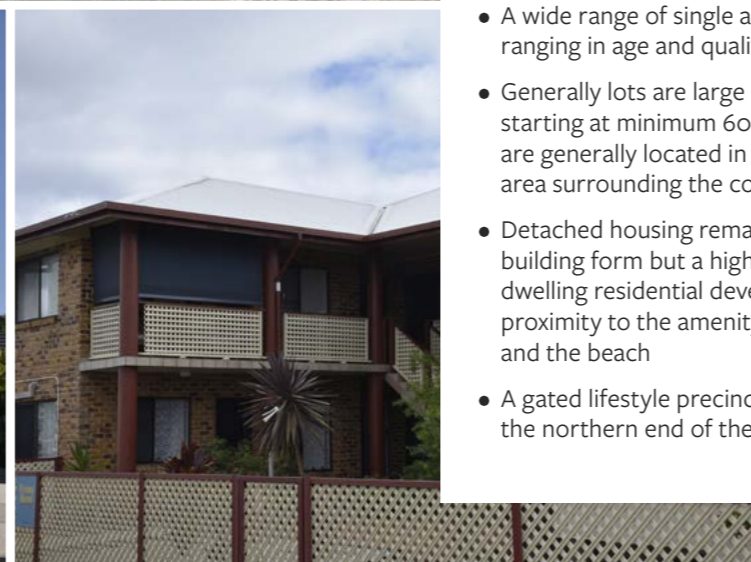


Our houses

- A wide range of single and 2-storey homes ranging in age and quality
- Generally lots are large by today's standards starting at minimum 600-800m². Large lots are generally located in the older township area surrounding the commercial centre
- Detached housing remains the predominant building form but a higher proportion of multi-dwelling residential development is evident in proximity to the amenity drivers of Oak Street and the beach
- A gated lifestyle precinct under construction at the northern end of the urban area



Multi-dwelling residential forms



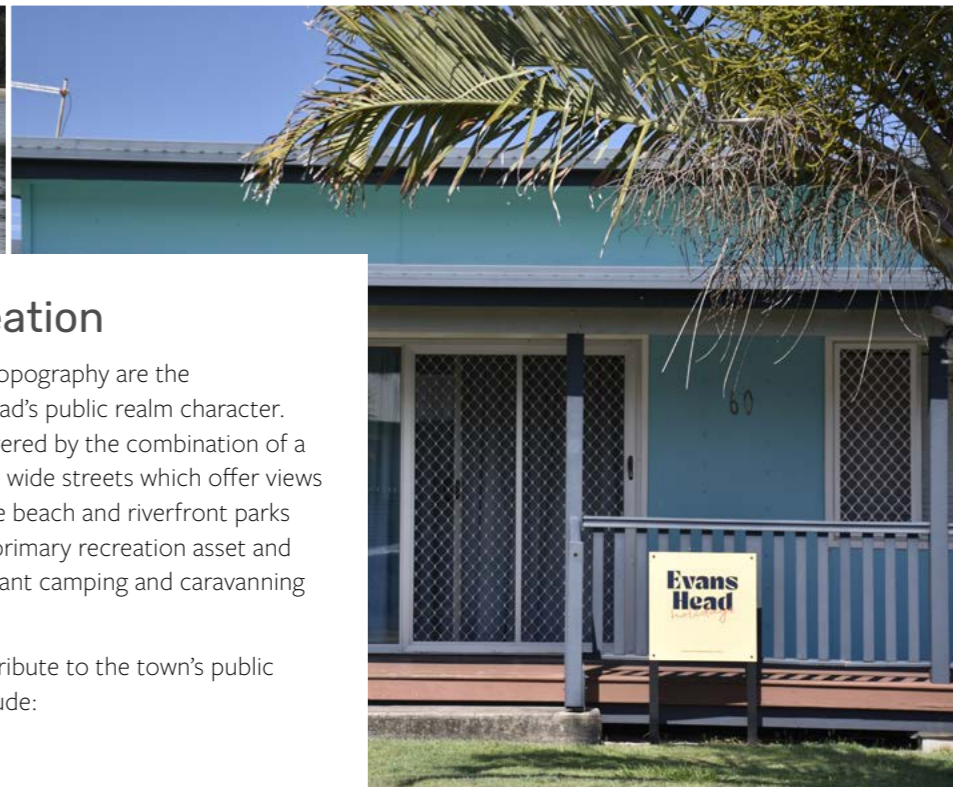
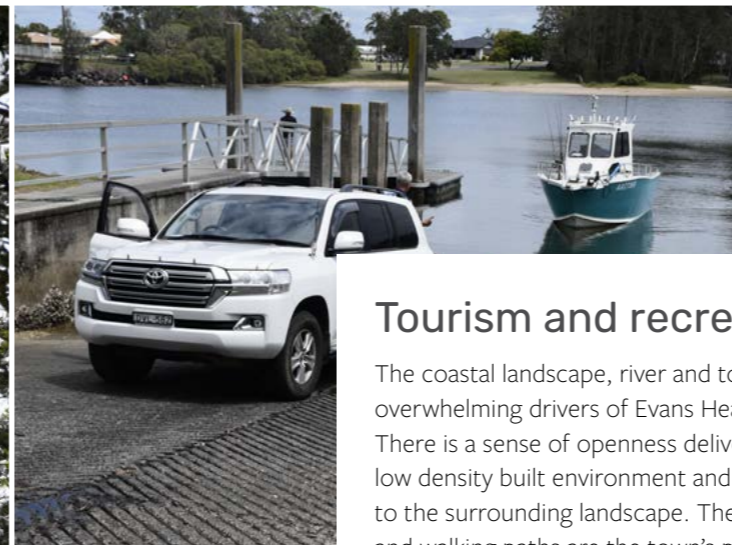
PART B - EVANS HEAD MID RICHMOND PLACE PLANS



Original and modern coastal architectural styles



Mix of detached house forms reflecting different eras of development

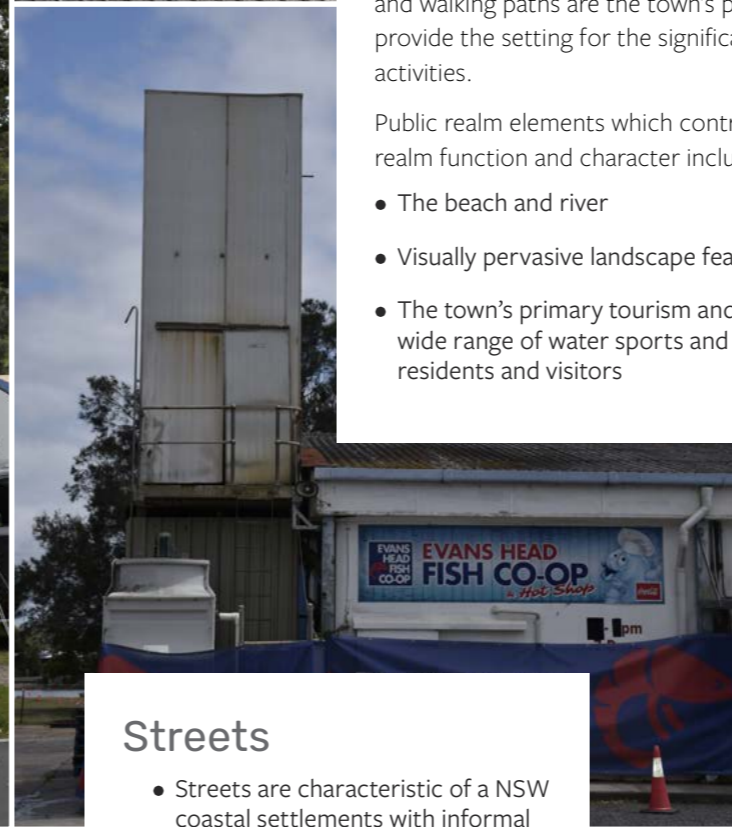


Tourism and recreation

The coastal landscape, river and topography are the overwhelming drivers of Evans Head's public realm character. There is a sense of openness delivered by the combination of a low density built environment and wide streets which offer views to the surrounding landscape. The beach and riverfront parks and walking paths are the town's primary recreation asset and provide the setting for the significant camping and caravanning activities.

Public realm elements which contribute to the town's public realm function and character include:

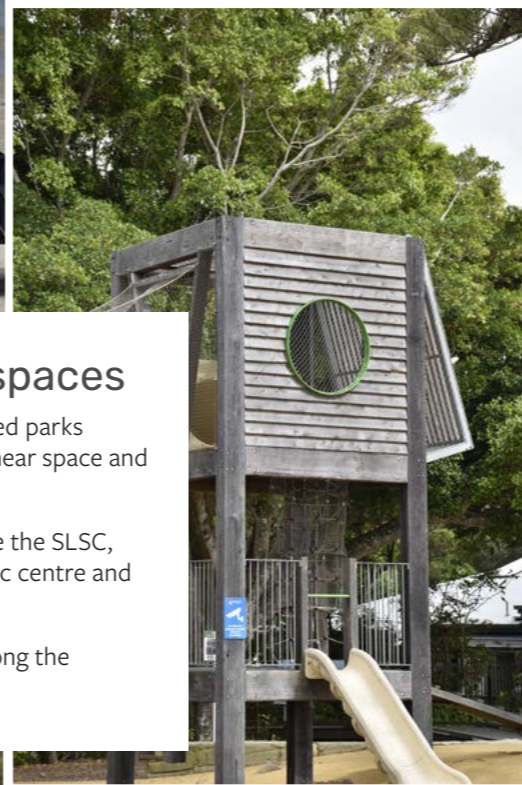
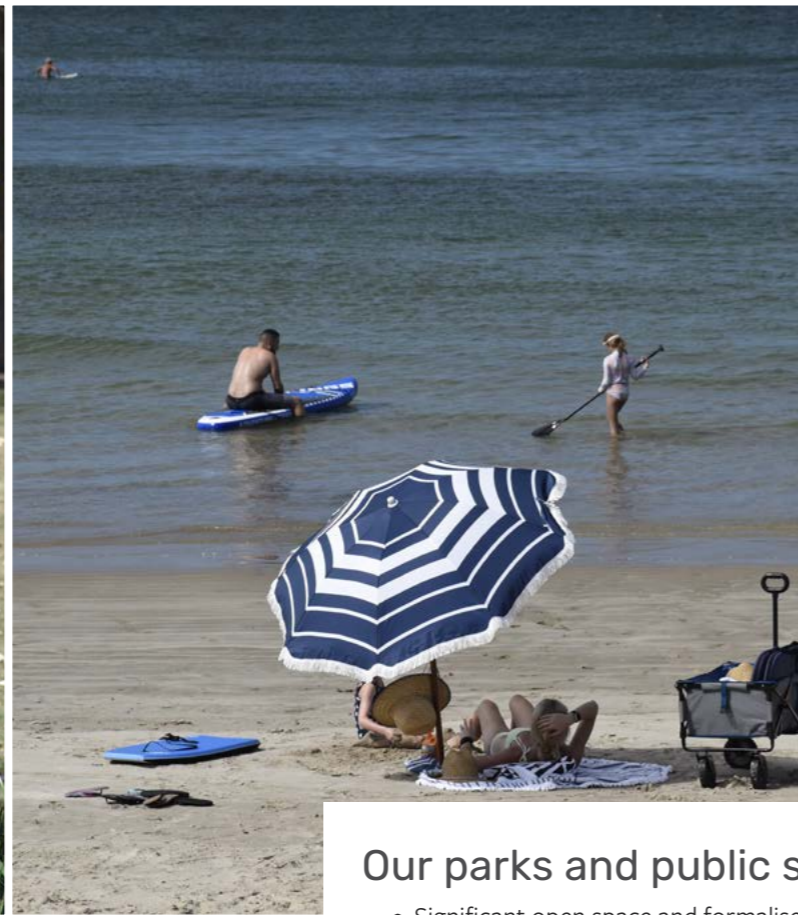
- The beach and river
- Visually pervasive landscape features
- The town's primary tourism and recreation resource offering a wide range of water sports and passive recreation settings for residents and visitors



Streets

- Streets are characteristic of a NSW coastal settlements with informal visual qualities
- Streets typically have wide reserves (20m- 30m) and possess a wide range of localised conditions such as formalise kerb and channeling, stormwater swales, tree planting, car parking and pedestrian footpaths
- There is an absence of public realm design which expresses the role or enhances the function of the important streets such as:
 - Woodburn Street as a town arrival experience
 - Oak Street as a commercial high street
 - Beech Street as a foreshore esplanade





Our parks and public spaces

- Significant open space and formalised parks including Crib Reserve, river edge linear space and beach, Razorback lookout
- Sports and recreation assets include the SLSC, boat ramps, Stan Payne Oval, aquatic centre and bowls club
- A range of walking opportunities along the foreshore, river and headland

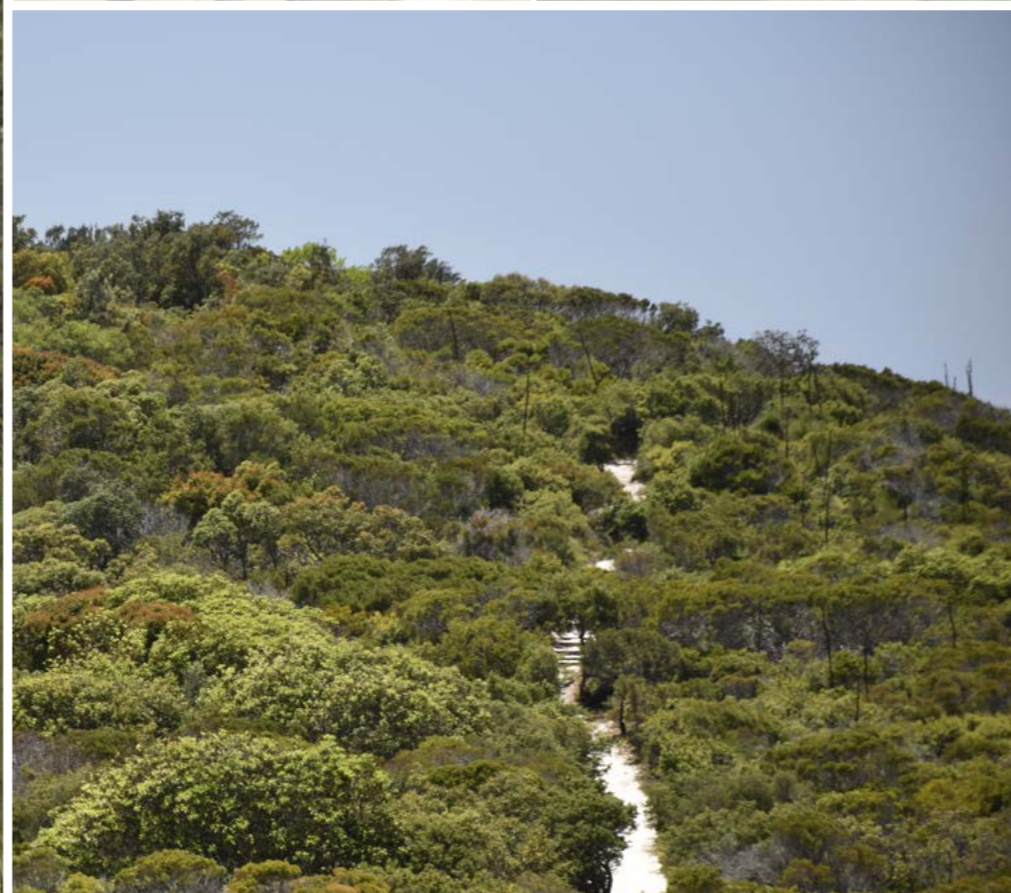
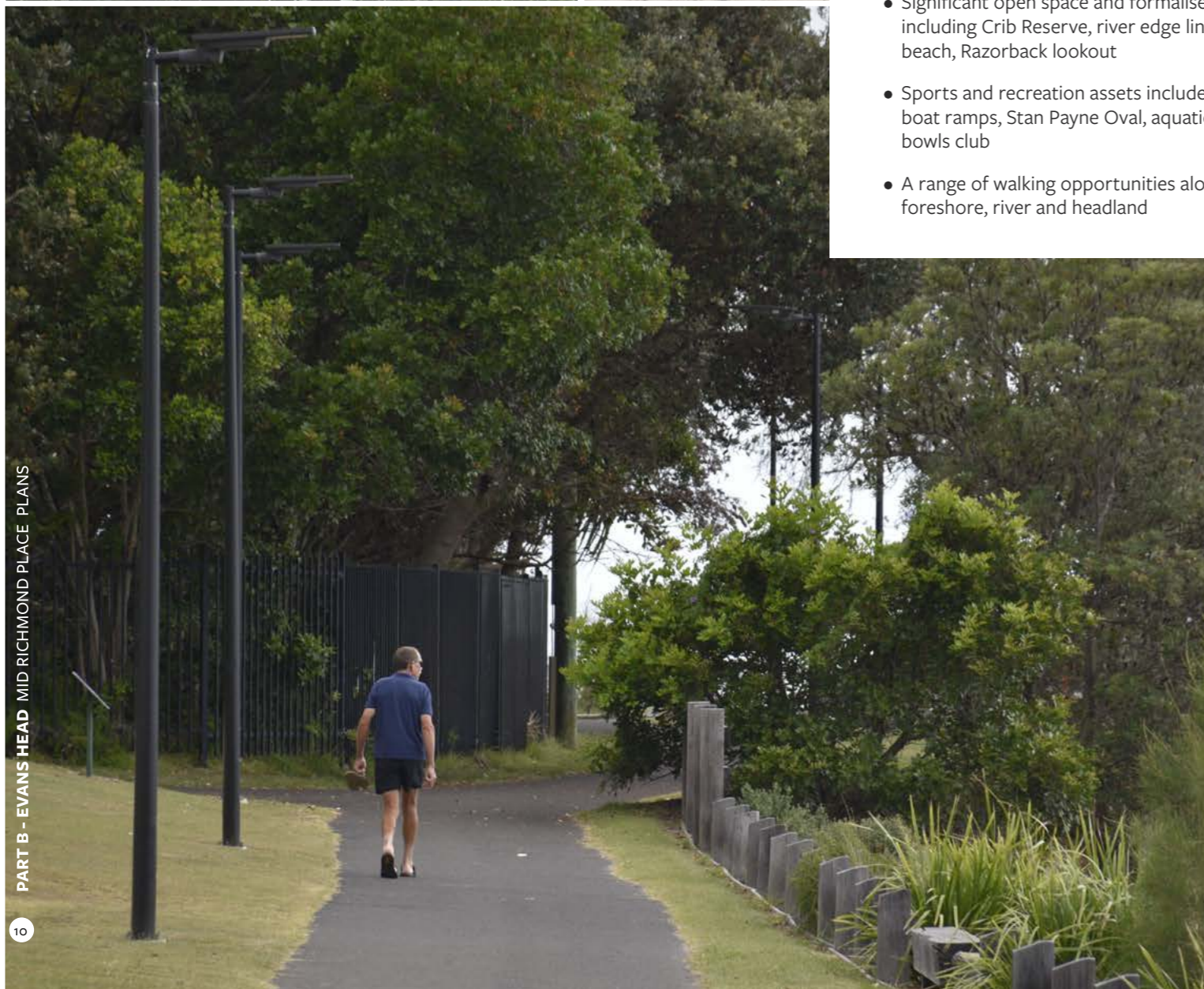


FIGURE 2:
LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE PLAN



LEGEND

- Urban area boundary (LSPS)
- Locality and suburb boundary
- Major roads
- Town gateway

Land Zoning (LEP 2012)

- Heritage
- Park and recreational facilities
- Rural landscape
- National parks and nature reserves
- Areas of environmental conservation and management

Facilities of interest

- 🌳 Park and recreational facilities
- 🏟️ Community uses
- 🏠 Short-term accommodation
- 🛒 Retail and commercial offerings

THE GAP

EVANS HEAD

1:8,000 @ A3





Capturing
Opportunities
and Facing Our
Challenges



Strategic
Directions and
Actions



Principles to
Guide a Healthy
Future





STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

EVANS HEAD PLACE PLAN

Place Plan structure

This Place Plan provides a strategic plan for Evans Head looking forward to a 20 year horizon. It guides Richmond Valley Council's approach and decision-making, addressing a wide range of environmental, economic and social factors which influence how the town functions and the lifestyle and wellbeing of residents.

Informed by contextual analysis and community engagement, the Place Plan is structured around five strategic directions. Each direction outlines objectives, priorities, environmental resilience pathways and actions which will inform sustainable growth and change which responds to Evans Heads' unique opportunities and challenges.

Key directions of the strategies are summarised by the Evans Head Place Plan (see page over).

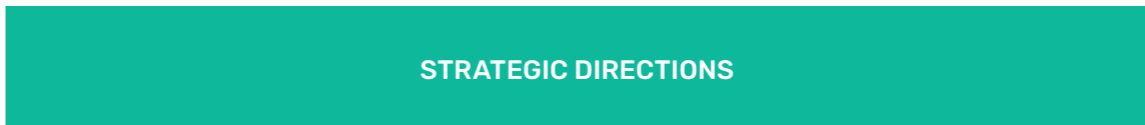
What informed the place plan?



Goals and aspirations for a sustainable future and community wellbeing



Strategic directions, objectives and actions to guide change which addresses our community, town shape and character, environment and climate



Consolidated action plan and next steps to help us achieve our goals



Figure 3: Place Plan Approach and Structure

Understanding priorities, opportunities, and challenges of Evans Head

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and the community, as a framework to evaluate Evans Head's position and inform place planning strategies.

STRENGTHS

Strengths are positive characteristics of Evans Head which we can control. Questions which inform this are:

- What do we do well?
- What unique assets and characteristics do we possess as a town and a community?
- What do visitors see as our strengths?

WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are negative factors which we need to improve on to be competitive. Questions which inform this are:

- What and where can we improve?
- What do other towns and villages do better?
- Where are the gaps in our infrastructure and facilities?

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities are external, positive factors which may give a competitive advantage and contribute to success. Questions which inform this are:

- What opportunities are open to Evans Head?
- What trends can we take advantage of?
- How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

THREATS

Threats include external factors beyond our control which may put the town or community at risk and may require contingency plans for dealing with them if they occur. Questions which inform this are:

- What factors beyond our control could place us at risk?
- Are there any changes or events which might negatively impact us?

Natural beauty of the beaches, river, and surrounds

Coastal lifestyle

Holiday letting in high demand

National Parks

Council facilities – library, halls, visitor information centre

Beaches

Stan Payne oval

Reflections caravan park

4WD access

Clubs, pubs and surf club

Quality open spaces

HealthOne (health hub)

STRENGTHS

Housing affordability

Availability of local worker accommodation

Parking availability for local workers and at peak holiday times

Public amenities having limited opening times

Limited access to health care and supporting services, such as medical, youth, mental health, and addiction

Capacity of local schools

Limited public transport

Limited youth related activities and facilities

Conflicting local views on development

Land locked settlement – surrounded by National Parks

Aging population

Central business area closing at 2pm

Lack of local workers

Lack of police

Safe off leash dog areas

No major shopping precinct like other nearby locations

Long-term sustainability and viability

WEAKNESSES

SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES

Explore the potential to provide all day parking on Woodburn Street

Improve access to health care services and explore the prospects for a nursing home to secure employment and free-up housing

Explore the potential to provide free camping

Improve stormwater drainage within the central business area

Improve public spaces and safety, with cleaner streets, street trees, public art, outdoor dining, toilets and BBQ at the skate park, more police, and CCTV

Improve pathways to accommodate a range of active transport options (walk, wheel, or ride)

Support housing growth in the right locations, with an appropriate density, floor space ratio and building height

Work with land owners to explore the development opportunities of key sites such as the Bowls Club, Fishing co-op and Pacific Motor Inn

Promotion of local events, culture, and music and arts festivals

Explore the potential for a boardwalk through the tea tree rainforest north of the surf club, a pathway for the full length of Mangrove Street, a pathway on Woodburn Street near the fire station to the roundabout and a pathway from Kalimna to Chinaman's Beach

Explore the potential to provide beach disability access

Explore prospects to offer river cruises, kayak tours, whale watching and surf activities

Explore the potential to extent the central business area along Woodburn Street

Explore the potential to attract a multi-national supermarket

Explore the potential for a new Men's Shed

Explore the potential to increase tree canopy cover in urban areas and a community garden

Explore the opportunity to open the walking tracks at the Bundajalung National Park Gumma Gurra areas

THREATS

Sea level rise and coastal erosion

Flooding

Pre-school regularly floods

The negative impact on national parks due to tourist activities and accommodation

Airbnb taking up residential space

Crime

Loss of inherent character

Heritage listing of aerodrome

Bushfire

Loss of the natural environment

EVANS HEAD PLACE PLAN

Key Place Plan Directions

The Place Plan summarises key directions of the strategies presented in the following sections. It spatially presents planning and urban design interventions which address Evans Head's opportunities and challenges now and into the future.

KEY PLACE PLAN DIRECTIONS AND IDEAS

1 Town centre revitalisation

Expand and diversify retail, commercial, community and accommodation activities across the town centre area through increased development intensity that sensitivity integrates and transitions to surrounding areas. Reconnect with the river

2 Community recreation precinct

Reinforce and enhance the existing cluster of community and recreation facilities - recreation hall, museum, Cribb Reserve, playground, river beach and kiosk - as an integrated community recreation precinct. Investigate the long term relocation of the ambulance to expand this area

3 Community services precinct

Develop the existing cluster of community and government services (School Lane and Woodburn Street) as an integrated community services precinct. Investigate the feasibility of a multi-purpose function facility which can act as a disaster coordination centre and place of refuge for future hazard events

4 Town centre residential frame

Increase development densities surrounding the town centre including a range of housing and apartment options as well as short-stay accommodation which supports a diversified tourism market (also see Strategy 4)

5 Streetscapes and street network

Enhance and upgrade all streetscapes within the town centre as part of a coordinated master plan which addresses future traffic and parking, increased tree planting and landscape, pedestrian safety and convenience, footpath furnishings and integrated urban art opportunities

6 Future car parking

Identify opportunities for future public off-street car parks around the frame of the town centre which will accommodate seasonal peaks in visitors and reduce congestion as the centre grows

7 Temporary accommodation site

On decommissioning, re-purpose the temporary housing village for additional holiday park activities

8 Beach precinct

Enhance SLSC access and public interface opportunities. Manage car parking and access to the beach to protect the character and environmental quality of the area, particularly addressing seasonal peaks

9 Sports precinct

Review future community needs for sports and organised recreation at Stan Payne Oval and the aquatic centre and plan for long term upgrades to maximise precinct function

10 Riverside open space

Enhance the riverside precincts as a connected network of diverse recreation experiences from the surf club to Razorback Lookout. Integrate holiday parks to improve interfaces and visual relationships

11 Diversify river engagement and activity

Review existing river-focused infrastructure and prepare a river activation strategy which enhanced existing places and spaces and delivers a broad range of boating, watercraft and swimming opportunities

12 Enhance the boat harbour and associated facilities

Upgrade the harbour to encourage a wide range of commercial fishing and tour boat operations and enhance the fish co-op as a commercial tourism destination. Ensure public boat ramps and parking are safe and of a high quality

13 Shark Bay and headland

Enhance river access. Improve connection to the town centre with improved walking and cycling paths

14 Pedestrian-cycle network upgrades

Connect the entire town with a network of high quality pedestrian-cycle paths and trails which:

- Connect residential areas to the beach, school, sports precinct, town centre and community recreation precinct
- Provide enjoyable visitor experiences engaging the beach, river and headland
- Protect the coastal foredune with managed access trails offering environmental experiences
- Link with the broader network of environmental trails and experiences

15 Three villages cycleway

Deliver the cycle connections to Woodburn and Broadwater

16 Aerodrome and museum

Improve promotion of the museum and connection precinct to the town centre with high quality pedestrian-cycle paths

17 National parks and environmental experiences

Integrate with surrounding National Parks and environmental experiences with improved signage and visitor information

18 Town gateways and arrival experience

Express and enhance the township arrival points on Woodburn Evans Head Road and Broadwater Evans Head Road to improve the arrival experience, investigating opportunities for:

- Wayfinding signage and visitor information
- Public art and landscape elements
- Cemetery maintenance and presentation

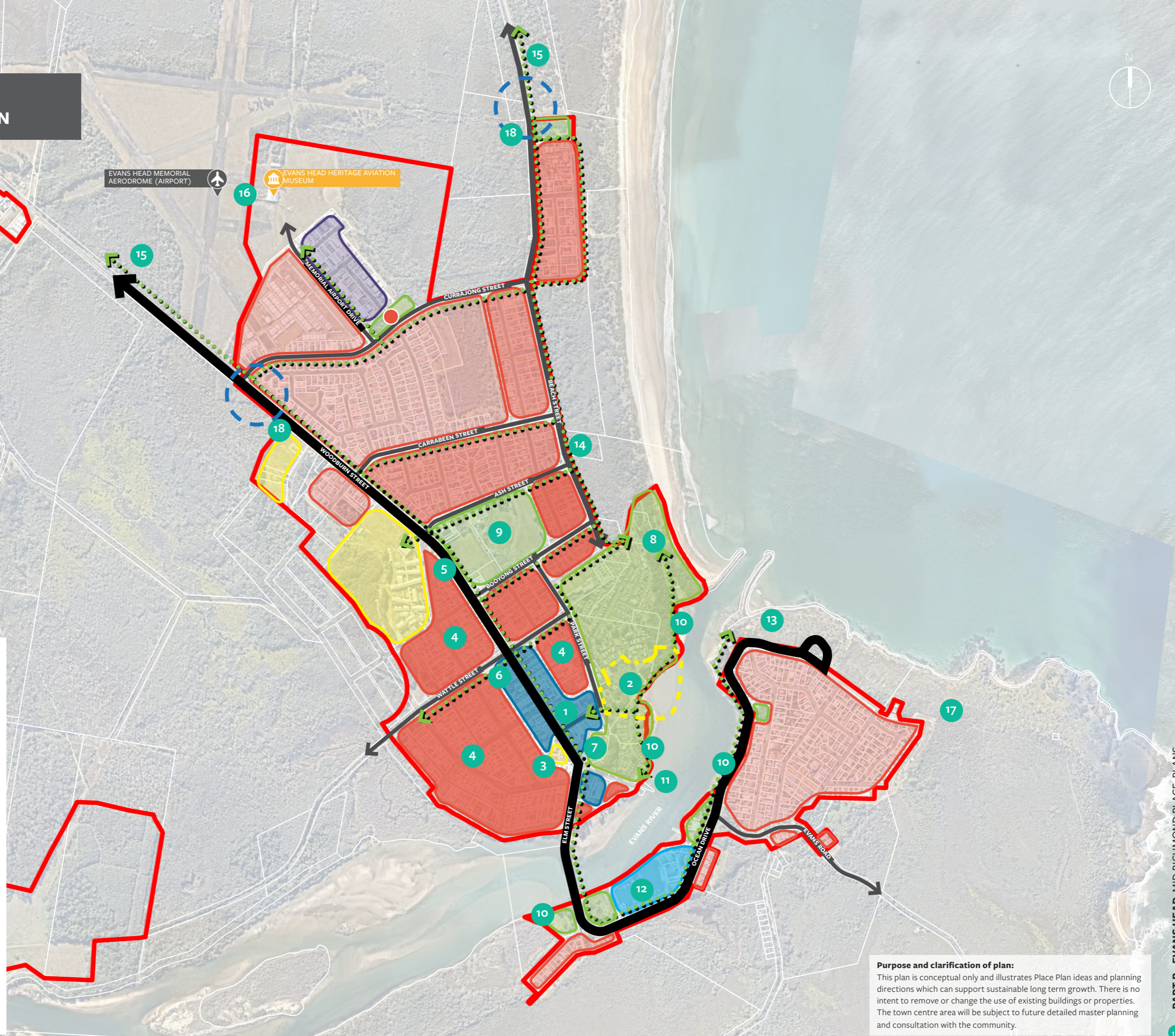
FIGURE 4:
EVANS HEAD TOWN PLACE PLAN

LEGEND

- Urban growth area boundary (LSPS)
- Major roads (Woodburn Street and Ocean Drive)
- Key town streets
- 1% AEP and climate change flood line (100 year + CC3)

Town places and activities

- Residential
- Community and education facilities
- Retail and commercial offerings
- Employment and industry
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Boat harbour
- Community recreation precinct
- Town gateways
- Key pedestrian-cycle path



Purpose and clarification of plan:
This plan is conceptual only and illustrates Place Plan ideas and planning directions which can support sustainable long term growth. There is no intent to remove or change the use of existing buildings or properties. The town centre area will be subject to future detailed master planning and consultation with the community.

SHAPING OUR TOWN'S FUTURE

Township Structure and Character

OBJECTIVE 1

Celebrate and protect our history, township qualities and natural setting

Connecting with country

The wider Evans Head area, including Dirawong Reserve, the Evans River environs and Bundjalung National Park, is the subject of important spiritual and creation stories for local descendants of Aboriginal people. The Bandjalang People consider the area to be of immense cultural significance and it is regarded as one of the last intact coastal cultural landscapes for Aboriginal people in NSW.

Council recognises the importance of Country to Aboriginal people by identifying opportunities to incorporate local Aboriginal knowledge, culture and tradition into projects aligned with the NSW Government Architect's Draft Connecting with Country Framework.

Township form and character

Since European settlement at the start of the 20th century, tourism, aviation and commercial fishing industries have all played a role in shaping Evans Head as a town and a community. Today the heritage listed aerodrome, a former World War II Air Force training facility, and Evans River boat harbour remain in operation and offer glimpses into the unique history of Evans Head.

But it's our spectacular coastal setting and the abundant recreation opportunities afforded by the beaches, river and headlands which have attracted visitors for 100 years and sustained a thriving seasonal tourism economy.

Nature has strongly influenced and shaped the settlement form of Evans Head too, maintaining a compact township which hugs the coast and Evans River estuary. Council's designated urban growth area is approximately 272 hectare, bounded by the Evans River flood plain and protected areas of high biodiversity value. These natural constraints establish a defined urban area which will not expand in the future.

Over time, this settlement history and the coastal environment have combined to deliver a distinctive township form and functional structure characterised by:

- A compact settlement scale, bisected by the Evans River and strongly defined by the coastline and coastal heathlands of the Broadwater and Bundjalung National Parks
- Generally low-scale, low-density built environment typical of regional coastal towns of Northern NSW
- A distinctive centre comprising a high street-based retail core and a mix of commercial and community services
- Major community destinations including the Hotel Illawong, bowling club and RSL
- Two regional connector roads - Broadwater Evans Head Road and Woodburn Evans Head Road (Woodburn Street) - and a simple grid network of local residential streets
- An expansive beach and river waterfronts of open spaces, recreation facilities and caravan and cabin holiday parks
- A centrally located education and sports precinct
- The aerodrome and industrial estate forming the northern town extents

With opportunities for growth confined to our current urban footprint, we need to consider how best to accommodate new residents and job opportunities while continuing to attract the visitors which support our local economy.

Council's goal through this Place Plan is to partner with the community to address Evans Head's future in a way which supports residents' well-being, celebrates our intrinsic township qualities and protects the natural environment.

Protecting valued place qualities

Community engagement undertaken as part of place planning for the Mid Richmond's villages highlighted the strong value our residents place the character of the Northern Rivers region as well their own communities. The beauty of the natural environments, river and coastline as well as the spacious rural landscapes contribute immensely to the character of our region, towns and villages and the lifestyles we enjoy.

Individually, the settlements of Evans Head, Coraki, Woodburn and Broadwater - Rileys Hill offer a broad mix of places and unique township characters that together contribute to Mid Richmond's image and diverse visitor experiences. Protecting this diversity and nurturing the much-valued qualities of Evans Head is not only important to residents but also supports a more robust regional tourism economy.

Evans Head's unique qualities, including the picturesque landscape setting, Aboriginal and European histories and its coastal township charm, will continue to play a key role nurturing community pride and attracting the visitors which sustain our local economy.

As we grow, and strengthen our resilience to the uncertainties of a changing climate, protecting these valued place qualities will require us to consider a wide range of new ideas which influence how we live and work in our community and region (see Figure 4 Evans Head Place Plan).

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a Evans Head Structure Plan in consultation with the community based on the following key principles:

- Reinforcing a compact, mixed use town centre
- Delivering higher density residential development in and around the town centre
- Reinforce and enhance the existing role and function of the street network
- Protecting and enhancing the foreshore and riverside open spaces
- Maintaining and enhancing the holiday parks
- Protecting and connecting key tourism assets such as the beach, aerodrome, harbour and lookouts
- Improving walking and cycling opportunities

This structure plan could form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure and community objectives to guide the sustainable growth of Evans Head. (refer to Figure 4: Evans Heads Place Plan on previous page)

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

OBJECTIVE 2

Deliver infrastructure that supports a safe, accessible and well-serviced community

Ongoing investment

The Richmond Valley is set for a massive investment in infrastructure over the next 20 years as we continue to rebuild our flood-damaged road networks, complete upgrades to community facilities and replace aging essential assets.

There will also be new infrastructure to build to meet the needs of our growing community, secure our water supply and unlock more housing. There will be major investment in replacing or upgrading aging essential assets, such as Sewage Treatment Plants.

To meet these challenges, we will rely heavily on support from National and State governments and Council will continue to advocate for further investment in our community.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Continue to develop the three villages cycleway project connecting Evans Head with Woodburn and Broadwater

Implement remaining actions from the Richmond Valley Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)

Continue to implement the Stan Payne Oval Master Plan

Complete repairs to Woodburn Evans Head Road and other flood-damaged roads and assets

Partner with State Government to upgrade and maintain key freight links, regional roads and tourist routes including the Evans Head-Broadwater and Evans Head-Woodburn roads

Provide a network of safe, well-constructed local roads, bridges, footpaths and cycleways

Complete Stage 2 of Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant

Support Rous Water's delivery of the Woodburn Groundwater Scheme, to provide improved water security for Evans Head, Woodburn and Broadwater

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.



OBJECTIVE 3**Plan for sustainable growth that is responsive to the regional context, our community and the environmental setting****Regional planning influences**

The North Coast Regional Plan 2041 (NCRP) sets a clear direction to provide new housing in existing centres and future urban release areas, and this is reflected in this Place Plan. This reinforces the provision of safe housing in these existing places that already provide important employment, community and commercial services, and social and community networks for residents. Supporting the NCRP, Council's Growth Management Strategy (GMS) seeks to guide the sustainable management of urban growth within the Local Government Area (LGA) and allows for the delivery of a range of residential and employment land which will meet the future demand of population growth and job creation.

The NCRP and GMS support delivering climate resilient development to ensure the region and its communities can withstand future disaster events and prepare for the impacts of climate change. A core direction of these place plans is to avoid new development in high risk areas prone to bushfire, flooding and coastal erosion.

The Northern Rivers has experienced unprecedented growth in recent years, with migration driving up demand for housing and jobs regionally. This growth will be focused in the larger regional centres, such as Casino, where there is existing infrastructure and unconstrained land for development.

Environmental constraints to future development

The existing urban growth area is strongly defined by a range of protected environmental areas and coastal hazard influences that prevent future expansion of the town. The majority of Evans Head is above regular flooding (0.2% + climate change 1% AEP and climate change 1 in 500 year event) with the exception of low land on the riverbanks, the beach foreshore and some localised drainage corridors. The caravan parks and the Iron Gates area fall within this flood prone area. A Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) would affect all areas except south Evans Head.

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.

An existing residential investigation area is located along Woodburn-Evans Head Road. This land is surrounded by national Park and is significantly constrained for development by high environmental and biodiversity values including wetlands and key habitats. The potential for residential growth on this land is highly inhibited and it will be removed as a future residential growth area.

In response to these constraints, the GMS advocates for sustainable growth within the existing urban area of Evans Head, subject to appropriate site and environmental constraints assessment.

Population growth

The population of Evans Head is forecast to increase from 2,907 people as per the 2021 Census to an estimated population of 3,422 people in 2041, or about 17% (medium series projection).

This translates to between 18 and 34 new residents per annum for the next 20 years, driven by natural growth as well as the continuing trend of migration from larger centres. To accommodate this number of new residents we will need between 10 and 20 new dwellings every year.

Housing demand and growth challenges

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a major demographic shift of people moving out of major centres such as Brisbane and Sydney to more rural coastal communities, such as Evans Head. Coupled with the housing shortage caused by the 2022 flood event, we are experiencing increased development pressures.

This presents significant challenges to our community such as higher property prices and rents as well as decreasing housing availability and affordability for young people, families and key workers. Tension also rises in the balance of housing availability for permanent residents and the stock of holiday properties which are the lifeblood of our local economy.

Looking ahead, Council is committed to sustainably delivering new homes to meet forecast population growth and support local jobs and services. With no opportunities to expand our town's urban area, we need to investigate a range of appropriate higher density living options, such as attached homes and apartments, as a greater proportion of our housing mix.

How old we are and how we live is important too. We are an aging population with the largest number households being "lone person" and "couple families without children" households. With these trends forecast to continue, we must rethink our housing mix to better meet the needs and lifestyles of these smaller households.

Our community's acceptance of this shift can be influenced by a wide range of personal values and concerns addressing our quality of life, township character, the impact of new development on existing housing, traffic and car parking. Council's approach will be to engage residents in decision-making and identify well-considered planning and development directions which ensure change is responsive to the Evans Head context and people. Community services and facilities, as well as our streets and parks, will be enhanced and aligned with the needs of a growing population. The local economy will be buoyed by a healthy tourism industry, but not at the expense of our lifestyles or the health of the natural environment.

Employment land demand

Regionally, new employment areas will be focused in the Northern River's larger towns. The Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct in Casino is an example of this investment. The proximity of Evans Head to other major centres, including Lismore, Ballina, Byron Bay and Grafton, means that we have access to a wide range of jobs and industrial services.

Locally, jobs will continue to be concentrated in tourism and hospitality, education, health and social services and retail rather than industrial activities. We have a small industrial area on the northern edge of town and additional land adjacent to the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome has been identified as an employment investigation area. This land has the capacity to accommodate industrial land uses, and is required to facilitate the ongoing use of the existing aerodrome subject to future conservation and heritage investigations.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a local housing study for Evans Head to inform the future Richmond Valley Housing Strategy

The strategy will set a framework for housing development in the Richmond Valley by assessing capacity, opportunities and constraints, identify housing supply gaps including housing diversity, identify the amount of housing required to address future needs and identify future infrastructure requirements.

Supporting this, a local housing study will investigate a range of opportunities to address forecast growth including:

- Demographic and population trends
- Existing housing assessment and future need
- Housing diversity and affordability
- Place-appropriate higher density housing types
- Supporting infrastructure and community upgrades

(also refer to Strategy 3 for actions addressing employment and local economy)

Maintain and support existing local employment activities and attract retail and commercial businesses which support the community and tourist economy

With the limited availability of land, no significant new employment land will be developed within the urban growth area.

To provide appropriate access to employment opportunities, the strategic focus will be:

- Ensure our community is connected and accessible to regional employment areas such as the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct
- Prepare a town centre master plan to maximise economic and employment opportunities
- Work with the owners of the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome site to explore employment opportunities which are in keeping with the site's heritage and conservation value
- Support sustainable growth of the population and the local tourism industry which are capable of generating a wide range of community, service and commercial employment opportunities

(also refer to Strategy 3 for actions addressing employment and local economy)

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

OBJECTIVE 4

Revitalise the town centre as the vibrant heart of Evans Head, servicing our community and elevating our reputation and appeal as a holiday destination

Role of the town centre

A much valued characteristic of NSW's coastal towns are their town centres and high streets. Many are popular destinations in their own right, possessing unique characters and qualities drawn from their township history, scale and coastal landscape setting. They are places that mix locals with visitors and are the vibrant centre of community and commercial activity.

Council's aspiration for Evans Head is to create an attractive, accessible and inclusive town centre which celebrates our best attributes and enhances community health and prosperity. Our goals are to:

- Strengthen its regional identity, role and function as a place for investment and business
- Sustainably address forecast population growth, offering a range of new housing choices to suit the long term needs of our community
- Create a social and cultural township heart
- Support a prosperous and more diverse tourism economy

The Evans Head commercial area already has all the ingredients to revitalise its role and function as a vibrant town centre. Focused on Oak Street and Woodburn Street, the centre has many positive attributes to build upon, including:

- The traditional high street form and character of Oak Street
- Good regional connectivity via Woodburn Street and the opportunity to create an enhanced Evans Head arrival experience
- Clusters of community and recreation activities which can be enhanced as identifiable and integrated precincts
- Opportunities to introduce higher density living and mixed use buildings responsive to the existing urban environment
- A range of community facilities, clubs and recreation spaces surrounding the centre which can be linked as a network of connected entertainment and leisure destinations
- Wide streets offering opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment and introduce landscape and shade trees
- Broad opportunities to improved walking and cycling connections through the streets and open spaces

Ideas and opportunities which can build upon these strengths are identified in the Town Centre Plan opposite (Figure 5).

The buildings and public realm

To achieve our goals, the overall scale and density of development in the centre will need to increase in the future, but this will be balanced against the relaxed regional coastal township character valued by the community. Supporting this transformation will require us to reconsider the function and design of the buildings, streets and public spaces.

The town centre will deliver a range of high quality residential, mixed use and commercial buildings. New buildings will strike the right balance between intensifying development and scale that is responsive to the Evans Head context. A broad range of building types will deliver a more urban character but embody our lifestyles, respond to our climate and draw character from the coastal landscape setting.

Streets in town centres aren't just for cars. People focused streets inspire community interaction and retail trade, and invite visitors to stay and explore. The centre's street network will need to address these roles as well as maintaining a function traffic network and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use.

Enjoying the outdoors is part of day-to-day life in Evans Head. Building on existing open spaces and future urban renewal opportunities, the centre's parks and urban places should offer something for everybody - culture, colour, nature and activity. They will reinvigorate business, cultural and community life in the centre, prioritise space for people over cars and reconnect the centre with the waterfront.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a Town Centre Concept Master Plan, in consultation with the community

The Master Plan should further develop and consider the Key Place Plan Directions and Ideas (see opposite), addressing the following elements:

- Town centre role, character and image
- Centre structure and land use
- Local economy and tourism
- Greater housing diversity
- Movement networks - traffic, public transport and walking and cycling
- Car parking
- Building scale, form and character
- Public space - landscape character, streetscapes, parks and environmental open spaces
- Community facilities and social wellbeing
- Infrastructure

This study could form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure and community objectives to guide the sustainable growth of Evans Head.

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions. Also see Strategy 3 and 4 Place Plan actions.

KEY PLACE PLAN DIRECTIONS AND IDEAS

- 1 Generally, expand and diversify retail, commercial, community and accommodation activities across the town centre area through increased development intensity that sensitivity integrates and transitions to surrounding areas. This will include:
 - Shops for daily grocery needs as well as tourism-related retail
 - Food and beverage businesses including bars, restaurants and takeaways
 - Local commercial services and activities such as hair dressers and real estate agents
 - Tourist and recreation related activities such as information centres and commercial tourism operators
 - Tourist accommodation such as motels, boutique hotels and short-stay apartments(also see Strategy 4)
- 2 Reinforce the function and character of Oak Street as a traditional high street, activated with a range of retail shopping and food and beverage businesses
- 3 Enhance Woodburn Street as a town arrival corridor and focus of larger scale commercial businesses and tourist accommodation
- 4 Develop the existing cluster of community and government services (School Lane and Woodburn Street) as an integrated community services precinct
- 5 Reinforce and enhance the existing cluster of community and recreation facilities - recreation hall, museum, Cribb Reserve, playground, river beach and kiosk - as an integrated community recreation precinct. Investigate the long term relocation of the ambulance to expand this area
- 6 Increase development densities surrounding the town centre including a range of housing and apartment options as well as short-stay accommodation which supports a diversified tourism market (also see Strategy 4)
- 7 On decommissioning, re-purpose the temporary housing village for additional holiday park activities
- 8 Enhance and upgrade all streetscapes within the town centre as part of a coordinated master plan which addresses future traffic and car parking, increased tree planting and landscape, pedestrian safety and convenience, footpath furnishings and integrated urban art opportunities
- 9 Upgrade walking and cycling networks, establishing strong connections to surrounding recreation and community destinations and to residential areas north and south
- 10 Enhance McDonald Place as a pedestrian-friendly connection between the town centre and riverfront
- 11 Investigate extending the E1 Local Centre zoning across Wattle Street to frame the intersection with town centre activities and provide potential for more mixed commercial uses in the future

FIGURE 5:
EVANS HEAD TOWN CENTRE PLAN

LEGEND

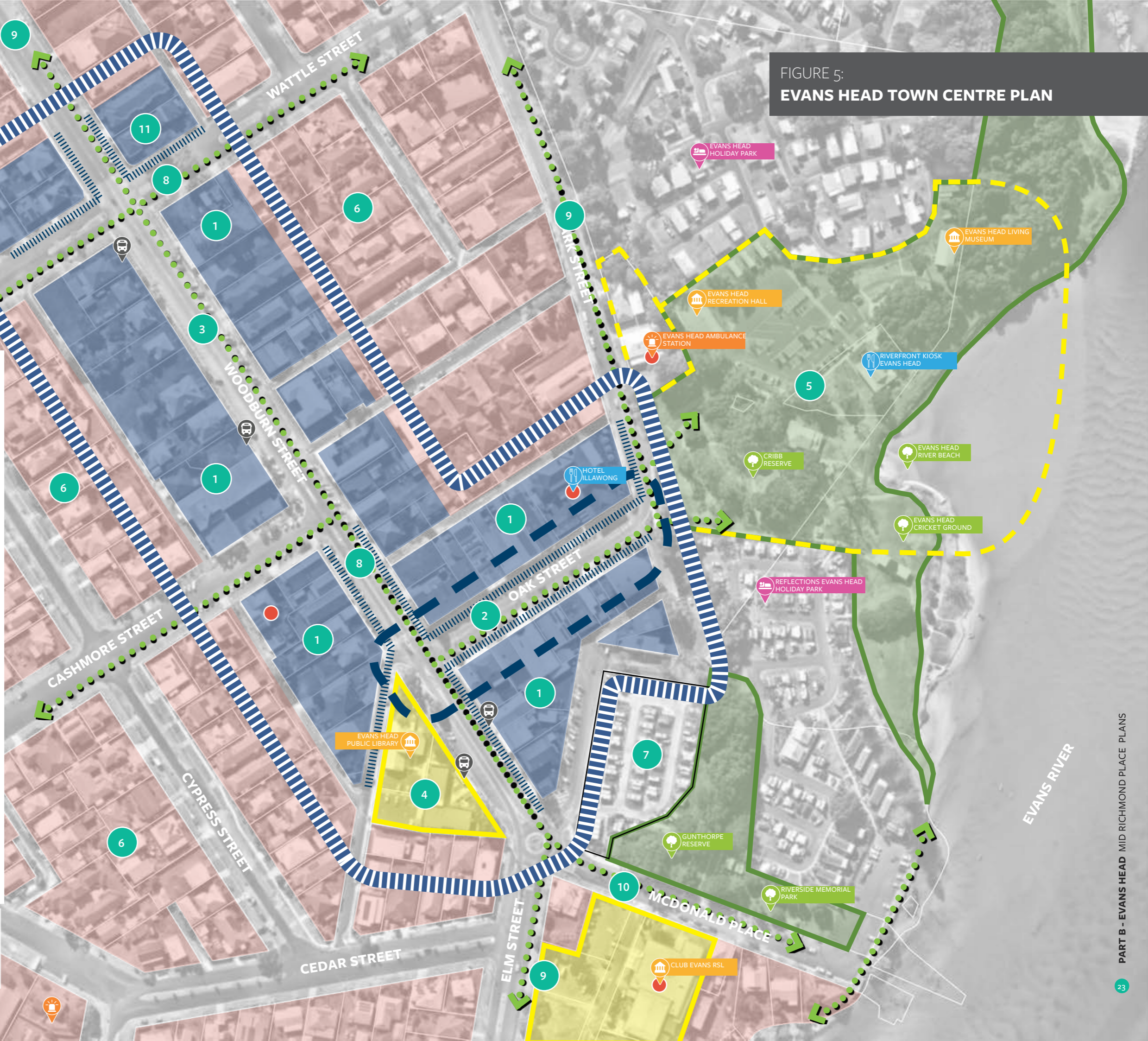
Town places and activities:

- Heritage buildings
- Key park and recreational facilities
- Key community uses
- Education facility
- Hospitality offerings
- Short-term accommodation
- Bus stop

Opportunities:

- High street precinct
- Town centre streets highly activated by retail and food and beverage businesses
- Mixed retail, commercial, residential and tourist accommodation
- High-medium density mix of residential and tourist accommodation development
- Enhanced green space and parks
- Community services precinct
- Community recreation precinct
- Future expansion of holiday park activities
- Enhanced walking and cycling connections

Purpose and clarification of plan:
This plan is conceptual only and illustrates Place Plan ideas and planning directions which can support sustainable long term growth. There is no intent to remove or change the use of existing buildings or properties. The town centre area will be subject to future detailed master planning and consultation with the community.



LIVING WITH THE LANDSCAPE

Natural Environment

OBJECTIVE 1

Protect the environmental riches which make this place special

Valuing our natural and cultural attributes

People love living in Evans Head because of its unique environmental characteristics and its beachside village feel. There are not many other places along the Eastern seaboard of Australia which are located on an open coast beach beside a calm and swimmable river estuary which is surrounded by National Park and environmental reserves that hold enormous importance to local Indigenous groups.

The natural environment has therefore influenced and shaped the settlement form of Evans Head, maintaining a compact township which hugs the coast and Evans River estuary. It will continue to do so into the future – and in fact, the valuing and protection of the environmental characteristics which have shaped the town will likely be even more important over time. Places sacred to the Bundjalung Nation, such as Dirawong Reserve (Goanna Headland) need strong landscape protection and careful management for their natural and cultural importance.

Development pressures and a changing climate could both influence the environmental values which make this place special. Threatened species such as the critically endangered beach stone curlew share the tidal flats of the Evans River with human holidaymakers¹. Ensuring that these endangered species are not further threatened, and broader biodiversity maintained on both water and land around Evans Head will be critical to keeping the town's connection to nature secure.

Water quality is both a prime indicator of environmental health, and a critical aspect of the Evans Head lifestyle and tourism economy. Continued efforts by State agencies to monitor water quality will be ever more important into the future – particularly in supporting the role of Evans Head as a regionally-important tourist location.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Support indigenous land management practices

Investigate how indigenous land management practices can support healthy Country, protect cultural traditions, and help reduce impacts from bush fire on the town

Support local Landcare and environmental groups

Continue support for groups such as Evans River and Coastal Landcare, and the Evans School Ecowarriors Group in carrying out their conservation and environmental projects

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

OBJECTIVE 2

Grow sensitively to the changing risks

Understanding natural hazard risk

As the coastal landscape, river and topography are the overwhelming drivers of Evans Head's public realm character, this means that much of the public space in town (and particularly that valued by tourists and residents alike) is subject to natural hazard 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% AEP (plus climate change) 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 Drive and further west out of town at Doonbah along the Woodburn Evans Head Road.

According to the 2023 BMT flood 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 (plus climate change) 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.

While the town is nestled in the beauty and uniqueness of both the Broadwater and Bunjalung National Parks and other heavily vegetated landholdings, this natural landscape also can generate significant bush fire risk that the community has lived experience of in recent years through the Black Summer bush fires of 2019/2020.

Evans Head is arguably the locality within Mid Richmond of greatest concern from a bushfire perspective. Its urban area is substantially surrounded by Category 1 vegetation of BFPL (the highest hazard categorisation), 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. Future development of the town would benefit from being guided by a Bush Fire Strategic Study undertaken in accordance with Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019, the NSW Rural Fire Service guide for councils, planners, fire authorities and developers.

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 such as the public spaces along both sides of the Evans River. 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 sections of Ocean Drive over the bridge on the southern side of the River may also be inundated by sea level rise.

Greenfield expansion beyond the existing town area will therefore be challenging given these natural hazard risks surrounding the town.

This means it is critical that future urban growth of the town is managed sensitively, both in terms of private development and public realm improvements. More natural hazard risk assessment information is needed to fully understand the potential and likely impacts flooding, coastal and bush fire hazards on the town. Because of this likely greenfield growth limitation, in order to accommodate more population over time in town, a resilient growth approach is likely to be increased density of development within the town centre if evacuation assessment supports this – so the town can continue to grow, but in a location safe from natural hazard risk.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a bush fire strategic study to inform future Local Environmental Plan updates

Seek funding to undertake a Bush fire strategic study in accordance with Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019. This could include a settlement scale bush fire mitigation plan grounded in cultural burning and management techniques, and a bush fire evacuation assessment to inform future growth planning

Completion of the Flood Risk Management Plan

Prioritise the delivery of the Richmond Valley LGA Flood Risk Management Plan and incorporate its findings and recommendations into planning controls, and flood mitigation activities around the villages and towns

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

OBJECTIVE 3

Increase the central role Evans Head plays in the region's disaster resilience

Elevating our regional role

During the 2022 flooding events, Evans Head became a central place of refuge and recovery for many of the region's residents during and immediately following the floods. Residents from surrounding areas such as Woodburn, Doonbah, Broadwater and further afield sought shelter with family or friends in, or were evacuated to, Evans Head.

It played this role given much of the town is largely immune to more extreme flooding events like the 2022 event given its topography, and it has a wide range of community and retail services which are needed to support that displaced population when events occur.

In line with its central role within the network of centres in the Mid-Richmond from an economic and social perspective, there is also the opportunity for Evans Head to act as a central focus for disaster event coordination and relief and recovery activities for future flooding or bush fire events.

By recognising this important opportunity, Evans Head could attract renewed investment in the town centre – this growth could be anchored by the development of a multi-purpose facility. This multi-purpose facility could normally operate as a library and community hall space, but during an event like a flood it could also perform the function of a coordination centre for Council, Police and SES operations, while also offering space for refuge for displaced residents if needed. This multi-purpose facility could therefore act to anticipate and accommodate the future relief and recovery needs of displaced residents in a proper manner, and anchor more private investment in the town centre in line with broader town centre upgrade plans for the town.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Examine disaster response facilities

Investigate the feasibility of a multi-purpose function facility in town which can act as a disaster coordination centre and place of refuge for future hazard events – through State or Federal disaster funding

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

GROWING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Economic Environment

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen regional relationships and our role within the network of Mid Richmond towns and villages

Regional connections and relationships

Evans Head is part of a wider Northern Rivers economy which includes the towns and villages of the Mid Richmond as well as the larger surrounding centres of Casino, Ballina, Lismore and beyond. Our region reflects extensive social and economic connections and relationships across our network local communities, in the same way any large metropolitan city functions.

The scale of business and industrial activity in Evans Head only creates demand for a relatively small local workforce and the majority of our working age residents travel further afield for their jobs. We currently generate 770 jobs locally, which are concentrated in tourism and hospitality, education and training, health and social services and retail. This number is significantly less than the 1,155 people who reported as being in the work force in the last census (2021 Census, ABS).

This is a regional employment trait. Richmond Valley's commuting patterns reveal just 33% of our regional work force working where they live. So, along with our neighbouring villages and towns, we share a highly mobile labour market.

Additionally, we depend on our larger regional centres for a wide range of essential and discretionary goods and services. Our permanent population size doesn't generate enough demand for major retail businesses or service providers to be based locally, such as a full-line supermarket or specialised health services. Travel to Ballina, Casino, Lismore and other regional destinations is a weekly, even daily, necessity for most of our community.

Clearly, we are reliant on convenient and safe connectivity to the bigger centres to support our lifestyles and wellbeing. With the populations of Evans Head and greater Richmond Valley forecast to experience continued growth, investment in high quality transport connections will benefit us and our regional economy.

Our role in the regional network

Tourism is our main contribution to the regional economy. We have a well-established local industry drawing on our spectacular scenic qualities, access to nature and pristine beaches. The boat harbour and ramp, opening safe access to both river and sea, and aviation museum add to our unique offer for visitors.

In addition to these strengths, we are part of a regional network of connected destinations only a short drive away. Through coordinated promotion and tourism information services, this network is capable of retaining tourists within the Northern Rivers longer with diverse range of rural, cultural, agri-tourism and nature-based experiences. Supporting this regional offer will continue to have benefits for Evans Head.

We are also part of an actively connected regional community that participates in civic events, markets, sporting activities, social gatherings and volunteer programs. Offering the places and venues which support these activities can inject the energy into our local economy, supporting local jobs and a broader range of services than our local population can otherwise support.

OBJECTIVE 2

Grow and diversify the local tourism opportunities

Growing and diversifying local tourism

Traditionally, we have a strong seasonal pattern to our local tourism industry and we have appealed to a relatively narrow range of tourists, namely campers, caravaners and budget family vacationers. This is reflected in our limited variety of tourism accommodation types which includes our expansive riverfront camping and caravaning parks, motels and a stock of holiday homes.

Tourism will remain as a core local industry and source of local jobs to support our growing population. To remain competitive in the growing Northern Rivers tourism market, we need to continue to invest in our tourism infrastructure - short-stay accommodation, recreation assets and tourist-related businesses - while protecting the coastal township qualities that draw visitors here.

A key opportunity to increase overall visitor numbers, and reduce the seasonal nature of our local industry, is to appeal to a wider range of visitor types than we have traditionally attracted. This can be supported by diversifying the choice of short-stay accommodation with a broader mix of apartments and boutique hotels as well as continued investment in high quality caravan and camping experiences.

Our parks, open spaces and recreation infrastructure - such as beach access, nature trails, playgrounds, boating facilities and the aerodrome - can be enhanced to support a more diverse visitor market while also benefiting our growing number of residents.

OBJECTIVE 3

Increase local jobs and services through sustainable growth

Retaining our talent and attracting young workers

While there are distinctive lifestyle advantages to living in smaller regional towns, there are also inherent challenges in terms of jobs and access to goods and services locally. The size of our community doesn't sustain the employment opportunities or the range of essential and discretionary retail, commercial and service providers that residents of the larger centres enjoy.

Regionally, our primary and manufacturing industries are forecast to remain the Valley's engines of growth. But, there has also been noticeably more workers being employed in population-serving industries which meet the needs of our growing communities. In Evans Head, our unemployment rate has come down significantly over time, from 9.5 per cent in 2006, to 4.5 per cent in 2021. While most local jobs are still concentrated in tourism and hospitality, we have seen increasing numbers of our transient and local work force employed in education and training, health care and social assistance and construction sectors.

This trend will continue as our local population grows. Of particular note regarding employment of people living in Evans Head is the importance of publicly funded sectors such as education, health, aged care, and social services.

Evans Head will continue to attract new residents who are drawn to the coastal location and seek more balanced or relaxed lifestyles. More, and a greater diversity of housing is required to support them as well as improved access to local goods and services. This growth will increase and diversify local employment opportunities and underpin the health of our local construction industry.

Importantly, we can leverage this to attract and retain talented workers and essential professionals and offer vocational opportunities for young people who wish stay in Evans Head.

Creating the environment for investment

Looking to a strategic planning timeframe of 20 years, Evans Head will require a balanced mix of uses and activities - retail, commercial services, professional services, short term accommodation and more diverse housing options. With constraints to expansion of the town's urban area, we need to develop land efficiently and ensure we are encouraging the highest and best use of land.

A comprehensive master plan is required to guide this growth in a manner that is sensitive to community values, township character and health of the environment.

The plan will need to support the delivery of new higher density housing options as well as mixed use development in the town centre which can accommodate a range of commercial, community and tourism accommodation activities. Coordinated improvements to transport infrastructure, recreation facilities and community services will be required to enable this change.

A key goal of the master plan will be to attract investment to Evans Head by providing certainty for private sector developers and public sector entities who will be involved in change. The plan should establish a clear vision for Evans Head's future supported by a range of strategies and commitments addressing the local economy, urban quality, the environment and social wellbeing of residents.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a local tourism study for Evans Head, identifying opportunities to grow and diversify the tourism economy

This study is to inform updates to the Richmond Valley Tourism Development Plan, identify Evans Head's natural assets, existing tourism and recreation infrastructure and potential opportunities which can deliver competitive advantages as a destination, addressing:

- Coordination with regional tourism strategies and identification of new markets
- Enhancement of tourism infrastructure including more diverse visitor accommodation, commercial tourism operators and recreation facilities
- Public realm and park enhancements to provide places and venues for community events, markets and regional sports
- Specific opportunities such as the aerodrome museum, expansion of river-based activities and cultural tourism associated with the significance of the region to Aboriginal communities

Continue to advocate for government investment to support economic recovery and regional transport infrastructure upgrades

Secured grant funding and financial support for the Richmond Valley through advocacy to all levels of government.

Engage NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to advocate for improved visitor facilities within Richmond Valley

Prepare an economic study for Evans Head and the surrounding villages

This strategy would inform Council's broader Economic Development Strategy and establish an economic vision for Evans Head, Woodburn and Broadwater supported by a range of strategies and commitments addressing:

- Sustainable population growth
- Local economy and employment
- Retail and service industries
- Investment attraction
- Community need and wellbeing

This study could form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure and community objectives to guide the sustainable growth of Evans Head.

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC SPACES THAT EMBRACE OUR COASTAL LIFESTYLE

Built Environment and Public Spaces

OBJECTIVE 1

Promote our regional image and protect our coastal township character

Reinforcing our coastal town identity

Our goal is to encourage buildings that embody our coastal town charm, outdoor lifestyles, climate and ecology while contributing to our local economy and changing household needs and preferences.

Supporting our growing population, new buildings will strike the right balance between increasing development density, building scale and architectural design that is responsive to the Evans Head context. Reinforcing the existing town form, the highest development intensity will be focused in and around the town centre and generally transition down in scale to the north of the urban area.

An upward shift in building scale and living densities is best achieved by a broad range of high quality mixed use, residential and commercial building types that can sensitively blend with our existing buildings and open spaces.

Key objectives to guide high quality, place-responsive buildings for Evans Head include:

- Set standards in building quality and design that underpin our regional image and protect local character
- Contribute to our local economy with a range of building types which achieve a critical mass of businesses and services in a compact, high quality town centre environment
- Diversify the tourism economy with buildings which deliver new accommodation, recreation and entertainment opportunities
- Offer greater housing choice to suit a wider range of household, types, sizes and budgets
- Ensure building siting, form and scale is responsive to its location and surrounding development

- Ensure all buildings appropriately address streets and open spaces in a manner which establishes attractive visual relationships and maximises surveillance of public areas to support public safety
- Elevate building design quality drawing on coastal building characters and climate responsive architecture
- Integrate generous landscape within private lots and building design to complement Evans Head's natural setting
- Ensure vehicle access, permanent and visitor parking and services are well-planned and avoid impact on surrounding buildings and streets

Sustainable, resilient buildings

Evans Head rests within a sensitive coastal ecology and our community place high value on the health of the natural environment. Our buildings can contribute to a more sustainable future by embedding environmental and resilience responses into our building design, including:

- Resource efficient buildings
 - Sustainable materials and building practices
 - Building form, orientation and articulation which promotes passive design principles that support low energy demand
 - Managing the future impacts of extreme heat and rainfall
- This can be achieved by ensuring our building design requirements meeting best practice standards for sustainable design and are aligned with State policies. We can also work in partnership with the local development industry to provide information and incentives to deliver energy efficient "green" buildings and developments.

OBJECTIVE 2

Deliver high quality buildings that contribute to the health of our community and economy

Housing choices to suit a range of household types

A range of housing types are required to meet the needs of our growing population and changing household sizes. Importantly, we need more housing to alleviate the impact that increasing buyer and rental demand is having on the availability and affordability of housing.

Half of the dwellings in Evans Head are detached houses. Yet we have an aging population and the majority of our homes are single and two-person households. We also need to provide affordable living options to attract essential workers and secure a future for our younger singles and families.

As a greater proportion of our housing mix, we need to introduce a range of higher density living options such as duplexes, attached homes and residential flats or apartments. These are appropriately located with the urban area through Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) controls which identify appropriate locations for low, low-medium and high-medium density residential development.

There are also opportunities to deliver apartments in the town centre as part of mixed use buildings which maintain ground level retail and commercial floorspace. These developments can provide flexible options for permanent and short-stay accommodation and offer our residents the choice to live in a more vibrant urban setting with high levels of access to amenities.

Town centre buildings and tourism accommodation

With a renewed focus on architectural excellence, town centre buildings can contribute towards prosperous business and tourism economies, generate vibrant street life and deliver new urban living choices.

Encouraging a greater intensity and scale of town centre development can support a critical mass of activity capable of attracting investment, business and a broader visitor profile. This requires high quality buildings capable of delivering a mix of uses, including:

- Mixed use retail, commercial and apartment buildings in Oak Street that stimulate vibrant street activity with shopping, cafes, bars and restaurants
- A range of commercial and apartment buildings in Woodburn Street to suit permanent and short-stay living, larger format retail and commercial business and professional office space
- A range of short term accommodation types including short-stay apartments and boutique hotels across the town centre and in framing blocks
- Buildings to suit a range of health and support services in the community services precinct

Unlocking this potential requires us to incentivise private sector led urban renewal of the town centre as well as attract public sector investment. High quality infrastructure, streets and open spaces, as well as development approval pathways that offer certainty for developers, are essential to enable this process.

These elements can be addressed through the development of master plan for Evans Head and the town centre. The plan can investigate and coordinate a wide range of economic, built form, infrastructure, open space and community objectives and actions that support a more sustainable future.



PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Review the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and DCP to incorporate the key directions and ideas identified for the town centre and residential areas

This review should be informed by an assessment of the existing urban environment and an analysis of a range of contemporary built form guidelines and planning scheme policies from similar contexts, addressing:

- Alignment with demographic and household forecasts
- Place-appropriate low-medium to medium high housing typologies
- Mixed-use town centre and civic buildings
- Market influences and development feasibility
- Detailed design and planning provisions (height, form, access, parking, landscape, etc)
- NSW coastal architectural character
- Sustainability and resilience to climate change

This study could form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure and community objectives to guide the sustainable growth of Evans Head.

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

OBJECTIVE 3

Supercharge the town centre as a destination

Streets for people

Streets in town centres aren't just for cars. People focused streets inspire community interaction and retail trade, and invite visitors to stay and explore. Street function in the town centre must be rebalanced to ensure we have a safe, attractive town heart which supports a variety of retail, event, business and tourism activities.

Streetscape improvements for Oak Street and Woodburn Street can support footpath dining and high quality shopping and business environments. Strengthened active and visual connections to the waterfront can engage the river and parkland as part of the town centre experience.

Oak street also has the potential to be a temporary event space, hosting festivals or markets through temporary closures. This can be explored and supported through future streetscape design and engagement with local businesses.

KEY PLACE PLAN DIRECTIONS AND IDEAS

The Town Centre

1 Tourism and entertainment precinct

This precinct will concentrate tourism, entertainment and short-stay accommodation in mixed use buildings up to 4-storeys. These buildings will provide ground level shopping, cafes, bars and entertainment uses that activate Oak and Woodburn Street frontages.

2 Woodburn Street

This corridor will comprise high quality mixed use buildings up to 4-storeys providing a mix of retail, commercial, and accommodation activities, including:

- Tourism activities and short-stay accommodation
- A range of retail and commercial activities required to service the local community
- Residential apartments in mixed use buildings where ground levels are commercial use
- Larger format commercial uses requiring greater site area and high levels of access

Extension of the existing E1 Local Centre zoning across Wattle Street should be investigated to frame the intersection with town centre activities and provide potential for more mixed commercial uses.

3 Civic and community precinct

This area will consolidate community service activities in an identifiable, integrated civic precinct where building design and access can be tailored to the needs of service providers and visitors.

4 Key development opportunity sites

Corner sites within the town centre are highly visible and present higher development potential with greater street frontage offering more flexibility to provide active street frontage, access and services. Building quality and scale should be maximised on these sites by:

- Encouraging amalgamation of lots to deliver a greater scale of mixed use development
- Investigating opportunities to incentivise higher quality buildings with bonuses in height or floorspace where design excellence is achieved and community benefit can be demonstrated

Residential Areas

5 Town centre frame residential (high-medium density residential)

The existing high-medium residential area surrounding the town centre will be retained and allow for a range of high quality attached housing, residential flat buildings and apartment buildings suitable for permanent living or short stay accommodation. A review of DCP controls should investigate:

- Height limits to allow 3-storey buildings
- Maximising floorspace on sites combined with higher requirements for integrated landscape
- Use of rooftops for private communal space and landscape
- On corner sites and sites fronting open space or the river, investigating opportunities to incentivise higher quality buildings with bonuses in height or floorspace where design excellence is achieved and community benefit can be demonstrated

6 Low-medium density residential

The existing low-medium residential area will be retained and allow for a range of high quality dual occupancy, attached housing intermixed with detached dwellings

7 Riverfront low-medium density residential

This area is flood impacted and subject to the future impacts of climate change. Low-medium density development will be required to demonstrate resilient design responses

8 Beachfront precinct

Current DCP and LEP provisions should be reviewed with opportunities investigated for a change to high-medium density residential in response to its high amenity location, high levels of access and suitability for tourism accommodation

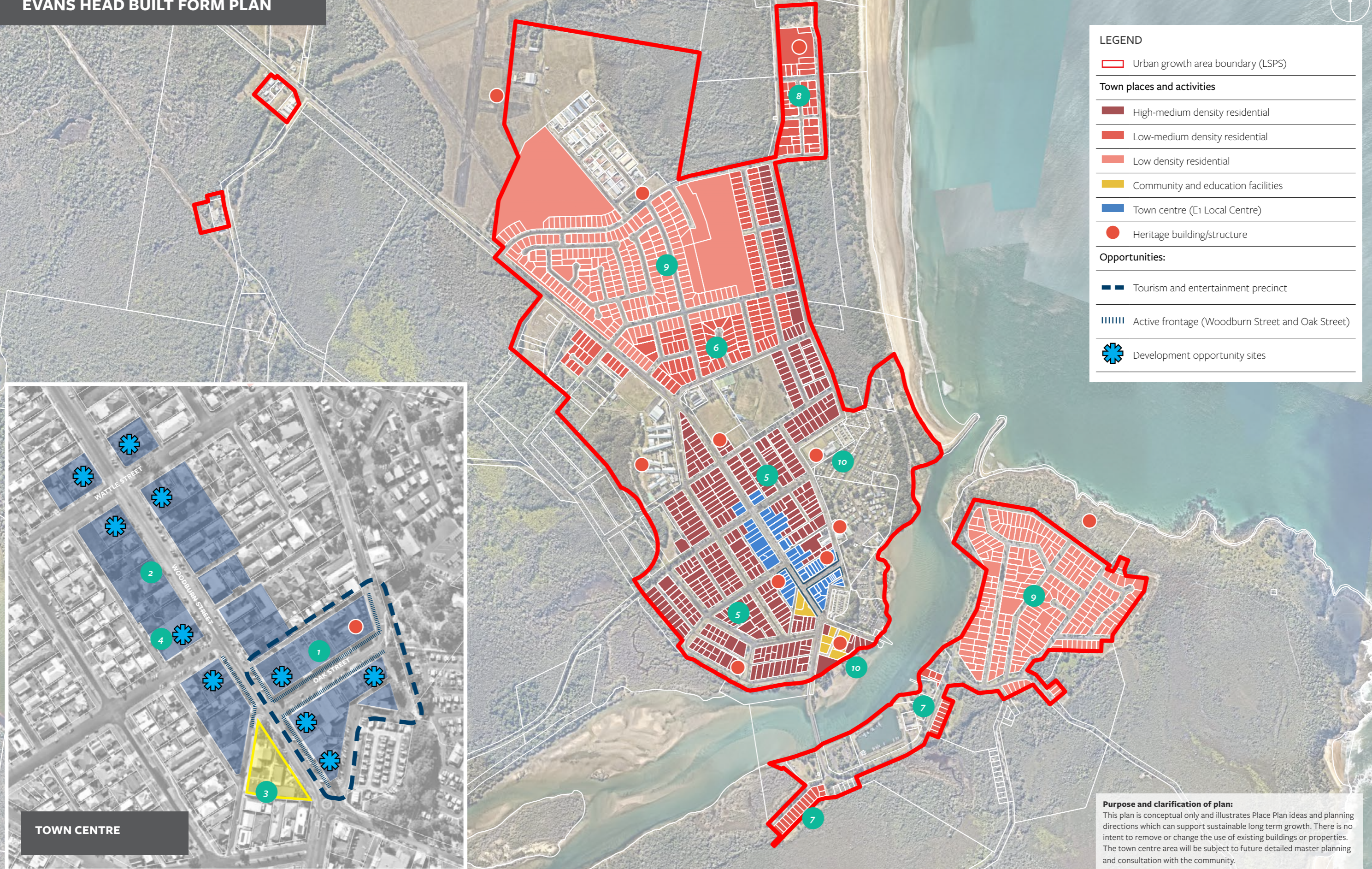
9 Low density residential

These existing low density residential areas will be retained. However, current DCP and LEP provisions should be reviewed for opportunities to encourage a larger proportion of dual occupancy and attached housing of a form and scale consistent with the lower density character of the area

10 Heritage buildings

Heritage buildings, including the RSL, bowling club and Illawong Hotel which are major community and tourism assets, will be protected and future development will be required to respond appropriately to the visual and functional qualities of these buildings

FIGURE 6:
EVANS HEAD BUILT FORM PLAN



LEGEND

- Urban growth area boundary (LSPS)

Town places and activities

- High-medium density residential
- Low-medium density residential
- Low density residential
- Community and education facilities
- Town centre (E1 Local Centre)
- Heritage building/structure

Opportunities:

- Tourism and entertainment precinct
- Active frontage (Woodburn Street and Oak Street)
- ✦ Development opportunity sites



TOWN CENTRE

Purpose and clarification of plan:
This plan is conceptual only and illustrates Place Plan ideas and planning directions which can support sustainable long term growth. There is no intent to remove or change the use of existing buildings or properties. The town centre area will be subject to future detailed master planning and consultation with the community.

OBJECTIVE 4

Create a public realm of attractive, functional streets and open spaces that are welcoming, safe and distinctively Evans Head in character

Celebrate our coastal setting and outdoor lifestyles

Evans Head's relaxed lifestyle, coastal and riverfront setting and enviable climate define its character and its attractiveness for residents and visitors alike. Our aspiration is to create a public realm of attractive, functional streets and open spaces that are welcoming, safe and distinctively Evans Head in character. They will reinvigorate business, cultural and community life in the town centre, provide a wide range of recreation opportunities and enhance walking and cycling convenience as well as experience.

Building on our best attributes - a climate that encourages outdoor living, wide streets, sports facilities and beach, river and headland parkland - our town's public spaces will need to cater for a growing population and greater visitors numbers. This will require us to investigate and prioritise improvements in recreation infrastructure, access, car parking and safety to suit the needs of residents and tourists.

Our streets and open spaces should be welcoming and accessible for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. The design of parks and streets, and the activities and opportunities they offer, should reflect our desire to be an inclusive, safe and friendly regional community.

Our town centre, open spaces and surrounding national parks and nature reserves have a key role to play in our tourism economy by adding a more diverse layering of cultural, recreational and nature-based activities for holiday-makers. The design of our streetscapes and open spaces as well as choice of trees and planting offer the chance to celebrate, educate and simply delight in Evans Head's natural ambiance.

Given the cultural importance of the wider Evans Head area to Aboriginal communities, there are opportunities to identify and implement meaningful expressions of indigenous peoples relationships with the land and water through public realm design, place stewardship and ongoing participation in design decision making.

Enhanced walking and cycling experiences

Strengthen walking and cycling connections to and between attractions and destinations will encourage people to engage and explore our town and its unrivaled nature environment.

Safe, high quality walking and cycling infrastructure is an essential part of encouraging our community to lead active, outdoor lifestyles and enhancing visitor experiences. Ongoing investment in upgrades will prioritise key streets and open spaces which connect key community and recreation destinations.

Sustainable design showcasing our environmental values

Embedding environmental sustainability in public open space and recreation infrastructure will demonstrate responsible custodianship of the land, water, air and built environment by protecting, preserving and enhancing the Northern Rivers' natural qualities.

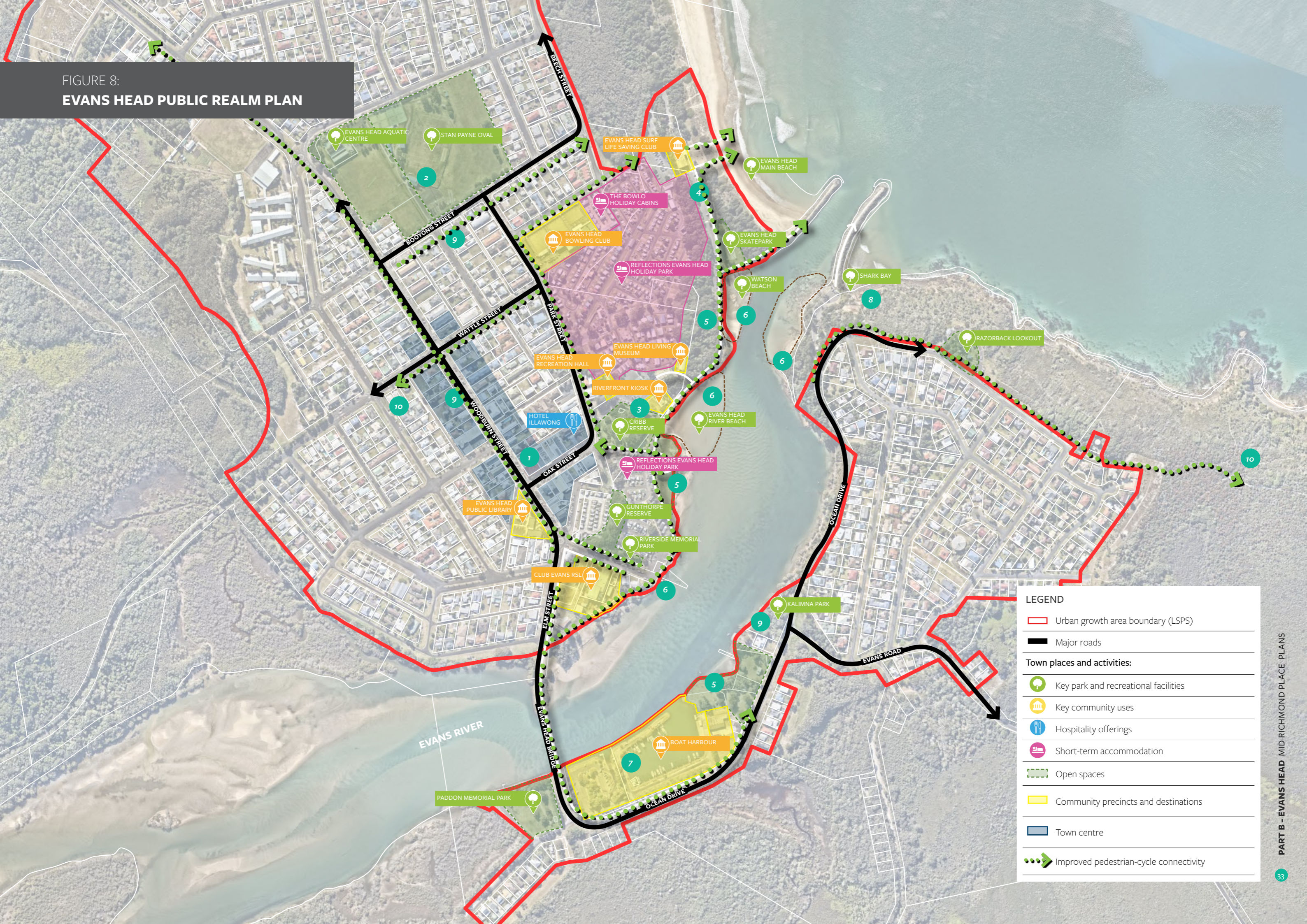
Investment in 'green' infrastructure and design solutions which proactively address sustainable practices and the impacts of extreme weather events will place us in the best and most resilient position to adapt and thrive in the face of climate challenges.

KEY PLACE PLAN DIRECTIONS AND IDEAS

- 1 Town centre streetscape revitalisation**
Prepare and implement a comprehensive streetscape Improvement strategy for Oak and Woodburn Streets to support active retail and dining streets and a high quality business environment. Reinforce connections to the river
- 2 Sports precinct**
Review future community needs for sports and organised recreation at Stan Payne Oval and the aquatic centre and plan for long term upgrades to maximise precinct function
- 3 Community recreation precinct**
Reinforce and enhance the existing cluster of community and recreation facilities as an integrated community recreation precinct.
- 4 Beach precinct**
Enhance SLSC access and public interface opportunities. Manage car parking and access to the beach to protect the character and environmental quality of the area, particularly addressing seasonal peaks
- 5 Riverside Open Space**
Enhance the riverside precincts as a connected network of diverse recreation experiences from the surf club to Razorback Lookout. Integrate holiday parks to improve interfaces and visual relationships
- 6 Diversify river engagement and activity**
Review existing river-focused infrastructure and prepare a river activation strategy that enhanced existing places and spaces and delivers a broad range of boating, watercraft and swimming opportunities

- 7 Enhance the boat harbour and associated facilities**
Upgrade the harbour to encourage a wide range of commercial fishing and tour boat operations and enhance the fish co-op as a commercial tourism destination. Ensure public boat ramps and parking are safe and of a high quality
- 8 Shark Bay and headland**
Enhance river access. Improve connection to the town centre with improved walking and cycling paths
- 9 Pedestrian-cycle network upgrades**
Connect the entire town with a network of high quality pedestrian-cycle paths and trails which:
 - Connect residential areas to the beach, school, sports precinct, town centre and community recreation precinct
 - Provide enjoyable visitor experiences engaging the beach, river and headland
 - Link with the broader network of environmental trails and experiences
- 10 National Parks and environmental experiences**
Integrate with surrounding National Parks and environmental experiences with improved signage and visitor information

FIGURE 8:
EVANS HEAD PUBLIC REALM PLAN



LEGEND

- Urban growth area boundary (LSPS)
- Major roads
- Town places and activities:**
- 🌳 Key park and recreational facilities
- 🏠 Key community uses
- 🍷 Hospitality offerings
- 🏠 Short-term accommodation
- Open spaces
- Community precincts and destinations
- Town centre
- ➡ Improved pedestrian-cycle connectivity

OBJECTIVE 5**Create a connected network of great places and experiences****Enhancing place character and quality**

Enjoying the outdoors is part of day-to-day life in Evans Head. Building on existing open spaces and future urban renewal opportunities, the Evans Head's parks, streets and active movement networks should offer something for everybody - culture, colour, nature, activity and connection.

Across the whole urban area, there are a wide range of opportunities to enhance the character and function of the public realm, including:

- Enhance existing park, recreation facilities and lookout
- Identifying a range of spaces for a variety of events and community gatherings
- Review future community needs for sports and organised recreation at Stan Payne Oval and the aquatic centre
- Deliver a comprehensive walking and cycling network which supports residents and visitors
- Diversifying on-water recreation opportunities and water access
- Improve beach access and parking
- Protect the coastal foredune zone and manage beach access
- Introduce wayfinding and signage upgrades which support visitor experiences
- Enhancement and integration of holiday parks with surrounding open space
- Specific responses for the harbour and aerodrome to improve arrival and visitor experiences
- Connect to regional environmental experiences and trails

Figure 7, (page over) identifies a wide range of opportunities to enhance the character and function of the public realm.

Creating a network place-based precincts

Evans Head boasts a diverse network of open spaces and activity hubs which deserve consideration as character places and recreation destinations in their own right. Our best chance to realise the full potential of these destinations is to understand the role, qualities and opportunities each place offers as well as how they complement each other as a connected network of experiences and activities.

A coordinated, precinct approach to the long term planning and design of our public realm ensures we:

- Reinforce place character and protect our rich diversity of experiences
- Offer a wide range of recreation activities to suit residents and visitors of a varying of ages, abilities and tastes
- Coordinate with broader infrastructure planning programs such as street network upgrades
- Prioritise and stage improvements as a series of coordinated projects and publicly funded investment opportunities
- Engage meaningfully with the community, stakeholders and local businesses about change

Figure 7, identifies the precincts and opportunities which can inform future public realm improvements.

PLACE PLAN ACTIONS**Prepare a public realm concept master plans for the public realm precincts**

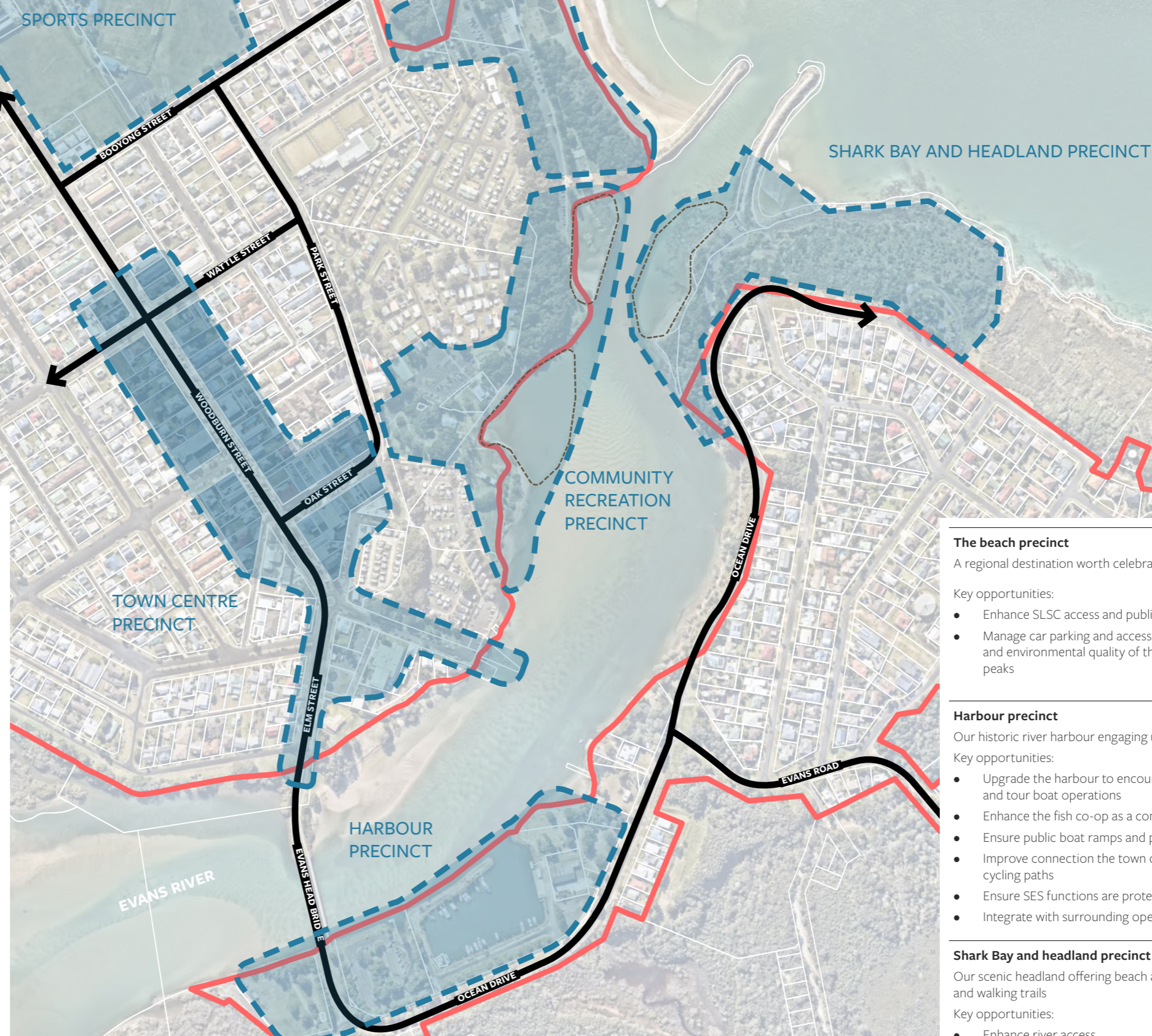
These master plans would provide concept designs for each precinct, addressing:

- Vision and objectives
- Precinct opportunities and activities
- Walking and cycling network upgrades including wayfinding and signage for tourists
- Coordination with broader infrastructure planning
- Sustainable design and resilience to climate change
- Staging and delivery
- Funding pathways

The master plans will address the key directions and ideas opposite and form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure and community objectives to guide the sustainable growth of Evans Head.

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.

FIGURE 7:
PUBLIC REALM PRECINCTS PLAN



PUBLIC REALM PRECINCTS

Town centre precinct

The town centre is our commercial, community and tourism heart.

Key opportunities:

- Streetscape enhancements to support active retail and dining streets and a high quality business environment
- Reinforce connections to the river through McDonald Place and Cribb Reserve
- Drawing planting themes from the open space into town centre streets (Also see Strategy 1 actions)

Community recreation precinct

This precinct has the potential to unify a broad range of existing activities to create a multi-functional community and recreation destination.

Key opportunities:

- Reinforce the existing cluster of community and recreation facilities - recreation hall, museum, Cribb Reserve, playground, river beach and kiosk - as an integrated community recreation precinct through landscape and pathway enhancements
- Diversify opportunities to engage with the river

Sports precinct

Our active sports destination in the centre of town servicing our community.

Key opportunities:

- Plan for the future sport needs of our growing community with long term upgrades to maximise precinct function
- Identify multi-functional uses of open spaces, such as community events, to maximise community value

The beach precinct

A regional destination worth celebrating and protecting.

Key opportunities:

- Enhance SLSC access and public interface opportunities
- Manage car parking and access to the beach to protect the character and environmental quality of the area, particularly addressing seasonal peaks

Harbour precinct

Our historic river harbour engaging us with the river and the ocean.

Key opportunities:

- Upgrade the harbour to encourage a wide range of commercial fishing and tour boat operations
- Enhance the fish co-op as a commercial tourism destination
- Ensure public boat ramps and parking are safe and of a high quality
- Improve connection the town centre with improved walking and cycling paths
- Ensure SES functions are protected and on display for the public
- Integrate with surrounding open spaces

Shark Bay and headland precinct

Our scenic headland offering beach and river experiences, panoramic views and walking trails

Key opportunities:

- Enhance river access
- Improve connection to the town centre with improved walking and cycling paths

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY AND LIFESTYLES

Social Environment

OBJECTIVE 1

Foster community engagement

An engaged community shaping the town

Council acknowledges the importance of engaging meaningfully and authentically and has a clear link to creating value for the community.

Council is committed to ensuring all members of the community have the opportunity to inform, get involved and collaborate with Council on key town shaping projects.

OBJECTIVE 2

Explore opportunities to promote greater housing choice

Opportunities to diversify housing

Our future housing needs will be shaped by changes in our community's age, household sizes and incomes.

Evans Head has an older age profile when compared to wider NSW. More than 50% of all people living in Evans Head are aged 45 years or older. The largest household type in Evans Head is lone person households, comprising 34% of all households, followed by couple families without children (33%).

The Richmond Valley generally has higher-than-average unemployment rates and ranks high on the socio-economic disadvantage scale. However, Evans Head has the critical mass to be able to retain a large working population, and with its seaside location and extensive resident amenities, to gain population and create more jobs. With increased population and employment growth, it will be critical to ensure there are affordable and diverse housing options

Our forecast population growth is higher when compared to the villages of Coraki, Broadwater-Rileys Hill and Woodburn, with a forecast between ten (10) and twenty (20) new dwellings per annum over the next 20 years.

In this context, greater housing diversity can be delivered through a range of higher density living options such as duplexes, attached homes and residential flats or apartments.

OBJECTIVE 3

Improve community health and well-being

Access to essential and community services

Equitable access to a comprehensive range of essential and community services to meet the needs of residents, regardless of background, ability or circumstance will be critical for Evans Head as it grows and changes. This includes:

- Exploring opportunities to increase health care services such as doctors, medical clinics, specialists, and allied health
- Ensuring emergency services are in the right locations away from natural hazards such as flood and bushfire
- Investigating opportunities to increase the social services, such as support services for seniors living, young people and persons with a disability

OBJECTIVE 4

Encourage active and healthy lifestyles

Encouraging active and healthy lifestyles

Encouraging active and healthy lifestyles is paramount for the residents of Evans Head fostering physical well-being, social cohesion, and community vibrancy.

With its stunning natural environment, including pristine beaches, parks, and rivers, Evans Head offers abundant opportunities for outdoor activities such as swimming, surfing, fishing, and bushwalking. Community initiatives and recreational facilities further promote active living, with local sports clubs, fitness centres, and walking trails catering to individuals of all ages and fitness levels.

Additionally, Evans Head's year-round mild climate encourages outdoor recreation and exercise, supporting a culture of wellness and vitality. By embracing and promoting active and healthy lifestyles, Evans Head not only enhances the physical health and fitness of its residents but also cultivates a strong sense of community spirit and connection.



PLACE PLAN ACTIONS

Prepare a local housing study for Evans Head to inform the future Richmond Valley Housing Strategy

The strategy will set a framework for housing development in the Richmond Valley by assessing capacity, opportunities, and constraints, identify housing supply gaps including housing diversity, identify the amount of housing required to address future needs and identify future infrastructure requirements.

Supporting this, a local housing study will investigate a range of opportunities to address forecast growth including:

- Demographic and population trends
- Existing housing assessment and future need
- Housing diversity and affordability
- Place-appropriate higher density housing types
- Supporting infrastructure and community upgrades

This study could form part of a suite of coordinated strategies which comprehensively address economic, built form, open space, infrastructure, and community objectives.

Foster community well-being through enhanced essential and social services

Investigate the opportunities to support increased health care and social services, including:


- General practitioners
- Medical clinics and specialists
- Allied health
- Social services for seniors, young people, and persons with a disability

Promote active and healthy lifestyle opportunities

Explore ways to promote active and healthy lifestyle opportunities, including:

- Year-round active and healthy program of activities which are fun, enjoyable and suitable for all ages
- Active and Health holiday programs for school holidays with free and low cost activities for young people
- Wellness workshops to improve physical and mental wellbeing

See Chapter E for more information on the priority, timing and responsibility for these actions.



Town
Resilience
Pathway
Summary

Implementation
Priorities, Timing and
Responsibilities

CHAPTER E
EVANS HEAD



IMPLEMENTATION



RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

Changes we can expect to see over time

As a town subject to multiple different hazards because of its connection to its natural landscape, residents of Evans Head can expect to see periodic impacts from flooding events, continued coastal erosion and possible inundation from East Coast Lows and other coastal storms, and periodic challenges with bushfire. Just like in the 2022 floods, Evans Head will likely be called upon again to support displaced residents from surrounding areas in future floods.

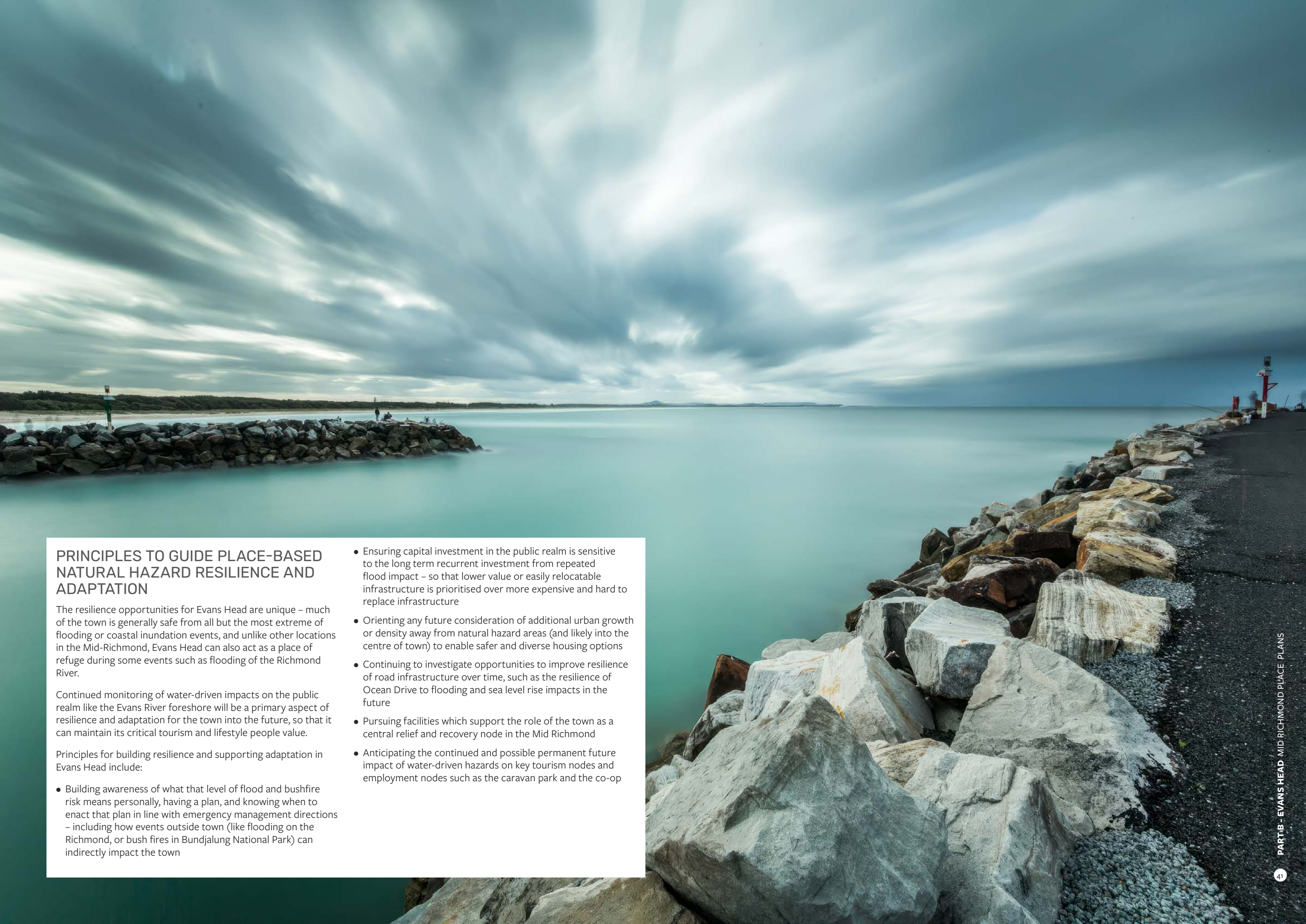
Bush fires are likely to continue to occur in the surrounding landscape – so even if Evans Head is not directly threatened, it may become a hub for those evacuating the fires, or indirect impacts such as embers travelling a long way from the fire front could cause spot fires in town. Residents should expect to evacuate periodically (particularly during dry, hot and windy spring and summer periods), and should even expect additional challenges such as smoke and poorer air quality. So those with respiratory problems such as asthma should be particularly vigilant, understand that this can impact them, and have a plan to act.

The public realm around both sides of the river foreshore will experience the greatest impact in town – from sea level rise and increasing instances of coastal inundation and flooding due to climate change. If these events do occur, and repeatedly, residents will likely see impacts like erosion and structural damage to the sea walls, park furniture, footpaths and caravan park facilities after these events. If repeated events occur, residents could see a reduction in the quality of park furniture and facilities (like expensive playgrounds or recreation facilities) if they repeatedly have to be replaced due to flood damage – it may be necessary to shift to simpler and less expensive furniture to limit recurrent costs.

Residents can also expect the nature reserve between Beech and Terrace Streets and Airforce Beach to be periodically flooded, and possibly permanently in the future due to sea level rise – which could make the presently informal beach access tracks challenging to navigate.

Into the far future, it could be challenging for the caravan park and co-op to continue operating because of the possibility of permanent inundation of the area by sea level rise. Initially, residents and tourists are likely to see impacts like poor drainage and standing water after rain events or higher tides as the sea and water table levels rise, which will make camping at the caravan park and access to the co-op premises difficult. Residents could also expect in the far future that access along Ocean Drive could be compromised from periodic tides and possible permanent inundation in the longer term.

As the climate changes, residents will also experience hotter days and longer periods of consecutive hot days which will present a challenge for those people who can't get out of the heat or access to cooler spaces, such as more vulnerable members of the community such as the aged or infirm.



PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE PLACE-BASED NATURAL HAZARD RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

The resilience opportunities for Evans Head are unique – much of the town is generally safe from all but the most extreme of flooding or coastal inundation events, and unlike other locations in the Mid-Richmond, Evans Head can also act as a place of refuge during some events such as flooding of the Richmond River.

Continued monitoring of water-driven impacts on the public realm like the Evans River foreshore will be a primary aspect of resilience and adaptation for the town into the future, so that it can maintain its critical tourism and lifestyle people value.

Principles for building resilience and supporting adaptation in Evans Head include:

- Building awareness of what that level of flood and bushfire risk means personally, having a plan, and knowing when to enact that plan in line with emergency management directions – including how events outside town (like flooding on the Richmond, or bush fires in Bundjalung National Park) can indirectly impact the town

- Ensuring capital investment in the public realm is sensitive to the long term recurrent investment from repeated flood impact – so that lower value or easily relocatable infrastructure is prioritised over more expensive and hard to replace infrastructure
- Orienting any future consideration of additional urban growth or density away from natural hazard areas (and likely into the centre of town) to enable safer and diverse housing options
- Continuing to investigate opportunities to improve resilience of road infrastructure over time, such as the resilience of Ocean Drive to flooding and sea level rise impacts in the future
- Pursuing facilities which support the role of the town as a central relief and recovery node in the Mid Richmond
- Anticipating the continued and possible permanent future impact of water-driven hazards on key tourism nodes and employment nodes such as the caravan park and the co-op

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION IMPLEMENTATION

Place Planning Opportunities



MAINTAIN

THE MAINTAIN PATHWAY

Trigger for action: Continued effort following the 2022 floods

Given the complexities and risks of developing on land subject to flooding and coastal inundation, the town area of Evans Head is of increasing importance to support higher density development. It will be important to maintain a risk-averse approach to additional on-floodplain development to ensure additional development is not put at unacceptable risk.

As stormwater and drainage systems in Evans Head struggled to cope with the rainfall that caused the 2022 floods, it will be important to undertake detailed stormwater studies and upgrades to minimise overflow or drainage impacts from future rain events.

Opportunities also exist to increase the resilience of utilities such as the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant Stage 2 to maintain existing levels of service.



MODIFY

THE MODIFY PATHWAY

Trigger for action: Before the next flood or significant natural hazard event

The role for Evans Head as a central point of coordination, relief and recovery in the Mid-Richmond from natural hazard events is a key resilience opportunity for the town, and one that is strongly connected to the central role in places in the network of towns that surround it, such as Coraki, Woodburn, and Broadwater. As part of long term recovery (and possibly linked to the Disaster Adaptation Plan process underway by the NSW Reconstruction Authority), a new centrally-located multi-function facility in town could be considered to support that role in relief and recovery. This could form part of the upcoming Central Business District (CBD) upgrade plans for Evans Head, and anchor more dense development along the spines of Oak and Woodburn Streets.

Increased density in Evans Head can also help counter-act issues associated with housing shortage and demographic change – both of which are key long term resilience issues. As one of very few towns in the Northern Rivers that is not significantly flood affected (other than via isolation, or inundation during very extreme events), there exists the reality that if insufficient affordable housing is available in Evans Head, that those who would like to live there (such as the adult children of current residents) will actually need to go elsewhere to find housing – including into hazard prone locations such as nearby Woodburn. This creates an unfortunate challenge where younger generations on the housing ladder are forced into hazard prone areas due to a lack of affordable and safer dwellings in town.



TRANSFORM

THE TRANSFORM PATHWAY

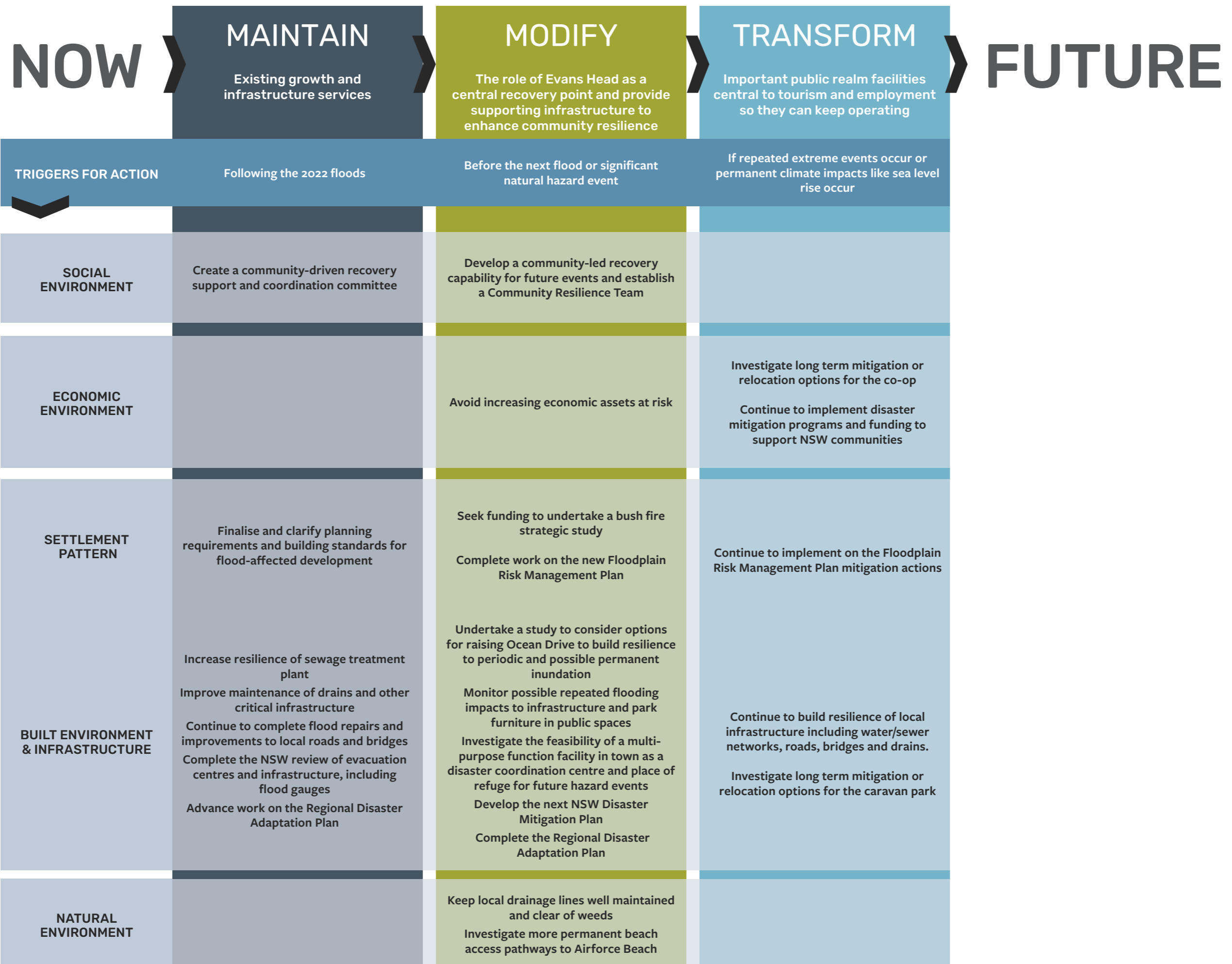
Trigger for action: If repeated extreme events occur or permanent climate impacts like sea level rise occur

As the public realm of Evans Head is likely to be subject to continued and more frequent periodic and permanent inundation over time, it will be important to carefully monitor these impacts as they occur over time. While not a threat for some years yet, it will be important for all stakeholders involved in the operation of the caravan park and co-op to make informed decisions about how or whether to maintain operation of the premises if these impacts do occur. This transformational activity could involve examining a wide range of mitigation options, such as raising ground levels over time through filling, creating larger sea walls and barriers, or even possible relocation of these activities to higher ground.

Advocacy for continued investment in resilient road infrastructure to reduce isolation periods and secure economic connectivity throughout the Mid-Richmond is also an important pathway for Evans Head – particularly if Evans Head is going to continue to act as a central point for supporting displaced residents from future events – safe evacuation routed into and out of Evans Head will be critical.

Within town, with the possibility of rising sea levels, the raising of Ocean Drive to counteract this inundation will also need to be investigated in the medium term so that resilient access to South Evans Head can be maintained into the future.

Built form resilience upgrades to community buildings is also an opportunity so that they can act as community ‘cooler places’ during heatwave if air-conditioning and climate conscious design can be employed in these upgrades.



*The actions above are identified across stakeholders, not only as council actions

Planning for resilience and adaptation is challenging, as we don't know when the next flood event will occur, or when key State and Federal government decisions policies, plans and programs will be finalised. The following considers what the community, Council and other Government Partners could do to support the Maintain, Modify and Transform pathways over the next 20 years. Council will review this action plan at least every four years, in line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycle.

MAINTAIN	
Up to 30 June 2025 – to align with implementation of the Richmond Valley 2022 Flood Recovery Plan	
WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work together to support flood recovery and participate in local advisory groups • Participate in “Get Ready” programs, and disaster awareness programs • Explore opportunities to help make local homes more resilient
WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the community through advisory groups and engagement activities • Support home-owners and business through the development process for recovery and resilience works • Continue to complete flood repairs and improvements to local roads and bridges • Improve maintenance of drains and other critical infrastructure • Include key actions from the Mid Richmond Place Plans in the new council Delivery Program for 2025-29
WHAT CAN OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTNERS DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the NSW review of evacuation centres and infrastructure • Advance work on the Regional Disaster Adaptation Plan, in consultation with local councils and the community • Finalise and clarify planning requirements and building standards for flood-affected development • Continue to support and fund community awareness, consultation and preparedness programs, including establishment of Aboriginal knowledge-sharing programs identified in the NSW Disaster Adaptation Plan.

MODIFY

In parallel with and beyond the Maintain pathway – July 2024 – June 2029 – to support sustained delivery of resilience and adaptation measures in line with Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycle

WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Community Resilience Team to improve local disaster preparedness and response • Create a community forum to support discussion and decision-making on future adaptation strategies • Continue to improve the resilience of local homes • Work with Council to identify maintenance and improvement priorities for local drains and critical infrastructure
WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Council’s new 2025-29 Delivery Program to implement key actions from the Place Plans • Continue implementation of Council’s Sustainable Communities Strategy 2023 – 2028 to advance sustainability to a changing climate • Keep local drainage lines well maintained and clear of weeds/debris • Seek funding to undertake a Bush fire strategic study in accordance with Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 • Finalise risk-based planning controls and zone amendments proposed in the Place Plans • Commence feasibility studies for urban investigation areas identified in the Place Plans • Investigate the feasibility of a multi-purpose function facility in town which can act as a disaster coordination centre and place of refuge for future hazard events – through State or Federal disaster funding • Review infrastructure design and resilience, in consultation with Council’s insurers and funding partners • Work with other government and community partners to investigate how indigenous land management practices can support healthy Country, protect cultural traditions, and help reduce impacts from bush fire on the town • Investigate more permanent beach access pathways to Airforce Beach • Undertake a study to consider options for raising Ocean Drive to build resilience to periodic and possible permanent inundation • Monitor possible repeated flooding impacts to infrastructure and park furniture in public spaces
WHAT CAN OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTNERS DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise the Northern Rivers flood recovery programs and complete the Regional Disaster Adaptation Plan • Finalise and deliver the State-led home modification funding program identified in the NSW DMP • Finalise and deliver State-led infrastructure resilience and improvement programs • Continue to support and fund local emergency response and recovery arrangements, including LEMCs and community resilience officers. • Continue to support and fund community awareness, consultation and preparedness programs, including Aboriginal knowledge-sharing • Develop the next NSW Disaster Mitigation Plan in consultation with local councils and communities.

TRANSFORM

Beyond 2029 – to embed longer term and more strategic action on resilience and adaptation as circumstances (such as future floods or climate change) may dictate and in line with broader Government policy direction at that time

WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work together on local disaster preparedness and response • Continue to improve the resilience of local homes
WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Council’s new 2029-33 Delivery Program to implement key actions from the Place Plans • Continue to build resilience of local infrastructure including water/sewer networks, roads, bridges and drains. • Continue to implement the Floodplain Risk Management Plan mitigation actions • Review progress on disaster mitigation and adaptation activity, and alter/refine approaches as needed • Review the impacts of any disaster events that have occurred over the past 5 years • Support investigations for long term mitigation or relocation options for the caravan park and Co-op as future periodic or permanent inundation may impact their operation
WHAT CAN OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTNERS DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement disaster mitigation programs and funding to support NSW communities • Review the effectiveness of disaster mitigation strategies in the State DMP and Regional DAP • Continue to refine and evolve Government policy on disaster risk reduction and adaptation to maintain a community-led focus on decision-making and implementation

PLACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This Implementation Plan has been prepared to deliver the actions identified in each of the five place plan strategies. The projects identified by this implementation plan capture the collective vision and principles set out in the Mid Richmond Place Plan, and will assist in advocating meaningful change to enhance the lifestyle and wellbeing of the community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
<p>1</p> <p>SHAPING OUR TOWN'S FUTURE</p>	Prepare a Evans Head Structure Plan in consultation with the community	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Short term (1-4 years)
	Continue to develop the three villages cycleway project connecting Evans Head with Woodburn and Broadwater	Richmond Valley Council Transport for NSW	Short term (1-4 years)
	Implement the The Richmond Valley Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)	Richmond Valley Council	Short term (1-4 years)
	Implement the Stan Payne Oval - master plan implementation	Richmond Valley Council	Short term (1-4 years)
	Complete repairs to Woodburn Evans Head Road and other flood-damaged roads and assets	Richmond Valley Council Transport for NSW	Short term (1-4 years)
	Partner with State Government to upgrade and maintain key freight links, regional roads and tourist routes including the Evans Head-Broadwater and Evans Head-Woodburn roads	Richmond Valley Council Transport for NSW	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Provide a network of safe, well-constructed local roads, bridges, footpaths and cycleways	Richmond Valley Council Transport for NSW	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Complete Stage 2 of Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant	Richmond Valley Council	Short term (1-4 years)
	Support Rous Water's delivery of the Woodburn Groundwater Scheme, to provide improved water security for Evans Head, Woodburn and Broadwater	Richmond Valley Council Rous Water	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Prepare a local housing study for Evans Head to inform the future Richmond Valley Housing Strategy	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Short term (1-4 years)
	Maintain and support existing local employment activities and attract retail and commercial businesses which support the community and tourist economy	Richmond Valley Council	Long term (10- 20 years)
Prepare a Town Centre Concept Master Plan, in consultation with the community	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Short term (1-4 years)	

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
2 LIVING WITH THE LANDSCAPE	Support Aboriginal land management practices	Richmond Valley Council	Long term (10- 20 years)
	Support local Landcare and environmental groups	Richmond Valley Council NSW EPA	Long term (10- 20 years)
	Prepare a bush fire strategic study to inform future Local Environmental Plan updates	Richmond Valley Council NSW Rural Fire Service	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Completion of the Flood Risk Management Plan	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Ongoing Action*
	Examine disaster response facilities	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Ongoing Action*
3 REVITALISING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY	Prepare a local tourism study for Evans Head, identifying opportunities to grow and diversify the tourism economy	Richmond Valley Council NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Short term (1-4 years)
	Engage NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to advocate for improved visitor facilities within Richmond Valley	Richmond Valley Council NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Long term (10- 20 years)
	Continue to advocate for government investment to support economic recovery and regional transport infrastructure upgrades	Richmond Valley Council NSW Reconstruction Authority	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Prepare an economic study for Evans Head and the surrounding villages	Richmond Valley Council	Short term (1-4 years)
4 RESILIENT BUILDINGS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SPACES	Review the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and DCP to incorporate the key directions and ideas identified for the town centre and residential areas	Richmond Valley Council NSW Department of Planning & Environment	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Prepare a public realm concept master plans for the public realm precincts	Richmond Valley Council	Short term (1-4 years)
	Prepare a local housing study for Evans Head to inform the future Richmond Valley Housing Strategy	Richmond Valley Council NSW Department of Planning & Environment NSW Reconstruction Authority	Short term (1-4 years)
5 SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY AND LIFESTYLES	Foster community well-being through enhanced essential and social services	Richmond Valley Council	Long term (10- 20 years)
	Promote active and healthy lifestyle opportunities	Richmond Valley Council	Long term (10- 20 years)

* Ongoing Action - if and when required, to be reviewed every 4-5 years to ensure it aligns with the future policy framework

