



Draft Northern Beaches Environment Study Snapshot

Planning for our environment

October 2021



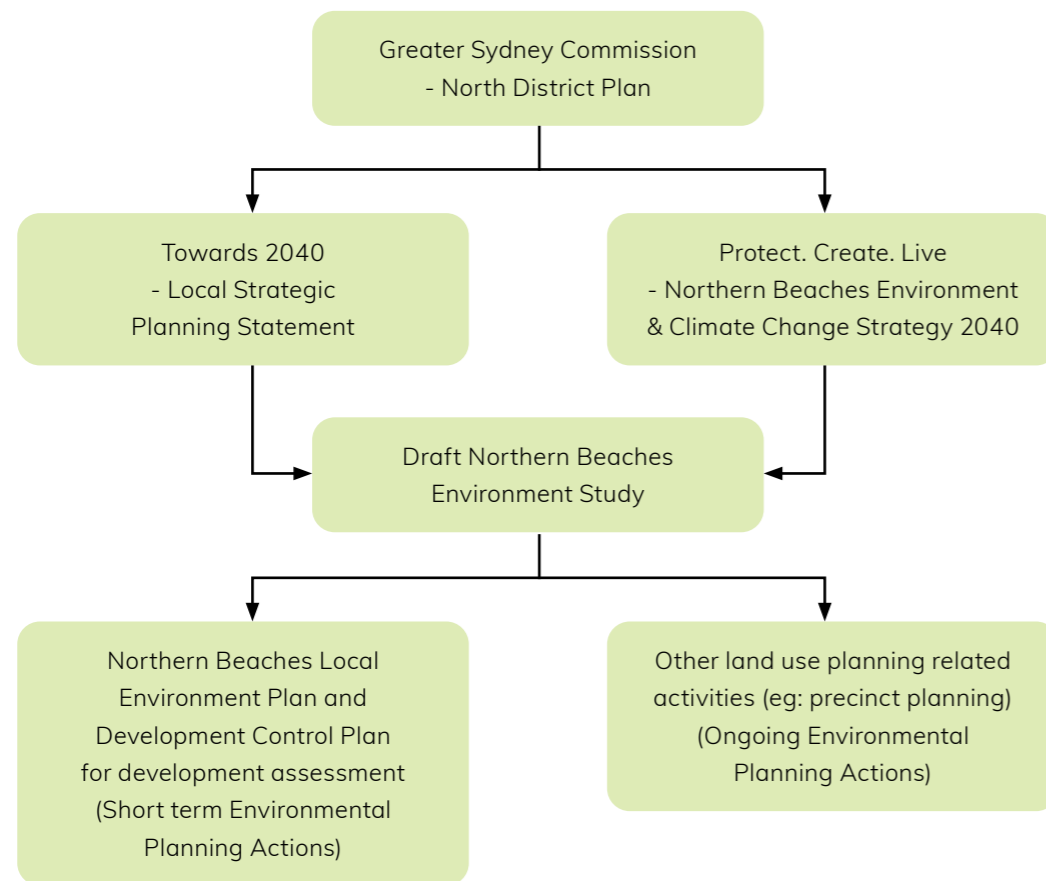
northern
beaches
council

Introduction

This document is a summary of the more detailed Draft Northern Beaches Environment Study. The Draft Northern Beaches Environment Study is part of a framework supporting the new Local Environment Plan, Development Control Plan and other development-related activities.

It recommends Environmental Planning Actions that will help to deliver the commitments within two important strategic documents:

- Local Strategic Planning Statement - Towards 2040
- Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040.



Study intentions

- Describes the natural environment of the Northern Beaches including the bushland and biodiversity, coasts, catchments and waterways. These areas support an extensive variety of flora and fauna and contribute to the open space of the area.
- Describes the importance of open space and the connections between the natural and urban environment, the importance of energy and water efficiency as well as the impact of natural hazards and climate change. The study demonstrates that the area is exposed to significant natural hazard risk and these are likely to intensify as the climate changes.
- Describes the challenges, such as development, land clearing and recreation that may impact the natural environment.

- Discusses the opportunities in relation to future growth to enhance and protect the environment.
- Recommends environmental planning actions to be implemented either in the short term or in an ongoing timeframe. The short term actions will be delivered during the development of the new Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan and the ongoing actions will be delivered as part of Council operations when addressing development related activities.

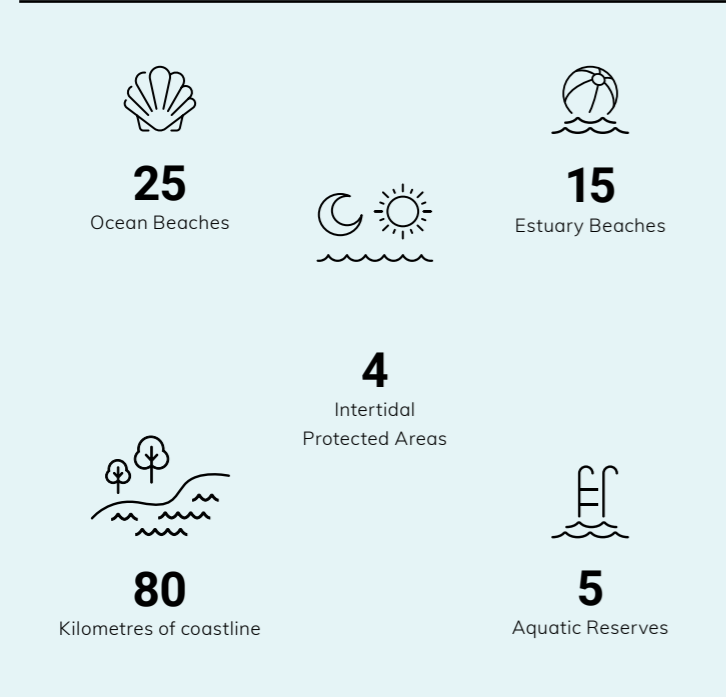
Recommendations

The study recommends a series of short term and ongoing actions to help manage development and other activities as they relate to protecting our environment.





Waterways Summary



The coast and waterways are iconic and an intrinsic part of the Northern Beaches' lifestyle, valued for their beauty, supporting a wide variety of plants and animals and a range of recreational opportunities.

Water is transported through major catchments to:

- coastal lagoons
- our beaches
- Sydney Harbour
- Hawkesbury River; and
- Pittwater.

Creeks and lagoons are part of an overall natural system and contribute to the adds beauty to infrastructure that cools and greens the area.

The network of waterways, coastline, beaches, aquatic reserves, lagoons and creeks also:

- provides habitat for the region's aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity
- supports threatened ecological communities
- supports coastal, marine and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

Environmental Planning Actions

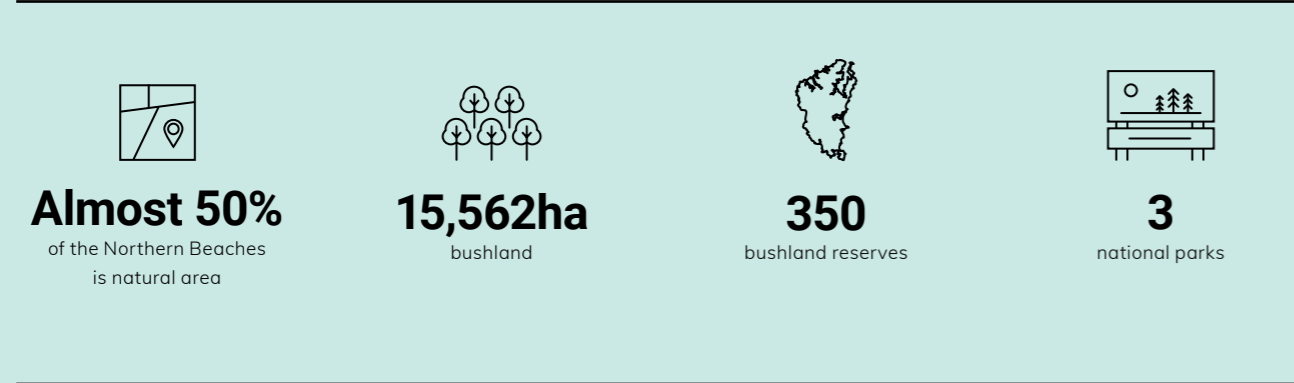
Summary	Timeframe for implementation
Assess and map freshwater habitats – finalise the assessment of watercourses, wetlands and riparian lands.	Short term
Protect and maintain watercourses, wetlands and riparian areas at current or improved condition from development impacts by reviewing current controls and where necessary developing and implementing new planning controls using appropriate setbacks and corridors based on environmental values and stream order.	Short term
Manage the threats to water quality and aquatic ecology – develop a water cycle strategy that identifies catchments according to risk, value and condition. Develop stormwater quality and quantity targets to protect water quality and aquatic ecology.	Short term
Develop and implement planning controls that integrate water sensitive urban design and stormwater controls to ensure development achieves the identified stormwater quality and quantity targets for each catchment and protects downstream water quality and aquatic ecology.	Short term
Ensure watercourses, wetlands, major stormwater and flood mitigation works and infrastructure are incorporated into public land in precincts to facilitate ease of maintenance, multifunctionality and optimal waterway health and amenity outcomes.	Ongoing
Protect natural assets including watercourses, wetlands and riparian lands, water quality and aquatic ecology by considering them early in the strategic planning process, such as during precinct planning.	Ongoing
Identify and protect coast and waterway areas of high environmental value within the local green grid.	Ongoing
Ensure that Council's recreation planning considers protection of high environmental value coast and waterway assets and ensures recreational activities and infrastructure within these areas are low impact.	Ongoing



Coastal boardwalk view to Long Reef Beach and Dee Why



Bushland Summary



Native vegetation or bushland areas include important core habitat, linked by biodiversity corridors (also known as wildlife corridors).

Bushland provides vital habitat for 540 animal species, some of these are threatened including:

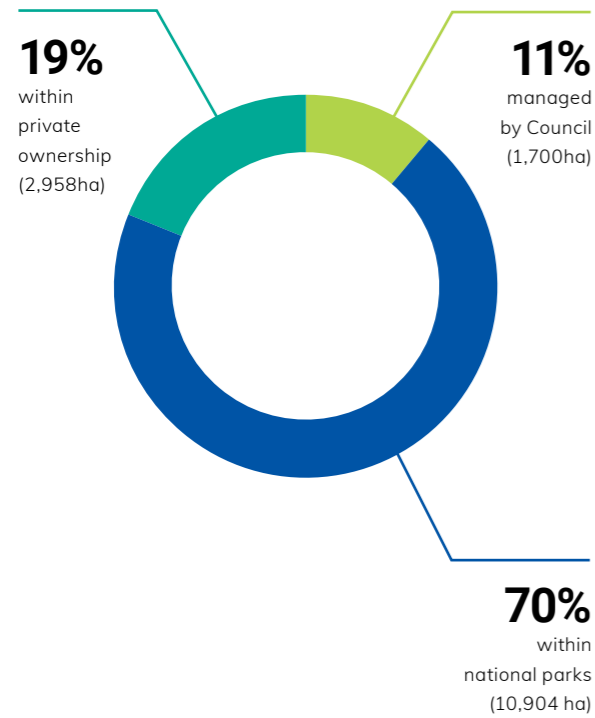
- Glossy Black Cockatoo
- Eastern Pygmy Possums
- Barking Owl
- Little Penguin
- Red-crowned Toadlet
- Grey-headed flying fox
- Eastern Osprey

and more common fauna such as:

- Sugar Glider
- Swamp Wallaby

It also supports 1460 native plant species including a number of threatened plants such as the critically endangered *Grevillea caleyi* and *Prostanthera marifolia*.

Bushland division



Environmental Planning Actions

Summary	Timeframe for implementation
Undertake technical studies to update and refine existing biodiversity mapping.	Short term
Incorporate updated biodiversity mapping developed in technical studies into the new local planning framework. This is to include a biodiversity map layer and provisions in the new LEP. More detailed controls will identify the extent and distribution of each biodiversity asset type (core habitat, biodiversity corridors, native vegetation or bushland and threatened biodiversity) in the new DCP.	Short term
Identify areas of high biodiversity significance as 'environmentally sensitive areas' in the new LEP and seek exemptions to applying State planning controls that override local controls tailored for sensitive environments.	Short term
Develop and implement new biodiversity planning controls that will require future developments to demonstrate a hierarchy of first avoiding then minimising direct impacts on bushland before offsetting is considered.	Short term
Develop and implement new biodiversity planning controls which will focus on minimising potential indirect impacts resulting from development such as considerations of future use, predation by domestic animals, light spillage, changes in hydrology and encroachment into natural areas.	Short term
Ensure natural assets including core habitats, threatened species habitats and native vegetation are considered early in the strategic planning process, such as during planning proposals, place plans or precinct plans.	Ongoing
Ensure Council's natural assets identified in planning proposals, place plans or precinct plans are appropriately funded.	Ongoing
Identify and protect areas of high biodiversity value within the local green grid. Ensure that Councils recreation planning considers protection of high biodiversity value assets and ensures recreational activities and infrastructure within these areas are low impact.	Ongoing
Investigate, develop and implement planning controls which support property owners to enhance bushland.	Ongoing
Identify options for funding the acquisition of land parcels with significant biodiversity values by way of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.	Ongoing
Increase the availability of local offsets by providing incentives and/or assistance to property owners to conserve bushland.	Ongoing
Council will continue to advocate to the state government agencies to ensure biodiversity offsets are established and sourced locally.	Ongoing
Develop and implement planning controls in the new planning framework that restricts the planting of priority weeds and other undesirable species in development as referenced in the Local Weed Management Plan.	Short term



Open space and the relationships between the urban and natural environment contribute to liveability and community wellbeing and include connections to:

- waterways
- beaches
- bushlands
- open spaces
- parks.

We must maintain and enhance these connections by designing our communities around nature using the 'green and blue' grid to keep urban areas cooler and enhance biodiversity and ecological resilience.



Environmental Planning Actions

Summary	Timeframe for implementation
Review, develop and integrate planning controls into the new planning framework that includes green infrastructure that provides for water treatment and retention, water sensitive urban design, urban cooling, ecosystem services and amenity and integrate it into built, landscaped and natural environments in strategic centres, employment hubs and areas subject to urban intensification.	Short term
Ensure built form controls maximise landscape open space at ground level, and where appropriate at upper levels.	Short-term
Implement a best practice Urban Tree Canopy Plan for the LGA that includes tree canopy targets and prioritises local native tree species.	Ongoing
Incorporate within the new planning framework requirements for landscape open space, tree protection and replacement.	Short-term
Develop and integrate planning controls into the new planning framework requiring building materials that help to mitigate urban heat.	Short-term





A low-carbon community, with high energy, water and waste efficiency

The vision for life on the Northern Beaches over the next twenty years is one where our community consumes less, produces less emissions and generates less waste.

Our future will include:

- encouraging a circular economy
- increasing use of active and public transport opportunities
- enhancing sustainable built environment outcomes.

Living sustainably and efficiently in our environment is a core focus for Council, business, community groups and households alike.

We are committed to achieving net-zero emissions across the community by 2050, from a baseline of around two million tonnes in 2016-2017.

We've also set targets to help the community maintain or reduce water consumption and reduce waste to landfill 2040.

Environmental Planning Actions

Summary	Timeframe for implementation
Deliver precinct plans and place plans as net zero carbon and high efficiency through integrating sustainability initiatives.	Ongoing
Consistent with NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 ensure planning controls provide opportunities for complementary businesses to co-locate in the Strategic Centres where they can beneficially re-use each other's by-products, reducing their waste and carbon footprints. Ensure sufficiently zoned land to enable the recycling, processing and disposal of waste generated within the LGA, and protect existing waste facilities' land.	Ongoing
Ensure active transport connections are provided, including wide footpaths, safe cycling options, bus stops, shelters, bike racks and signage to support active and public transport in strategic centres and planning precincts. Ensure planning controls are included for bicycle parking and end of trip facilities to encourage healthy active lifestyles and help reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.	Short-term
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by advocating to the NSW State Government to increase BASIX requirements for residential developments including adopting net-zero targets for multi-residential developments as defined in 'Planning for net zero energy buildings'	Short-term
Review, develop and implement planning controls in the new planning framework to ensure efficient operational waste management.	Short-term



Adapted to the impacts of natural and urban hazards and climate change

The proximity of urban areas to hazards such as waterways, coastal processes and bush fire prone vegetation places people, property and infrastructure at risk.

Population increases and climate change will increase the risk to potential hazards, the intensity of exposure and/or frequency over time.

Almost 43,000 properties in the area are exposed to flood, coastal erosion and bushfire hazards.

The challenge is to build a resilient Northern Beaches, by adopting risk-based approaches.

Land-use planning plays a significant role in protecting existing urban areas. It also ensures that new development is:

- not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk
- does not create new risk
- considers future climate changes.

Environmental Planning Actions

Summary	Timeframe for implementation
Deliver resilient precinct plans and place plans designed with adaptive capacity to respond to shocks, chronic stresses and climate change.	Ongoing
Current and future natural hazard risks such as bushfire (including evacuation, egress or accessibility out of an area in an evacuation), flooding, coastal erosion and geotechnical risk must be considered early in the strategic planning process. This includes planning proposals, precinct and place plans. Future natural hazard risks will be determined by incorporating climate change projections, as described by Adapt NSW, CSIRO or other peer reviewed projections in studies.	Short-term
Undertake a risk-based assessment and develop maps for estuary planning levels for North Harbour, Middle Harbour and Cowan Creek according to the Coastal Management Act that identifies areas subject to current and future estuary inundation risk consistent with those undertaken for the Pittwater Waterway. Develop planning controls that mitigate current and future risk.	Short-term
Continue to identify flood-prone land in accordance with the NSW Governments Flood Prone Land Policy and Floodplain Management Manual (2005). Permit development that is compatible with the flood hazard and flood function of land considering the projected changes as a result of climate change.	Ongoing
Develop and integrate planning controls into the new planning framework using existing coastal hazard studies, such as the Coastal Zone Management Plans (Coastal Management Programs from January 2022) and the Identification of Coastal Hazard Risk Areas to Projected Sea Level Rise for the Manly Local Government Area.	Short-term
Develop and integrate planning controls into the new planning framework that ensures all asset protection zones are within property boundaries as per Planning for Bushfire Protection, 2019.	Short-term
Ensure that the ecological function of natural ecosystems is maintained and protected to enhance resilience to natural hazards and a changing climate.	Ongoing

