

CRESCENT HEAD PUBLIC DOMAIN PLAN (FORESHORE) REVIEW OF PROJECT SCOPE

DECEMBER 2021

KEMPSEY
Shire Council



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Executive Summary

Over the last five years there has been extensive community engagement and planning for the future of Crescent Head. Since 2017, Council has adopted the Crescent Head Master Plan, Your Future Macleay – Local Strategic Planning Statement, Crescent Head Public Domain Plan, and the Macleay Valley Coast Holiday Parks (MVCHPs) Future Development Plans. In 2021, the draft Kempsey Shire Council (KSC) Crown Land Plan of Management (POM), which includes KSC managed Crescent Head Crown Lands, was endorsed by Council for forwarding to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for concurrence prior to community consultation and reporting back to Council for adoption. At the time of writing this report, Council was waiting on concurrence from DPIE.

Through all the community engagement, there has been conflicting views within the community regarding the foreshore area, specifically relating to the number and location of car parking spaces within the oceanfront precinct. At the July 2021 Ordinary Meeting, Council resolved to:

1. *Acknowledge the significant community consultation to date*
2. *Report back to August 2021 ordinary Council meeting to present the engagement scope and how it will be delivered, how will the work be funded and impacts to the Operational Plan 2021/2022*
3. *Bring a further report back to Council in approximately 24 months with more options balancing the need for car parks on the foreshore and the need for green space, the playground design, a skate park design and location in an overall concept design that recognises the various cultures of Crescent Head, developed through a community advisory group including members of the most relevant groups (Dunghutti, ratepayers, surfing community, community groups, business owners, tourism and others) and continue to keep the community engaged throughout this process.*

Following the July 2021 Council resolution, in August 2021 Council endorsed a seven-step engagement methodology to conduct further community engagement and design over the next 24 months. The purpose of this report is to address step one in the process by auditing the project scope and providing recommendations on the future geographic footprint for community engagement and design.

As part of this project, an independent, comprehensive review has been completed of Council plans, reports, community engagement, and other internal documentation, as well as stakeholder interviews with members of the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team and staff from Strategic Asset & Planning, Commercial Business, Community Partnerships, and Infrastructure Operations. In assessing the potential geographical footprint for the future project, consideration was given to regulatory obligations and existing commitments; social and cultural factors; and environmental and economic factors.

The key factors influencing the recommendation on the geographic footprint include:

- Regulatory obligations, specifically regarding Crown Land management requirements.
- Economic contribution of the Holiday Park to the local area and broader shire in terms of visitation and economic benefit to local businesses.



- Revenue generated by the Holiday Park is reinvested into Crown Lands within Crescent Head and across the shire therefore precluding any changes that would negatively impact visitation or the revenue generated.
- The extensive community engagement across the Crescent Head Master Plan, Public Domain Plan and MVCHP Future Development projects.
- The Surf Club has been excluded as it is not part of the KSC Managed Reserve and there are existing commitments to design and complete work in the immediate surrounds of the Club to address environmental issues associated with asbestos in the area.
- Little Nobby has been excluded as there is an existing design and works project planned for 2022 to address environmental issues in the area, subject to funding availability.
- The environmental considerations (i.e., coastal management processes, rock wall) and Holiday Park compliance requirements along the Killick Creek foreshore will define any designs for the area, therefore the community is unable to influence Council decision.
- Environmental considerations associated with sensitive flora and fauna in Muddy Arm Park excludes this from the geographic footprint until further studies are completed as part of the Coastal Management Program.

The geographic footprint recommended for future community engagement and design over the next 24 months is:

Western limit: past the footbridge to the point where the path narrows along Killick Creek

Southern limit: bounded by the existing Holiday Park boundaries

Eastern limit: where the path narrows and meets the Golf course towards Little Nobby

The footprint is to exclude the area in front of the Surf Club as work on the site is planned during calendar year 2022 to finalise the detailed design to enable work to progress to remove asbestos and construct the area in accordance with the final design, subject to confirmation of funding availability.

The recommended geographic footprint is also to exclude the Crescent Head Holiday Park as the MVCHP Future Development Plans have been adopted by Council in April 2021.



There are some considerations for the future engagement and design project including:

- Crown Lands feedback on the KSC Plan of Management (POM) may have implications for the geographic footprint, which will need to be considered in future phases.
- Future community engagement will need to take a mediation approach to address community division on the foreshore design.
- Reluctance of some community members and organisations to continue to engage due to the division in the community, particularly for business owners, may require innovative or alternative methods of engagement to ensure anonymity of respondents.
- Education of the community regarding the value of the Crescent Head Holiday Park to the local community in terms of its economic contribution to the village and the broader shire through tourism and employment; along with the contribution the revenue makes towards the maintenance and improvement of Crown Lands across the LGA.
- The community will need to understand the reasons for the narrow definition for future engagement and design to ensure there is transparency in Council processes.



1. Introduction

Crescent Head is a place of natural beauty, with a relaxed village atmosphere and strong ties to its Indigenous heritage and surfing culture. Since 2016, Kempsey Shire Council has conducted extensive planning and community engagement to understand the priorities for the community and visitors while ensuring sustainable development for the future. As part of this process Council must balance Crown Land management requirements, legislative compliance, community needs, tourism, and funding constraints.

Despite adopting in principle, the Crescent Head Foreshore design plans, as part of the broader Public Domain Plan in October 2020, Council revisited the plans during 2021 and determined to undertake further consultation and design work for presentation back to Council. This report considers the scope of the foreshore area to be considered as part of this process.

Crescent Head Planning timeline

The key planning documents referred to in this report include:

1. Crescent Head Master Plan (Master Plan)
2. Crescent Head Public Domain Plan (Public Domain Plan)
3. Macleay Valley Coast Holiday Parks Future Park Development (MVCHP Future Development Plans)

The diagram below provides a visual timeline as background for the Crescent Head Review of Project Scope work.



Crescent Head Master Plan

The Crescent Head Master Plan (Master Plan) adopted by Council in October 2017 identified the following key priorities for future design and planning¹⁰:

1. Conserve the natural beauty and environment of the village
2. Retain the beach as defining characteristic of Crescent Head
3. Retain Crown land in public ownership used for recreation
4. Oppose large development that changes the social fabric of the village
5. Improve and beautify public recreation facilities
6. Manage water quality issues particularly relating to Killick Creek
7. Improve community safety
8. Beautify the streetscape and CBD but retain village atmosphere
9. Balance needs of permanent residents with investors and holiday makers
10. Improve parking and traffic flow
11. Address housing availability and affordability

The Master Plan priorities were developed with input from the community via two community workshops, stakeholder meetings and feedback via Your Say Macleay¹⁰. During the 28-day public exhibition the Master Plan attracted 1100 visitors to the Your Say Macleay site, of which 442 downloaded or viewed multiple documents, 130 visitors responded to the survey/brainstorm, 23 submissions were received, and 24 participants submitted feedback on the Your Say Macleay site.

The Master Plan identified three priority initiatives¹⁰ to be completed as part of future planning for the area:

- Traffic Management and Parking Plan
- Foreshore Recreation and Landscape Plan
- Town Centre Urban Landscape Plan

Crescent Head Public Domain Plan

The Crescent Head Public Domain Plan¹¹ (Public Domain Plan) was a direct result of the Crescent Head Master Plan, covering the three priority initiatives of traffic management and parking plan; foreshore recreation and landscape plan; and town centre landscape plan. In 2019, external consultants Plummer & Smith were engaged to develop foreshore and village plans, including traffic management and parking plans.

The foreshore area was identified from Muddy Arm through to Little Nobby. Prior to commencing the Public Domain Plan, it was determined the Holiday Park boundary would not be changed and the foreshore would be designed outside the existing boundary of the Holiday Park and the area of Crown Land leased to the Country Club, including the golf course¹¹.

The Public Domain Plan involved extensive community engagement consisting of community workshops, workshops with school children, community catchups, and collaborative design workshops with representatives from the community, selected through an expression of interest process. The feedback received was used as input into the draft designs for the area.



The draft Public Domain Plans were exhibited following the May 2020 Council meeting for a period of 42 days. Council received 354 completed online surveys, three petitions, 568 proforma submissions and 24 independent submissions⁸. The plan was adjusted based on the feedback received and adopted in October 2020⁸. To ensure engagement was comprehensive letters were sent to community groups and state agencies notifying the plans were available for feedback (full list of stakeholders notified is included in the October Council Report 9.2⁸). No significant issues were identified by the state agencies. The community feedback was grouped together into five main themes⁸

- Access – including pedestrian, disability, access to open space, movement, and circulation
- Pathways – design and location, pathway alignment and materials
- Amenity – open space design, landscape design, shade protection, consideration of prevailing winds, built facilities, recreation facilities, integration with existing facilities, interface with the Holiday Park, fish cleaning facilities, playground, and skate park
- Traffic – carparking predominately then circulation, vehicle access, trailer and large vehicle considerations, boat ramp access and vehicle/pedestrian interface considerations
- Environmental – coastal erosion, climate change effects, consideration of natural and cultural environmental heritage, sympathetic facility, and infrastructure design supportive of maintaining ingrained character of the place

Given the conflicting feedback regarding the Crescent Head foreshore area and carparking, the external consultants and Council staff recommended the decision regarding this area be deferred for further design and community engagement. However, based on the extensive community consultation to that time and the quality outcome, Council adopted all plans within the Crescent Head Public Domain Plan, with the foreshore area plans being adopted in principle.

Macleay Valley Coast Holiday Parks Future Park Development Plans

In March 2021, the Macleay Valley Coast Holiday Parks Future Development Plans (MVCHP Future Development Plans) were presented to Council. There was significant community interest in the Crescent Head Holiday Park, specifically regarding the proposed cabins along the foreshore carpark boundary. At this time, the 'Save the Carpark' group raised concerns regarding proposed changes to the foreshore parking, suggesting that as the Holiday Park Development Plans are being considered there may be the opportunity to adjust the Holiday Park boundaries to increase car parking spaces, especially along the foreshore area. During this meeting, Council deferred consideration of the MVCHP Future Development Plans to April 2021. The MVCHP Future Development Plans were adopted by Council in April 2021, consisting of the alternative plan for Crescent Head Holiday Park which eliminated the cabin provision along the foreshore carpark boundary.

Crescent Head Foreshore revisited

At the Ordinary Council Meeting in May 2021, the 'Save the Crescent Head Point Carpark' petition with 8,243 signatures was noted by Council, followed by a Notice of Motion from Councillor Mark Baxter requesting further community engagement to occur in relation to the design of the foreshore open space and parking components of the Crescent Head Public Domain Plan that was adopted in October 2020.

Council resolved that⁵:



1. *Note the October 2020 resolution of Council with regard to the adoption of the adoption of the Crescent Head Public Domain Plan, which included adopting in principle the foreshore carparking Option A as the preferred layout.*
2. *Staff seek to further refine the concept plans including additional parking and a component of foreshore parking area whilst maintaining the greenspace principles of the existing concepts within the Public Domain plans.*
3. *The refined plan or plans be reported to a future Council meeting.*

In response to the May 2021 resolution, further foreshore design options were presented to the July 2021 Ordinary Council meeting, generating extensive discussion among Councillors, and resulting with the following resolution that⁴:

1. *Acknowledge the significant community consultation to date*
2. *Report back to August 2021 ordinary Council meeting to present the engagement scope and how it will be delivered, how will the work be funded and impacts to the Operational Plan 2021/2022*
3. *Bring a further report back to Council in approximately 24 months with more options balancing the need for car parks on the foreshore and the need for green space, the playground design, a skate park design and location in an overall concept design that recognises the various cultures of Crescent Head, developed through a community advisory group including members of the most relevant groups (Dunghutti, ratepayers, surfing community, community groups, business owners, tourism and others) and continue to keep the community engaged throughout this process.*

Following the July 2021 Council resolution, in August 2021 Council endorsed a seven-step engagement methodology to conduct further community engagement and design over the next 24 months³:

1. Audit project scope
2. Procurement of consultants that specialise in participation, collaborative codesign and managing community conflict
3. Develop detailed plan and conduct independent review of all previous engagement and documentation
4. Establish community tolerance for compromise across components on the project and establish the Community Advisory Group
5. Develop design options
6. Public exhibition
7. Council decision

The purpose of this report is to address step one in the process by auditing the project scope and providing recommendations on the future geographic footprint for community engagement and design.



1.1. Project Objectives

This project represents Step 1: Audit Project Scope, of the seven-step engagement methodology for further community engagement and design relating to the Crescent Head Public Domain Plan as endorsed by Council in August 2021.

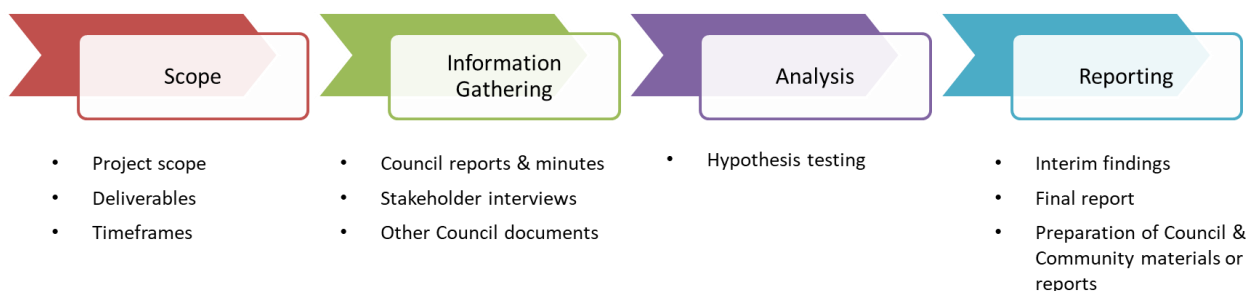
The objective of this project is to define the geographic footprint for future design and community engagement in Reserve 63725, specifically the western limit on the Killick Creek frontage, southern and eastern boundaries (the northern limit is the tidal edge). The review is not to make recommendations in relation to the inclusion of design elements within the future concept designs.

As defined in the seven-step engagement methodology the project will conduct a detailed analysis of the project footprint to evaluate the economic and social opportunities and complexities that could result if the area defined as ‘foreshore’ was adjusted from what was presented to Council in July 2021.

1.2. Project Approach

The project will be completed internally by an independent, qualified Council staff member, who has not been involved in any projects relating to Crescent Head and is from a department that is not involved or impacted by the project or its outcomes.

The project will follow a structured process, with a comprehensive review of relevant Council reports, Council meeting agenda items and minutes, community engagement completed to date, external reports, and other internal documentation. Interviews with stakeholders includes members of the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team and staff from Strategic Asset & Planning, Commercial Business, Community Partnerships, and Infrastructure Operations. Interim findings were presented to the Crescent Head Foreshore Project Control Group with feedback incorporated into the final report.



Geographical scope for this project

The geographical area considered as part of this project was Crown Reserve 63725, segments A, B, C, D, E, finishing at the Golf course boundary marked in red in the diagram below.



The geographical footprint has then been segmented into seven areas consistent with the Public Domain Plan¹¹. Note: boundaries shown below are rough guides only for the purposes of discussing each area.



For each geographical segment the following aspects were considered:

1. Regulatory obligations and existing commitments
 - Crown land requirements
 - Council adopted plans
 - Work commenced
 - Lease agreements
2. Social and cultural factors
 - Cultural associations including Indigenous, surfing community
 - Community use of land
 - Community profile
 - Tourism expectations
3. Environmental factors
 - Environmental issues and constraints
 - Environmental impact
4. Economic factors
 - Financial implications for Council
 - Economic benefit

2. Crown Land

The Foreshore area forms part of Crown Reserve 63725. The *NSW Strategic Plan for Crown Land: Crown Lands 2031* indicates there will be a change in the way land assets and infrastructure are managed over the next ten years to deliver greater social, environmental, and economic benefits for the people of NSW¹. The strategic priorities for the next ten years aim to:

- Strengthen community connections with Crown Land
- Accelerate economic progress in regional and rural NSW
- Accelerate the realisation of Aboriginal land rights and native title in partnership with Aboriginal people
- Protect cultural heritage on Crown land
- Protect environmental assets, improve, and expand green space and build climate change resilience

As a Crown Land manager, Council must submit the Plans of Management (POM) to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment to establish the direction for the future management of public land for which it has been appointed the Crown Reserve Manager. At the Ordinary Meeting of Council in March 2021, Council endorsed the KSC POM for public exhibition following receipt of concurrence by DPIE. Concurrence by the Crown remains outstanding to enable the public exhibition phase to commence. In the plan the Crescent Head Reserve existing uses were to be maintained including the foreshore public reserve areas, holiday park and golf course¹⁹. The POM identifies several improvements through the implementation of the Crescent Head Master Plan, Public Domain Plan and MVHP Future Development Plans.



3. Geographical Review

The following section will review each of the seven geographical locations which comprise the broad definition of the Crescent Head foreshore: including Little Nobby, Country Club area (including golf course), Foreshore, Holiday Park, Killick Creek, Willow Street Park and Muddy Arm Park. Each area will be assessed based on regulatory obligations and existing commitments, social/cultural factors, environmental and economic considerations for inclusion in the scope of the Crescent Head Foreshore Review project which will involve further community engagement and design work over the next 24 months.

3.1. Little Nobby



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- The Master Plan identified to retain and improve public access to Crown reserves with the view to create a coastal walking track¹⁰.
- Council adopted the Public Domain Plan design for Little Nobby in October 2020⁸.
- Detailed design is being completed as part of the Operational Plan 2021-22.

Social / cultural factors

- The Public Domain Plan identified inappropriate use of the areas outside the existing path, that has resulted in environmental damage which is a concern for Council and the community¹¹.
- Immediate measures identified in the Public Domain Plan focused on changing user behaviour, predominately through the installation of signs discouraging the use of bikes and skateboards in the area. The proposed design aims to prevent bike and skateboard access to Little Nobby, establish appropriate vegetation, structured walkways and viewing platforms to manage foot traffic¹¹.
- As part of the community engagement for the Public Domain Plan, community satisfaction with the Little Nobby proposed design was 72% of respondents indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied, 14% neutral and 14% not satisfied with the proposed designs⁸.



Environmental factors

- Little Nobby is defined as Natural Area in the Crown POM¹⁹, it is the culmination of the foreshore circulation path which stops at the western edge of the headland with no designated walking tracks on the headland. Key environmental concerns are erosion and degradation of the area to be addressed in the Public Domain Plan proposed design¹¹.

Economic factors

- Tourism is a key driver of economic benefit for the Crescent Head community with Little Nobby being a critical feature of the natural environment providing a viewing location for the Crescent Head surf reserve.

3.2. Country Club



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- Crown Land area occupied by the golf course is leased to the Crescent Head Country Club until 2027 with expectation this will be extended for the long term¹².
- The Country Club has recently secured a State Government grant in excess of \$2M to improve water recycling for irrigation purposes and establish a mini golf course¹².
- Council's Crown Land POM identifies the intention to continue to lease the land for purposes of a golf course¹⁹. It must be noted that Council is still awaiting feedback and concurrence of the POM from DPIE.
- Council has identified the continuation of the of the golf course under a lease arrangement as per the principles of the Macleay Valley Sports Strategy 2017 and Community Infrastructure Strategy 2020.

Social / cultural factors

- Golf course provides recreational activity for locals and tourists while maintaining significant green space on Crown Land¹². In addition, locals and visitors will utilise the golf course area for recreation and exercise.



- The Master Plan indicated the community prioritises retention of the golf course as an important feature of the future plans¹⁰.
- The community group supporting increased foreshore parking has previously proposed options to reduce the size of the golf course to accommodate changes to the Holiday Park boundaries to allow increased parking. This is not feasible from a financial or tourism perspective as the golf course is only six holes as it currently stands and a tight layout, any reduction in size does not make it a viable destination and would invalidate the lease arrangements.

Environmental factors

- Golf course provides open green space which is valued by the community¹⁰.

Economic factors

- The golf course provides a sports facility for the local community and tourism attraction for visitors contributing economic benefit to the community.

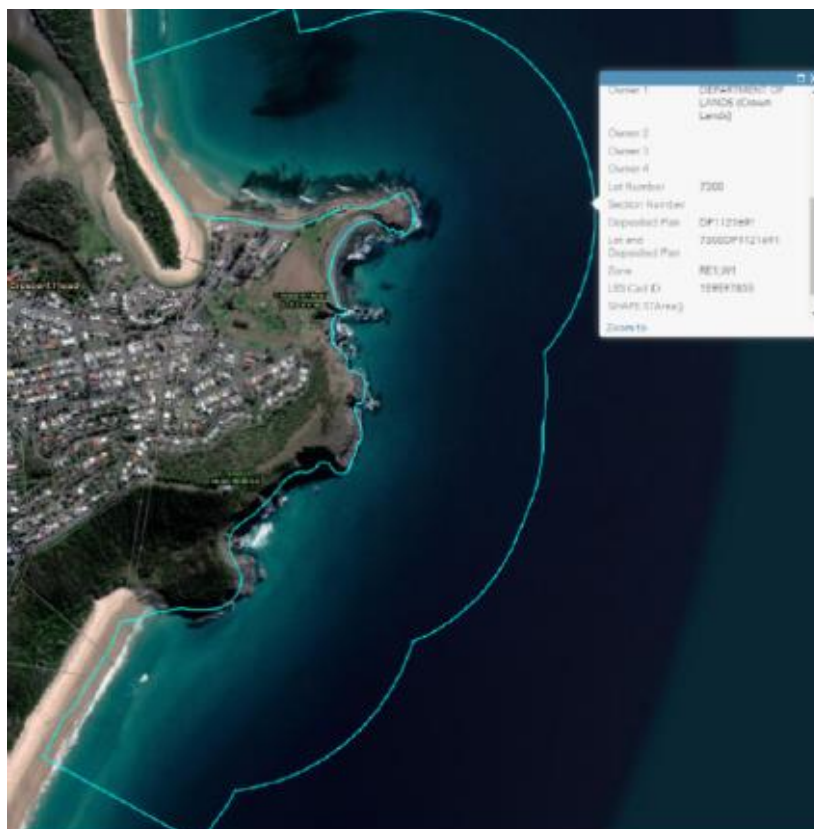
3.3. Foreshore



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- The foreshore area is located on Crown Land with future development aligned to Crown Land regulatory requirements and strategic principles²⁰.
- The Crescent Head Surf Club has a separate lease with Crown Lands and does not form part of the KSC Managed Crown Land Reserve.
- Crescent Head has a designated Surf Reserve which are areas protected for use by the public and surfing community, they have environmental, cultural, or historical significance in Australian Surf Culture. In NSW their protection is provided by being located within Crown Land and reserved for the purpose of recreation. Lot 7300 DP1121691 Reserve number 1014768 was notified in June 2008 for the purpose of surfing recreation and runs adjacent to the existing foreshore carpark⁸. The surf reserve is only designated in the water bounded by the coast as show in the diagram on the next page.





- The adopted Master Plan identified the following initiatives for the foreshore area¹⁰:
 - The need for a traffic management and parking plan to address concerns raised by the community regarding pedestrian safety, traffic congestion and traffic flow between the foreshore and village, especially along Reserve Road
 - Improvements required to local amenities
 - Beautification of the streets and parks around foreshore, beach, and village centre
 - Improve public access to crown reserves with view to creating a coastal walking track
- The Public Domain Plan adopted in 2020 prioritised green space and consolidation of public areas with clear separation between community and vehicular areas. Option A for the carpark was identified as the preferred layout despite recommendation to defer decision to allow for further design work and community consultation¹¹.
 - Following a notice of motion in at the May 2021 Council meeting, further concept plans were developed for the foreshore to include greater parking whilst maintaining greenspace principles⁵, however due to negative feedback from the community and conflicting views Council resolved in July 2021 to require further community consultation and design work to be completed over a 24-month period⁴.
- The footprint is to exclude the area in front of the Surf Club (circled) as work on the site is planned during calendar year 2022 to finalise the detailed design to enable work to progress

to remove asbestos and construct the area in accordance with the final design, subject to confirmation of funding availability.

Social / cultural factors

- The key driver for the Crescent Head Foreshore Review project is the conflicting views and division within the community regarding the proposed design for the foreshore and carparking area as presented in the Public Domain Plan 2020 and the subsequent additional designs considered in at the Ordinary Council meeting in July 2021.
- Community engagement conducted during the Public Domain Plan indicated the following^{8/11/18}:
 - Key themes identified by the community to be addressed as part of the Public Domain Plan included improved pedestrian safety, protecting the natural environment, improved greenspace, recreational facilities, and amenities, reduce traffic issues but also to balance this with sufficient access to the foreshore and carparking.
 - Division in community regarding foreshore carparking, specifically relating to volume of car spaces and the ability to watch the surf from your car. This has been the driver of the petitions, public meetings, and some submissions.
 - Draft Public Domain Plan received 568 proforma submissions which focused on retaining carpark spaces and carparking along the foreshore⁸. Three petitions were received from the same group that created the proforma letters, with one of the key reasons for the foreshore carpark spaces being it is socially important from a 'surfing culture' perspective.⁸
 - Responses to the Draft Public Domain Plan Your Say Macleay survey indicated although most of the respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the proposed designs, there was a proportion of the respondents who were not satisfied with the foreshore designs, which represented a greater percentage than in the other areas⁸.

Design area	% Very satisfied or satisfied	% Neutral	% Not satisfied
Foreshore Surf Break (1)	66%	10%	24%
Foreshore Surf Break (2)	62%	8%	30%
Surf Break Park	59%	8%	33%
SLSC Sector	69%	15%	16%
Killick Creek Play Park	70%	15%	15%
Foreshore Carpark			
Option A	61%	4%	35%
Option B	52%	9%	39%
Option C	47%	18%	35%



- Save the Crescent Head Carpark group raised the actual number of car spaces as a contentious issue, with the Public Domain Plan identifying 110 formal spaces and the group disputing this, however the difference is driven by additional informal car spaces which then take the total number of cars being parked to approximately 130. The foundation for the group's concerns is proposed to be the impact the concept plans would have on the status of the Crescent Head National Surfing Reserve and the legacy to the surfing community. The carpark along the foreshore is seen as being a key part of surfing culture, embedded in the view that people gather in the carpark or watch the surf from their cars.
- The Save the Carpark Group linked the MVCHP Future Development Plans with suggesting the changes proposed as part of the Public Domain Plan was part of an overarching strategy by Council to gain approval for additional cabins in the oceanfront precinct⁵. This potentially created some confusion within the community, which may have supported some of the petition signings however the alternative plan for Crescent Head Holiday Park was adopted by Council in April 2021 thereby negating this as a valid position.
- The alternative view from other segments of the of the community is they feel there is limited green space along the foreshore available for public use, with the carpark dominating the area. It was identified by some segments they can feel excluded from using the foreshore as at times due to the car-based gatherings overflow onto the path, people using the carpark for camping, people changing in public and leaving dogs tied up in an area where there is only a narrow path to be shared by all community members and visitors⁸.
- There are segments of the community who support the existing design plans, feel the engagement has been sufficient over 3 years and there is concern that the division in the community will result in many people not wanting to share their opinions in the future¹³
- Anecdotal feedback from business owners is many are reluctant to share their opinions or show support for Council publicly¹² due to the significant division within the community and their concerns regarding the impact on their business.
- Increasing visitation places pressure on environment, infrastructure, and social aspects of the community¹¹.
- The grassed area beside the boat ramp and near the park on the Killick Creek side is often used as an informal gathering place for the Indigenous community^{12/13}.
- The National Surfing Reserves organisation is the central Australian Group that facilitate nomination and management of National Surfing Reserves (NSR). NSR are defined as *“‘iconic’ places of intrinsic environmental, heritage, sporting, and cultural value to a nation. NSR embrace all peoples to enjoy, understand and protect special coastal environments of universal value to the surfing world. A Surfing Reserve does not attempt to exclude any user group”* (<https://www.surfingreserves.org/what-is-nsr/>). There are specific criteria for World Surfing Reserve, National Surfing Reserve and Regional Surfing Reserves to be met before an area is declared a surf reserve. The criteria relate to quality of waves, consideration of the



area as sacred by International, National or Regional surfers, and the long term usage of the beach and wave environment by the surfing community (including a long history of SLSC and board riders clubs). It should be noted the criteria do not reference the ability to park a car near the reserve or the cultural significance of congregating around cars near a surfing area, or the ability the view the surf reserve.

Environmental factors

- The Area circled around the Surf Club is excluded from future design and consultation due to the identification of an asbestos issue. Council has worked with Safe Work NSW to complete short term remediation with a permanent solution to be implemented during the 2022 calendar year, however this is subject to confirmation of funding availability.
- Car parking requirements have changed overtime to accommodate larger vehicles¹².
- Plummer & Smith identified the following environmental factors to be considered in future designs as part of the Public Domain Plan¹¹:
 - Car parking and vehicular infrastructure dominates and segments the foreshore with public open spaces very narrow and disconnected for other public open spaces¹.



- There is a single 2m wide path along the foreshore which becomes congested at busy times with congregation for picnics and socialising makes the path not ideal¹¹. There is also overflow as it abuts the car park where people also congregate around cars etc.
- Traffic Management and Parking plan produced by GTA Consultants identified issues with speeding along Reserve Road, traffic congestion and vehicle queuing as they wait to get into the carpark during peak periods.

- A lack of footpaths around the intersections of Reserve Road and the carpark can create safety issues for pedestrians as they generally walk along the road and through the carpark to access the beach and the creek.
- Identification of erosion and decline of foreshore pandanus due to environmental and human factors with consideration also to be given to the impact of ocean swell on rock retaining wall both along the ocean face and entrance to Killick Creek
- Consideration to vegetation types to be given along foreshore¹¹ as the two main foreshore edge trees – Pandanus and Casuarina have different impacts on understory vegetation which then has implications for erosion i.e. Casuarina canopy allows filtered light enabling understory vegetation growth which protects against erosion whereas the Pandanus does not.

Economic factors

- Crescent Head is one of the key tourist destinations in the Macleay Valley, attracting international and Australian visitors who make an important contribution to the \$147M spend per annum across the Macleay Valley Coast region¹².
- Estimated number of visitors to Crescent Head per year (based on Tourism Australia data) is 140,400 per annum¹².
- Development of the foreshore is not currently budgeted and will potentially be reliant on the support of Federal or State grants.

3.4. Holiday Park



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- Crown Land obligations require Council to manage and develop the Crescent Head Holiday Park as a commercial business to fund future maintenance and upgrades to Crown reserves in the LGA².
- Crown Land Management Review 2014 also highlights the obligation for Councils as Crown Land managers to obtain an appropriate return on the Crown estate, including opportunities to enhance revenue.

- The MVCHP Future Development plans were adopted by Council in April 2021, including the alternative plan for Crescent Head Holiday Park⁶.
- Crescent Head Holiday Park is under a management contract to ATPM until 2027¹² and Council has an obligation to ensure infrastructure maintenance and development supports the competitive position of the Holiday Park.

Social / cultural factors

- Crescent Head Holiday Park is the primary accommodation provider for the area. Although Crescent Head has the highest occupancy of the MVCHP, it achieves low customer satisfaction scores in research conducted by ATPM¹².
- A visitor survey completed as part of the community engagement for MVCHP Future Development achieved 263 respondents, who indicated they predominately travelled with their caravan (51%) and usually stayed on a powered site (76%). Approximately one third (32%) stayed one night; 46% of visitors stayed more than two nights but less than a week; 30% stayed for an extended period during off peak and 19% stayed during school holidays¹⁷.
- Extensive community consultation was conducted as part of the MVCHP Future Development project focusing on the area within the existing holiday park boundaries. The key themes that emerged in relation to Crescent Head Holiday Park¹⁷:
 - Desire for the Holiday Park to respond to the character of the broader area and build on the work completed as part of the Crescent Head Public Domain Plan.
 - Ensure an appropriate mix of accommodation opportunities, minimising the number of additional cabins, particularly in areas considered to be intrusive to views.
 - Future development to increase the quality of the communal guest facilities by improvement to amenities and camp kitchens.
 - The need to retain the caravan and camping character of the area, whilst addressing the need for upgrades and improvements to meet the changing market needs.
 - Clarify the future of annual holiday van sites in the context of their contribution to the area whilst retaining permanent resident sites in line with their current occupancy agreement with Council.
- Community feedback obtained during the Public Domain Plan community engagement indicated some segments of the community potentially do not understand the value of the holiday park to the broader LGA or the Crown requirements to manage and develop the park as a commercially viable business¹². Therefore, it is recommended future community engagement provides some education on these factors.

Environmental factors

- Rock wall along Killick Creek requires significant rehabilitation prior to the footpath being constructed¹⁸.
- When planning changes to the park consideration needs to be given to the increasing size of vehicles to be accommodated within Holiday Park, overflow parking and appropriate turning circles¹².



- Sites bordering Killick Creek currently meet regulatory requirements for site size¹⁸. Future pathways and boundary separation designs need to consider compliance with site size regulations¹⁸.
- Internal discussions regarding moving the path along Killick Creek closer to the rock wall edge or using a cantilevered path over the rock wall have not reached resolution – there is a need to ensure Holiday Park site size compliance while maintaining access to the public as the path provides a connection between Willow Street Park through to the foreshore and along the coast to Little Nobby. There is a need to also consider environmental factors associated with the rock wall, public safety, and compliance with coastal management processes¹².

Economic factors

- Crescent Head Holiday Park has the highest occupancy rate and generates the greatest revenue of the MVCHP group. Given Council's financial position the Holiday Park provides critical financial support for maintaining Crown Lands which would otherwise have to be funded by the rate payer. The MVCHPs were budgeted to contribute over \$3M (excluding depreciation) to Council's 2021-22 operating result, with the Crescent Head Holiday Park contributing approximately 42% of that result.
- Revenue generated from MVCHPs is used to reinvest in maintaining and upgrading tourism accommodation offering to ensure the parks meet visitors' expectations and provide a competitive tourism offering.
- To meet Crown Lands requirements Council needs to ensure MVCHPs are run efficiently; maintained and developed to meet tourism industry standards¹².
- The holiday parks are the predominant form of accommodation in the Macleay Valley Coast region¹².
- The Crescent Head Holiday Park is a key driver of economic benefit to the village and the broader shire through tourism and employment.

3.5. Killick Creek



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- Crescent Head Master Plan identified an initiative to investigate and implement key recommendations as part of Killick Creek Management Plan in DP 2017-2021. In addition, the Master Plan identified to retain and improve public access to crown reserves with the view to create a coastal walking track¹⁰
- The adopted Public Domain Plan 2020 proposed design increased the path width and the creation of a subtle and natural separation between the Holiday Park and public space¹¹.
- The Holiday Park Killick Creek sites (135 to 153) currently meet the minimum site size (65m²) in accordance with the *Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005*. The sites also meet the requirement of 3m from boundaries other than a public road. A report by Locale Consulting on Holiday Park site compliance suggests the proposed design in the Public Domain Plan may impact site compliance and proposes movement of the path closer to the rock wall as an option for consideration¹⁵.

Social / cultural factors

- The Killick Creek area provides a public path connecting Willow Street to the foreshore. During peak periods Holiday Park residents do overflow into the public area¹².
- Community feedback via the Your Say Macleay survey on the Draft Public Domain Plan indicated 77% of respondents were satisfied with the draft plans, 9% not satisfied and 14% neutral⁸
- Due to small size of the geographical area, environmental factors, and compliance requirements there is limited opportunity for community to influence the area.

Environmental factors

- Coastal Management Program will assess the rock wall between the boat ramp and Willow Street along Killick Creek to provide recommendations for the rehabilitation of the rock wall. This is scheduled to be completed in the next 2-3 years (potentially post OP 26/27)¹⁸.
- Fluctuating water quality in Killick Creek and estuary was identified in the Crescent Head Master Plan¹⁰
- Feedback from Community engagement for MVCHP Future Park Development raised the issue that the rock wall was 'collapsing' into the creek and needed improvement¹⁷.
- Key considerations are rock wall rehabilitation, pedestrian safety (specifically if pathway is moved closer to the rock wall) and shorter asset life due to potential storm surges¹⁸

Economic factors

- Sites (135 to 153) along Killick Creek boundary have 94% occupancy generating revenue of approximately \$330,000 per annum¹⁵.



3.6. Willow Street Park



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- The Public Domain Plan¹¹ proposes Willow Street as a more formalised overflow and peak period parking for the Holiday Park while maintaining open space.
- Based on the number of sites within the Holiday Park, there is a regulatory obligation to provide twelve additional car spaces for Holiday Park visitors, of which three are required to be disabled parking⁷.

Social / cultural factors

- Willow Street Park is valued by the local community as a quieter area to access the creek and the foreshore, however there are currently very few facilities located on site¹¹. The area is also used for overflow parking for the Holiday Park.
- Future design elements need to consider the potential impact on residential houses¹¹.
- Public Domain Plan community engagement indicates 71% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the proposed design, 17% were neutral and 12% not satisfied⁸.
- Crescent Head Holiday Park experiences high occupancy all year around therefore requirements for overflow parking are no longer just during peak periods¹².

Environmental factors

- Flat, open space with beach shower, steps to access the creek, small shelters, and picnic tables making this an adaptable space for the local community and suitable for additional parking spaces¹¹

Economic factors

- Provision of overflow parking for Crescent Head Holiday Park at an additional daily rate would provide a small amount of incremental revenue⁷.

3.7. Muddy Arm Park



Regulatory obligations and existing commitments

- Crescent Head Master Plan¹⁰ and the Public Domain Plan¹¹ identifies improving recreational access to Muddy Arm as a passive recreation location and quiet environmental haven for the community.

Social / cultural factors

- Muddy Arm Park is currently utilised by the community as an informal walking area¹¹; however, Councillors have previously raised the potential for the land to be used as an Eco Study Facility, alternative space for the Holiday Park or overflow parking¹²¹³.

Environmental factors

- Muddy Arm Park is open grassland adjacent to Killick Creek, fringed by sparse trees and ecological/wetland area. The northern and western areas of the zone are ecologically sensitive providing sheltered habitat for a range of birds and other flora and fauna¹¹.
- Further environmental studies are required as part of the Coastal Management Program prior to any further designs being considered for this area¹².

4. Recommendation

The key factors influencing the recommendation on the geographic footprint include:

- Regulatory obligations, specifically regarding Crown Land management requirements.
- Economic contribution of the Holiday Park to the local area and broader shire in terms of visitation and economic benefit to local businesses.
- Revenue generated by the Holiday Park is reinvested into Crown Lands within Crescent Head and across the shire therefore precluding any changes that would negatively impact visitation or the revenue generated.



- The extensive community engagement across the Crescent Head Master Plan, Public Domain Plan and MVCHP Future Development projects.
- The Surf Club has been excluded as it is not part of the KSC Managed Reserve and there are existing commitments to design and complete work in the immediate surrounds of the Club to address environmental issues associated with asbestos in the area.
- Little Nobby has been excluded as there is an existing design and works project planned for 2022 to address environmental issues in the area, subject to funding availability.
- The environmental considerations (i.e., coastal management processes, rock wall) and Holiday Park compliance requirements along the Killick Creek foreshore will define any designs for the area, therefore the community is unable to influence Council decision.
- Environmental considerations associated with sensitive flora and fauna in Muddy Arm Park excludes this from the geographic footprint until further studies are completed as part of the Coastal Management Program.

There has been extensive engagement with the Crescent Head community and with visitors to the area with the primary area of conflicting views related to the oceanfront foreshore area, specifically focusing on the number and location of carparks. Segments of the community would value increased green space and public facilities to enjoy the foreshore area while other segments of the community value the availability of car spaces facing the ocean for parking, viewing the ocean and gathering purposes. Due to the divided feedback, external consultants, Plummer & Smith, as part of the Public Domain Plan, recommended a deferral of decisions relating to this area to allow for further community consultation and design discussions to reach a solution. This report also supports the view that further community engagement and design work is required, focusing on a narrow geographical footprint to ensure the community can provide input into a design solution that best meets the needs for all locals and visitors to the area, now and into the future.

The Killick Creek foreshore has been excluded from the recommended footprint as there are limitations to the design options due to narrow geographical area, the need to improve and maintain the rock wall as part of Council's coastal management processes, and the requirement to ensure the Holiday Park remains compliant with site size regulations.

The Holiday Park and Golf Course boundaries are maintained and excluded from further review as both properties are under subject to current contractual arrangements (a management agreement and a lease respectively) until 2027 and comprise a critical part of Council's commercial management of Crown Land. The Holiday Park in particular, provides significant revenue to ensure maintenance and development of Crown Lands across the LGA and given Council's current financial position this revenue needs to be maintained or increased to ensure Council's financial sustainability.

Little Nobby has been excluded from the recommended geographical footprint as the proposed designs were well accepted by the community and there is a need to address environmental degradation to the area. Detailed design work is underway for this area.

Willow Street Park has also been excluded from the recommended geographical footprint as Council adopted the proposed designs as part of the Public Domain Plan and there has been no issues raised by the community to date.



Finally, Muddy Arm Park requires further environmental studies as part of the Coastal Management program due to the ecologically sensitive habitat before any further designs are considered for this area.

In conclusion, the recommended geographic footprint for future community engagement and design over the next 24 months is:

Western limit: past the footbridge to the point where the path narrows along Killick Creek

Southern limit: bounded by the existing Holiday Park boundaries

Eastern limit: where the path narrows and meets the Golf course towards Little Nobby

The footprint is to exclude the area in front of the Surf Club (circled) the area is not on Council managed Crown Reserve as there is a separate lease agreement between Crown Lands and the Surf Club. In addition, work on the site is planned during calendar year 2022 to remove asbestos and construct the area in accordance with the final design, subject to confirmation of funding availability.

The recommended geographic footprint is also to exclude the Crescent Head Holiday Park as the MVCHP Future Development Plans have been adopted by Council in April 2021.



Other considerations for the future project

- Crown Lands feedback on the KSC Plan of Management (POM) may have implications for the geographic footprint, which will need to be considered in future phases.
- Future community engagement will need to take a mediation approach to address community division on the foreshore design.

- Reluctance of some community members and organisations to continue to engage due to the division in the community, particularly for business owners, may require innovative or alternative methods of engagement to ensure anonymity of respondents.
- Education of the community regarding the value of the Crescent Head Holiday Park to the local community in terms of its economic contribution to the village and the broader shire through tourism and employment; along with the contribution the revenue makes towards the maintenance and improvement of Crown Lands across the LGA.
- The community will need to understand the reasons for the narrow definition for future engagement and design to ensure there is transparency in Council processes.



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