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# Town Centre Master Plan

Bowral | Mittagong | Moss Vale

Version #2 - 2014



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Project: Town Centre Master Plan - Moss Vale, Mittagong and Bowral-Section 1.0

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#001	September 2013	Draft report of community consultation	
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# Vision

THE TOWN CENTRES WILL BE SENSITIVELY AND INCREMENTALLY TRANSFORMED TO ADDRESS THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE THE REGION THROUGH. IMPROVED MOBILITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY, AS A COHESIVE EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING STRENGTH EXPRESSED IN OUR COMMUNITY VALUES. EACH OF THE TOWN CENTRES WILL CHARACTERISE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RURAL HERITAGE INTO THE FUTURE. THE INTERPLAY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY LIFE WILL BE EFFECTIVELY EXPRESSED THROUGH A UNIQUE BLEND OF RURAL ACTIVITIES, ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES, PRESERVATION, SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



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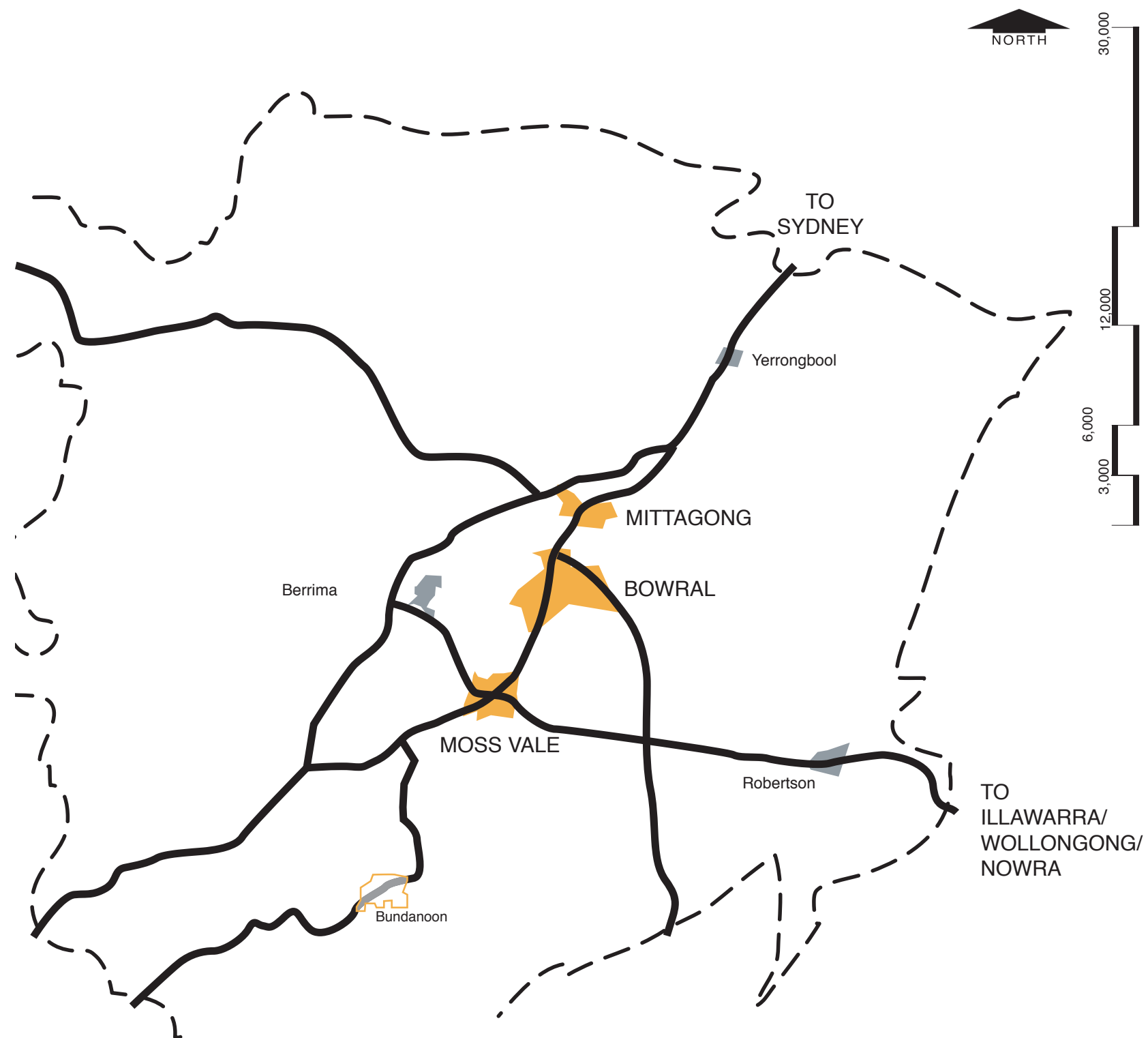


Figure 1. 1 - location map

# 1.1 Introduction

*A Master Plan is a high level plan designed to provide a coordinated approach to future development. Master Plans contain a series of illustrations and explanatory text to specify the planning principles and controls within a particular area as a whole. Their intent is to guide landowners, government and the community on how public areas and assets can be improved and where development should occur.*

The Master Planning process will determine how the Town Centres of Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong can best serve the future of the Southern Highlands. This process will, consider heritage, setting, existing uses, future uses and sustainability. The Southern Highlands Town Centres Masterplan is a long term vision for the region that proposes a long term vision for development.

A master plan assists in providing supportive analysis and guidance in the future planning of an area. The final master plans will be non-statutory documents that communicates a vision, outcomes and strategies to facilitate the dynamics, maintenance and management within the town centres.

The master plan process will investigate ways to update and reinvigorate the area within the community vision. It will explore:

- how we can maintain and reinforce the role of each Town Centre in a manner that they retain their individual and unique qualities, provide an attractive, pleasant and safe environment
- how we can improve the public realm and provide well-designed public spaces to increase each centre’s safety and amenity.<sup>i</sup>

**Intent**

This document proposes to:

- Provide a consistent point of reference for making more informed decisions,
- Assist budget forecasting
- Allow better use of limited resources such as revenue and land,
- Enhance and sustain community character, pride and development of values.
- Enhance the images of each of the Town Centres.

**Expectation**

Practical workable document that will enhance the decision making process with respect to

Cohesive collective vision for the three Town Centres that acknowledges their individual character and qualities.

- Enhance the public domain
- Provide a safe walkable environment
- Allow for the future economic prosperity and development within the town centre areas
- Guide the implementation of benchmark development

<sup>i</sup> Version 2



# 1.2 Approach

*Our project approach is divided into a series of sequential elements, each progressively informs the other :*

Stage 1:  
Observation and Analysis  
This stage involved a physical review of each of the Town Centre areas, relevant historical data and background reports. Initial primary research focused on internal review and discussions with Council staff, this was further enhanced with presentations and information gathering sessions with key community member stakeholders. These sessions focused on each individual Town Centre, as well as their dynamic interrelationship. Support and assistance was provided by Master of Urban Planning students of the University of Technology who undertook a Masterplanning project on Moss Vale Town Centre, material and presentations from their project provided valuable information and insight.

The community working sessions focused on delivering three key achievements :

- Community interaction and creative thinking through active dialogue, attention and listening
- Key desires, wants and needs.
- Visioning- Thinking about positive change.

The process used a combination of discussion, observation, review and graphic/written material to assist all attendees to actively participate and contribute.

Stage 2:  
Masterplan development  
Based on the initial observations, analysis and community/stakeholder sessions a number of design principles and objectives assisted in defining a master plan for each town centre indicating key opportunities for staged catalyst projects. Ongoing community input was provided following the forum environment through interaction with the Wingecarribee Shire Council “Your Say” website and forum established for the Town Centres Masterplan project. Following this masterplan options were further refined utilising in-house Council expertise.

Stage 3:  
Following community review the development of the following documents will support Town Centre management and asset maintenance as well as give direction for the implementation of new work.

- Integrate as a key support element of the WSC Local Planning Strategy and its further review and development.<sup>ii</sup>
- Town Centre Guidelines and Strategies

<sup>ii</sup> Version #2



# 1.3 Structure

This section presents the key elements that present the Master Plan approach and delivery, these are:

- Observation and analysis
- Visioning
- Synthesis

Ongoing development will provide strategies for:

- Consolidation, and
- Delivery

The working documents are represented in the diagram shown in “Figure 1. 2 - process”.

The Town Centres Masterplan is collated as a single volume for all of the three town centres.

The Objectives and Principles are relevant to all of the town centres.

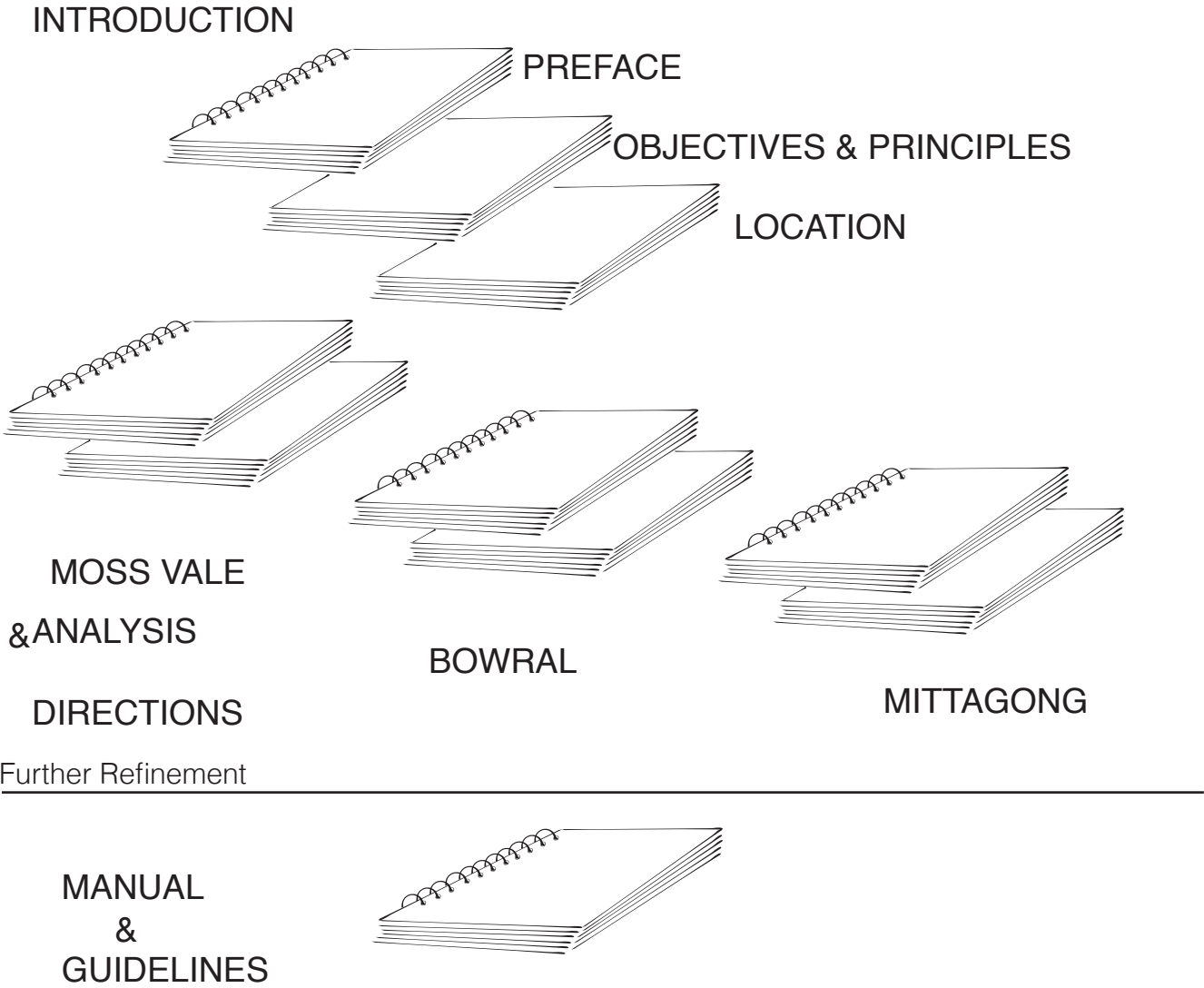
The analysis and directions document for each town centre may be separated as separate volumes, as well, as other town centres, villages and neighborhood centres added over time.

It is proposed that the document is allowed to be treated as a guideline and amended over time as required to suit changes and needs.

Key projects may be treated as providing a benchmark for the further development and refinement of streetscape elements such as : pavement types, furniture, signage and “Wayfinding”, materials, planting types and maintenance and management<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>iii</sup> Version #2

Figure 1. 2 - process



# 1.4 Overview

The Masterplan is a guiding document for Council and the community. It will be implemented by more detailed tools which provide technical guidance on the design and delivery of the strategies and plans contained in this Masterplan.

## Location and Context

The townships of Moss Vale, Mittagong and Bowral are located in Wingicarribee Shire Council which lies within the Southern Highlands region of New South Wales (NSW). The area is approximately 120km south west of the NSW capital, Sydney, and 160 km north east of Canberra, the Australian national capital. Each of the Town Centres combines to offer a network of activity nodes serving the needs of he Southern Highlands community

## History

The traditional owners of the land are acknowledged as the Gundungurra and D’harawal people. Post European settlement was initiated by explorer and Surveyor General of New South Wales, John Oxley, who was the first to occupy land where Bowral now stands. The 1860’s saw rapid development through the Main Southern Railway Line. Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale grew quickly. A number of settlements across the Shire sprung up in the late 18th century and early 19th century.

The region has played an important part in the development of the area for farming. Cooler climates, reliable rainfall and good soils attracted many farmers who cleared a large part of the Shire’s remnant vegetation, resulting in the current landscape mix of open paddock and bushland areas.(source: WCS website-Heritage in the Wingecarribee Shire) Both Bowral and Moss Vale developed in anticipation of the completion of the railway in 1867. These developments were privately initiated and not towns surveyed by the government of the day. In some cases this resulted in Civic buildings being located along “secondary” roads rather than the prime thoroughfare.

Infrastructure (electrical reticulation, telephone and sewage systems) introduced between 1889 and 1939 facilitated development closer to the primary roads. Post WW II development expanded subdivision further from the commercial centres of each town. The nature of development and expansion has impacted the level of pre 1940’s building stock, and has an effect on the heritage character of the three towns. While the relocation of the Hume Highway has impacted traffic movement, mobility remains a significant element that requires consideration and careful management into the future.

# 1.5 Strength Challenge and Opportunity

*Techniques used in collaborative events provide a valuable resource to identify opportunity, generate ideas, develop and test options, and take decisions.*

## Key Challenges

- Community perception of traffic congestion
- Culture and dependency on private motor vehicle use
- Preservation of “Rural” image
- Dynamics of multiple centres
- Delivering a sustainable outcome

## Key Strengths

- Regional Context and proximity to other major centres
- Lifestyle opportunities balancing employment, education, recreation and environment.
- Recognised and identifiable history in the development of the area.
- Proximity and quality in the physical environment



# 1.6 Objectives

*It is envisaged that the primary objectives are: to respect, protect and build on the area’s heritage links and rural character , as well as ensure the enhancement of the vitality, economic robustness and amenity of the centres*

It is vital that each of the Town Centres mutually support and contribute to the Southern Highlands regional context.

Primary Objectives that will assist this are to place emphasis upon:

- Local identity, individuality and character
- Connectivity through pedestrian amenity and priority, particularly for the mobility impaired through equal access for all.
- Engage with the community and other user groups
- Provide a Civic focus and hub
- develop projects that will support a dynamic incremental and sequential change. These projects are often termed a “Catalyst” Project<sup>iv</sup>
- Encourage diversity through the provision of spaces within the public realm that will allow for variety in activation and event staging.
- Support alternative modes of access and circulation that will reduce dependency on private motor vehicle use
- Acknowledge urban ecology and its role in supporting sustainable outcomes

<sup>iv</sup> The term “Catalyst” is used to suggest the initiation of a dynamic an ongoing process of beneficial and adaptive change

# 1.7 Community Expectations

*“Rural heritage with city comfort.”*

Wingecarribee Shire Council Community Forum comment

The community’s aspirations for the Town Centre which have been derived from the key themes of the community workshop discussion, are to:

- Establish a unique identity to make the Town Centres more attractive for residents and visitors
- Allow the streets to be more activated through outdoor cafes and goods on display.
- Cater for the outdoor festivals, concerts and markets by providing malls and plazas.
- Increase and improve the Centre’s entertainment and nightlife activities and facilities
- Maintain a local focus in the provision of produce and crafts in retailing as a key part of the Town Centre’s character
- Encourage redevelopment of the Centres businesses to make it more attractive
- Be creative and enterprising in ways to encourage continuous street front activation by filling empty shops.
- Improve and provide more open space for a range of users including families and children
- Improve the quality and accesibility of arcades, allys and laneways to better connect parts of the Centres and make them special in their own right
- Maintain and enhance the Centre’s important civic role, which needs to relate better to the rest of the centre
- Provide a higher level of upkeep and maintenance to the public areas, to encourage business owners and operators to improve the quality of their premises.





# 1.8 Consultation

“Rural heritage with city comfort.”

Wingecarribee Shire Council Community Forum comment

Public Forums in each Town Centre provided an opportunity to gain a first hand insight into how the community engaged with the Town Centres.

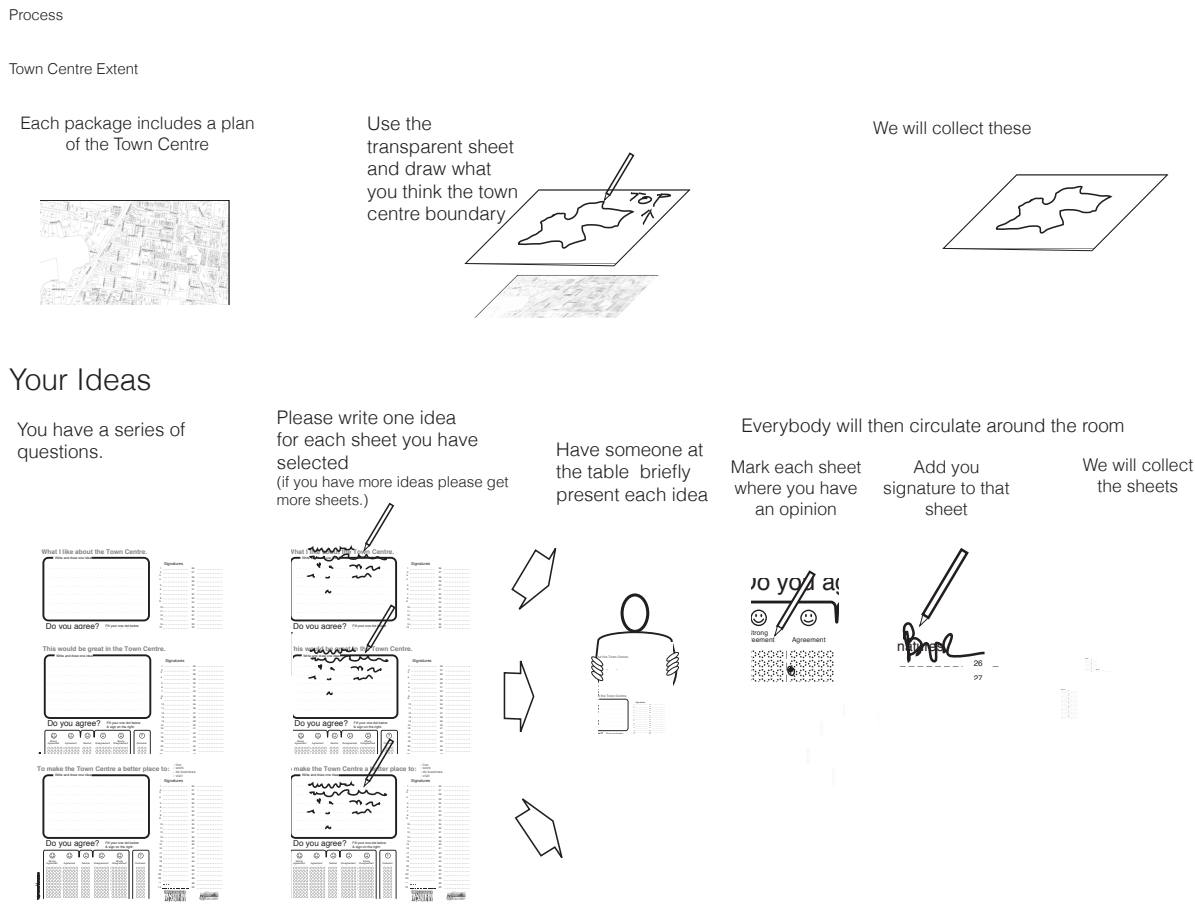


Figure 1. 3 - examples of public forum worksheets



Figure 1. 4 - photo from the Bowral public forum 2013

# 1.9 Principles

*The vitality of a Town Centre is a legacy of the physical and emotive dynamics of community engagement*

The vigor of any centre is a complex dynamic of people and place. A key purpose of this process is to support each Town Centre in its role to deliver an environment that is safe, clean, and easy to move around in. An enduring quality is the capacity for a town centre to realise its economic potential in a meaningful manner that enhances the user's experience,

The following key principles proposed provide a guide in assessing the current dynamic within each Town Centre and to make recommendations for its future direction in managing and

maintaining vital, and cohesive, urban town centres within the region.

These principles have been formulated from the key outcomes developed during a series of public forums and meetings with community stakeholder groups.

**2013 Community Strategic Plan**

In addition these principles are aligned with the 2031 Community Strategic Plan, that was developed through a much broader community engagement program.

Of primary significance was the connection the key goal of developing Places-"of distinct character, "where "people want to be".

This can be supported through principles and strategies that support:

- Safe pedestrian environments.
- Principal commercial and retail areas
- Premier evening and nighttime activity
- Transport/transit hub and engagement
- Civic presence, activity cultural and creative interaction
- Tourist destination service
- Protect and enhance the Rural/Urban feel through the enhancement of views and physical connection to the rural interface.
- Provide an environment that retains a strong connection to the sense of place and identity established.
- Respect and embrace the embedded history of the region<sup>v</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Version #2



### Key Principles

The report proposes 5 Key Principles that seek to guide public realm initiatives and gain public benefit from strategic opportunities that arise from the private sector development process.

#### Community Initiative and Participation

It is hoped that an initiative that may arise is a heightened level of community engagement and participation in delivering and supporting these principles. This contrasts with traditional community thinking of oppositional culture (in which) one of the only ways that citizens can engage planning and other public processes is by their power to say no.

The broader community has the capacity to engage with the public realm and activate a more positive relationship to planning the environment – rather than simply awaiting decisions by private

# AMENITY QUALITY PUBLIC REALM WALKABILITY

owners or developers and simply reacting and responding through public voice and action in powers to block projects.

A more desirable outcome would be if the community and its environment were to more rigorously participate in directing, planning and physically forming its own destiny through action? Such action is manifest in many examples and is known through Tactical Urbanism, the POP-Up movement and Better Block movements, where the community lead by example and initiative.

#### Strategic Framework

The Master Plans are a non-statutory document, that will inform the future development and preparation of the Local Planning Strategy and Local Plans that are key elements of any future revisions and amendments as required under the proposed amended Planning Scheme<sup>vi</sup>.

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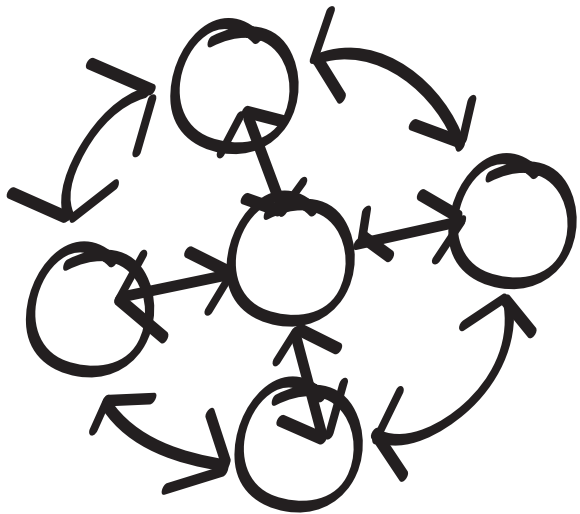
# 1.10 5 x Principles

*“provide the platform” Wingecarribee Shire Council 2031 Community Strategic Plan*

Quality in analysis, design and execution is important everywhere, the creation of successful places depends on the skills of designers, planners, managers, Councillors and the community to collectively contribute to the quality of the public realm.

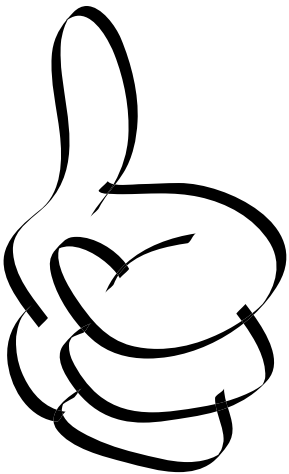
Identity and meaning are integral elements in recognising that no two places are identical, and that a generic approach that lacks meaning reinforces the idea you cannot simply copy good design. A quality outcome always arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and context.

An engaging public realm is rarely created by prescribing physical solutions, applying a prescribed kit of tools or through setting rigid or empirical design standards. The highest level of execution is facilitated through an approach that guides and places an emphasis on basic principles and objectives.



**Place**

Successful streets, spaces, and towns tend to have common elements or characteristics. These factors have been analysed to produce principles or objectives that will assist in collectively contributing to the development strategies and plans that will help shape the urban realm. This provides a prompt in the development of what must be considered and sought in the creation and delivery of a successful place.

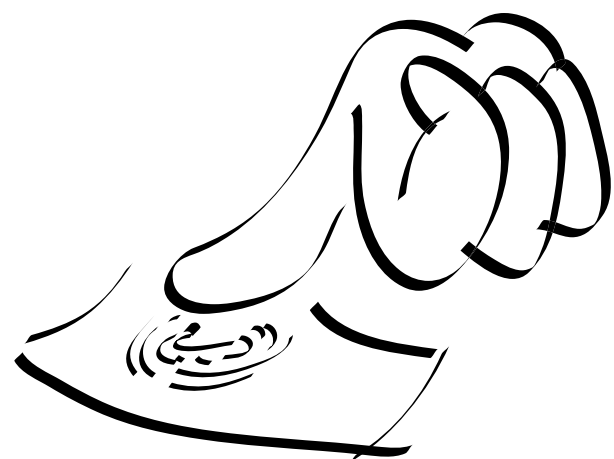


**Affordance and Amenity**

Circulation within each town centre comprises accessible paths of movement that are not restricted to the traditional footpath or street.

It is vital that the public realm including: streets, footpaths, lanes and access-ways, arcades, public conveniences, restrooms, car-parks and parks cater for the amenity of the user. This included ease of, protection from the elements, comfort, access and movement, consideration of safety and physical welfare.





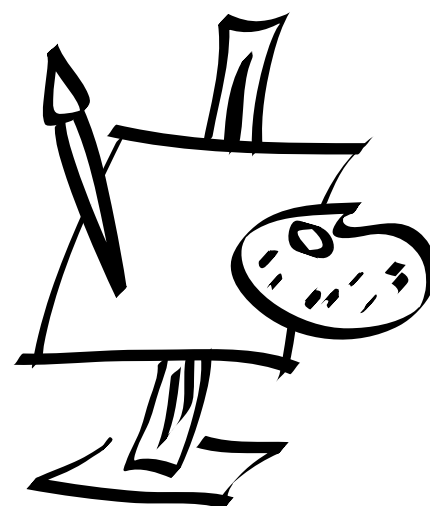
### Character and Identity

The distinctive qualities of a place generates its perceived character or identity. This becomes the “Urban Meaning” of that place that has developed by action and activity over time. This is generally affirmed as people interact, develop memories and experiences and form an emotional connection and level of comfort within a particular environment.



### Walkability

We proposed to provide streets for people, walking is not only healthy it supports sustainable principles. Provide an environment that is comfortable for all people of all age groups. Imperative to this is the balance between transport and traffic management and minimising areas of conflict where ease of pedestrian accessibility and movement is subservient to traffic.



### Culture

Creativity and culture play an active role in imparting and communicating the individuality and enterprise of a community.

Key to both creativity and cultural expression is its individuality and the contribution that this makes in exhibiting the unique quality of a place that makes it memorable.



### Quality

It is always desirable to deliver a benchmark of quality and consideration to all aspects of delivering and maintaining elements within the public realm, this reflects the aspirations of a community and reinforces civic pride<sup>vii</sup>.

<sup>vii</sup> “The intense concern with inter-city competition, place-making and leveraging in middle-class populations and inward investment has tended to sideline the wider goals of holistic and socially inclusive cultural planning” (Chatterton and Unsworth 2004)

# Affordance and Amenity

## Affordance and Amenity

Affordance and amenity relate to the capacity of an environment to identify and deliver a reasonable expectation in satisfying the needs and expectations of the user<sup>viii</sup>.

Each of the Town Centres provides a level of amenity through the provision of covered street awnings, connecting arcades and walkway, and a range of park and open space options.

### Vehicular Amenity

An overwhelming response from community forums however placed a heavy emphasis on two highly related factors:

- vehicular accessibility and
- parking provision.

Each of the Town Centres is effectively bisected by primary vehicular thoroughfares. Some of these roads fall under the control of a NSW state authority (Roads and Maritime Services). Bowral has a Traffic and Parking Strategy prepared and adopted by Council (2012). Moss Vale is currently (2014) having a Traffic and Parking Strategy prepared<sup>ix</sup>.

Observation and site investigation indicates that the core of each of the town centres sit within a walkable 400m radius, and, with possible future traffic management, have the capacity to provide a level of pedestrian amenity.

## Connecting Spaces

Circulation within each of the Town Centres may furnish accessible paths of movement that are no longer restricted to the traditional footpath or street. These routes take several forms including the enhancement of:

- Formal shopping arcades and pedestrian “alleyways”.
- Shared (traffic and pedestrian) Zones
- Linked public spaces and Squares and Plazas
- Malls and parks.

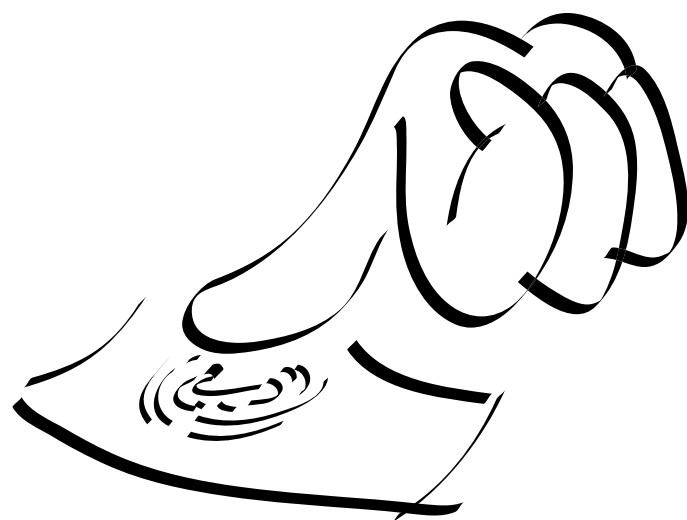
Future development opportunities may enhance amenity through:

- Active frontages to enliven the space and to provide safety and security
- Awnings, colonnades or pergolas. These elements are to provide pedestrian amenity and a transition zone between the public spaces and the buildings
- Public domain interface elements are to be co-ordinated between the staging of buildings to have a consistent outcome of proportion, materials and finish

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## Character and Individuality

### Character, Identity and Individuality

Within the Southern Highlands key factors that influence its “Character and Identity” are:

- Symbolic heart of a rural centre.
- Civic influence
- Civic space
- Parks and town spaces

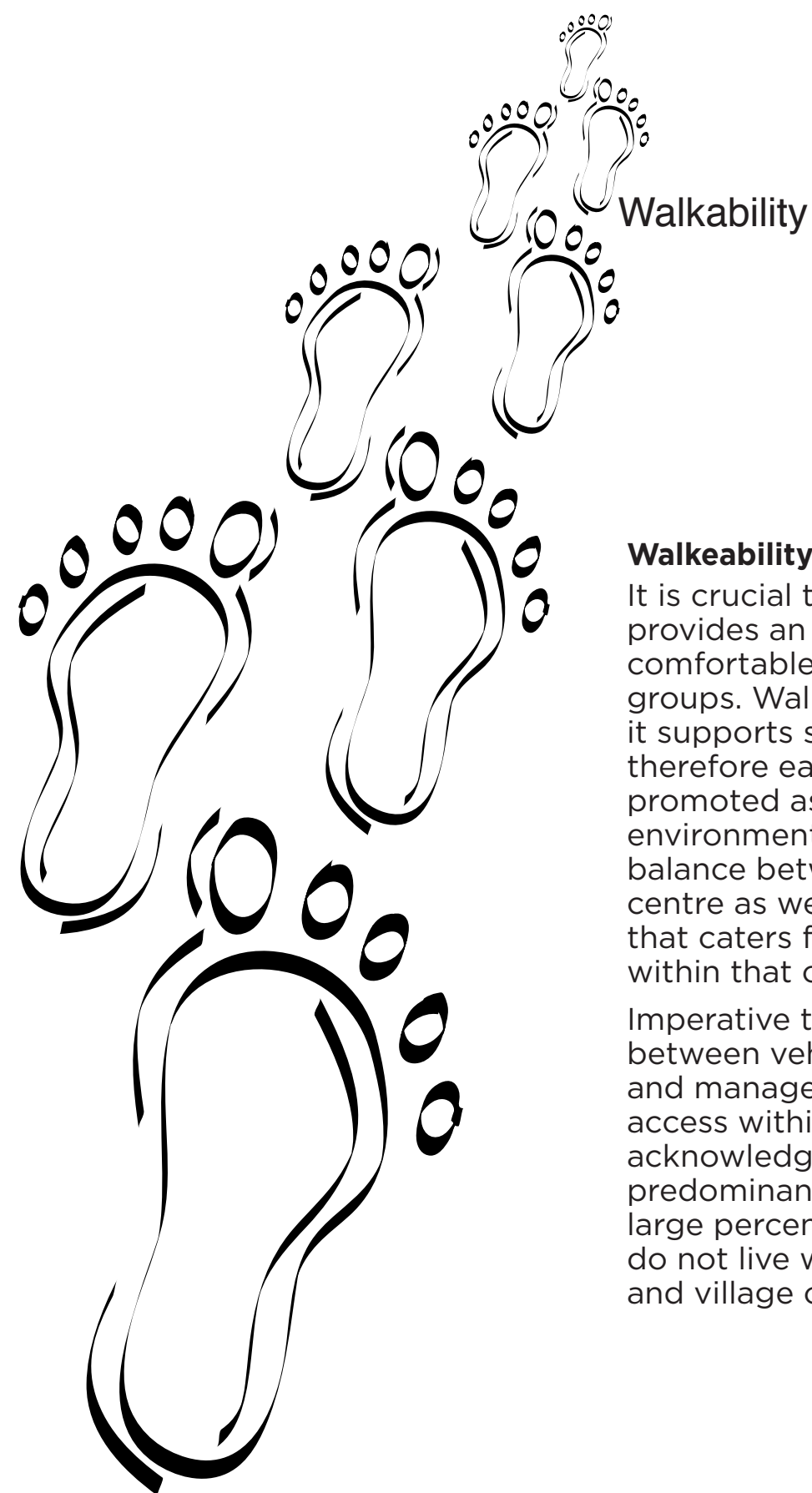
A unifying feature of the main street character of each town centre is the retention of verandahs and street awnings. This not only forms a remnant historic link within the built fabric of the town centres, the protective cover also provides a high level of physical protection and containment.

In general, public realm elements are characterised by disparate and inconsistent furnishings and finishes (such as paving and street furniture), which in many cases are quite worn due to sustained heavy use.

There is a high need for the refurbishment of each of the town centres streets and other public spaces, in order to improve the quality of the finishes and furnishings to bring them up to a quality that will convey an improved status in civic engagement and pride.

Notwithstanding this, there is a diverse character and qualities within each distinctive town centre, as well as the variety in built form and spatial character. This variety and peculiarity can be endorsed as a desired expression of a distinctive individuality.

To support this, it may be inappropriate to apply street quality improvements that are predominantly or overly ‘themed’, alternatively the public realm may provide a backdrop that allows the embedded meaning and characteristics of the area, generated by its activities and users, to take precedence.



### Walkability

It is crucial that each town centre provides an environment that is comfortable for all people of all age groups. Walking is not only healthy it supports sustainable principles, therefore each town centre is promoted as a safe accessible environment. This necessitates a balance between an accessible centre as well as an environment that caters for pedestrian mobility within that centre.

Imperative to this is the balance between vehicular accessibility and management, and that of easy access within the town centres. It is acknowledged that the Shire has a predominantly rural quality, where a large percentage of the population do not live within the urban town and village centres.

In addition to this each of the major village centres play a key role in the provision of economic services. Therefore commercial and retail services are not duplicated within each of the Village Centres. This requires inter-village travel, and currently the majority of travel is undertaken by private motor vehicle. This places pressure on each of the Town Centres to accommodate vehicle circulation and parking. Recent traffic studies (WSC Bowral Parking, Traffic and Transport Strategy) note that the majority of vehicular travel is generally Town Centre destination, and not specifically through traffic.

The density of traffic circulation, current road configuration and provision of car parking is often in conflict with appropriate pedestrian amenity with respect to accessibility within each of the Town Centres.

Therefore it is appropriate that the provision of a “walkable” environment, is also an environment where vehicular mobility and circulation is also effectively managed.

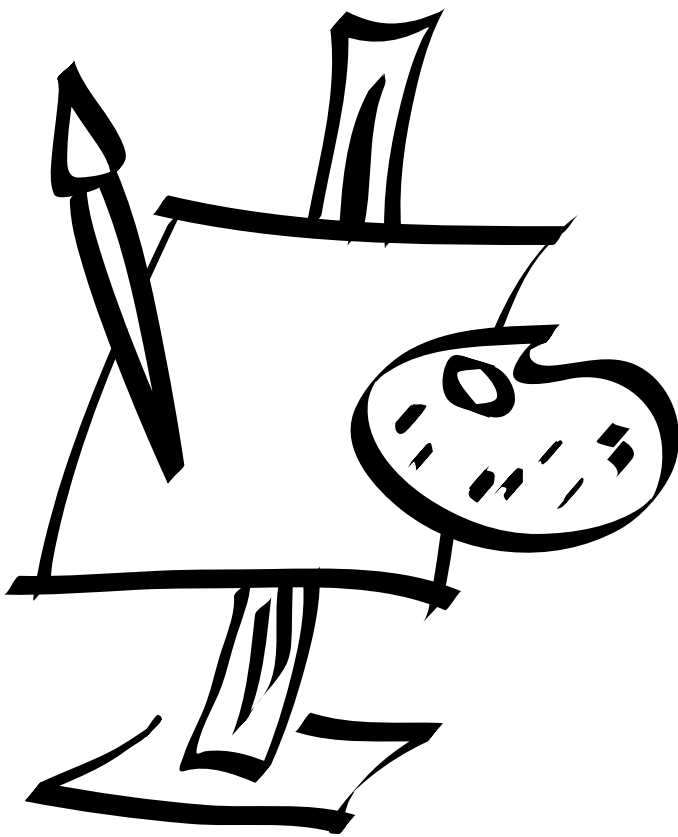
Ultimately a walkable environment places an emphasis on pedestrian amenity, where there is a high level of amenity and accessibility to the forms of public transport that service the Town Centre.

To support this it is imperative that the priority is placed upon the enhancement of the existing circulation network with a finer grained infill of walkways, arcades and alleyways that are safe and welcoming.

These environments often provide opportunity for activation through the development of small retail outlets, small plazas and courtyards, and the integration of public art.







**Culture**

A cultural and civic presence has the capacity to enhance the activation of a Town Centre.

The Southern Highlands is home to a diverse range of cultural activity, that supports and is supported by traditions and celebrations. The Town Centres provide an opportunity for cultural events to take place in their heart. Through the provision of appropriately scaled and dispersed spaces and venues, scale and suitable amenity allows for a diverse range of civic activities that would alternate throughout the year<sup>x</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> “Paul Keating, at the University of Technology Sydney on 30/11/00, said, ‘nothing is more important to a country than the way it thinks of itself. In other words, the commonly shared model of what its national values and priorities are. Everything else, including economic growth, flows from that’ (cf Howard: ‘national character is an important factor in achieving prosperity’)”

Town Centres are traditionally busy during the day, supported by commercial and retail activity. To maintain a vibrant and attractive centre it is also important to foster a level of public realm activity at night.

In addition to enhancing the economic sustainability of a centre, the physical presence of people supports a safer environment.

Cultural facilities and venues provide nodal activity points, that may link to other facilities such as dining venues, clubs and bars, and cinemas. Key areas of activity are supermarket shopping centres that now provide extended hours of operation. These pools of activation can enhance a precinct through improved connectivity and accessibility.

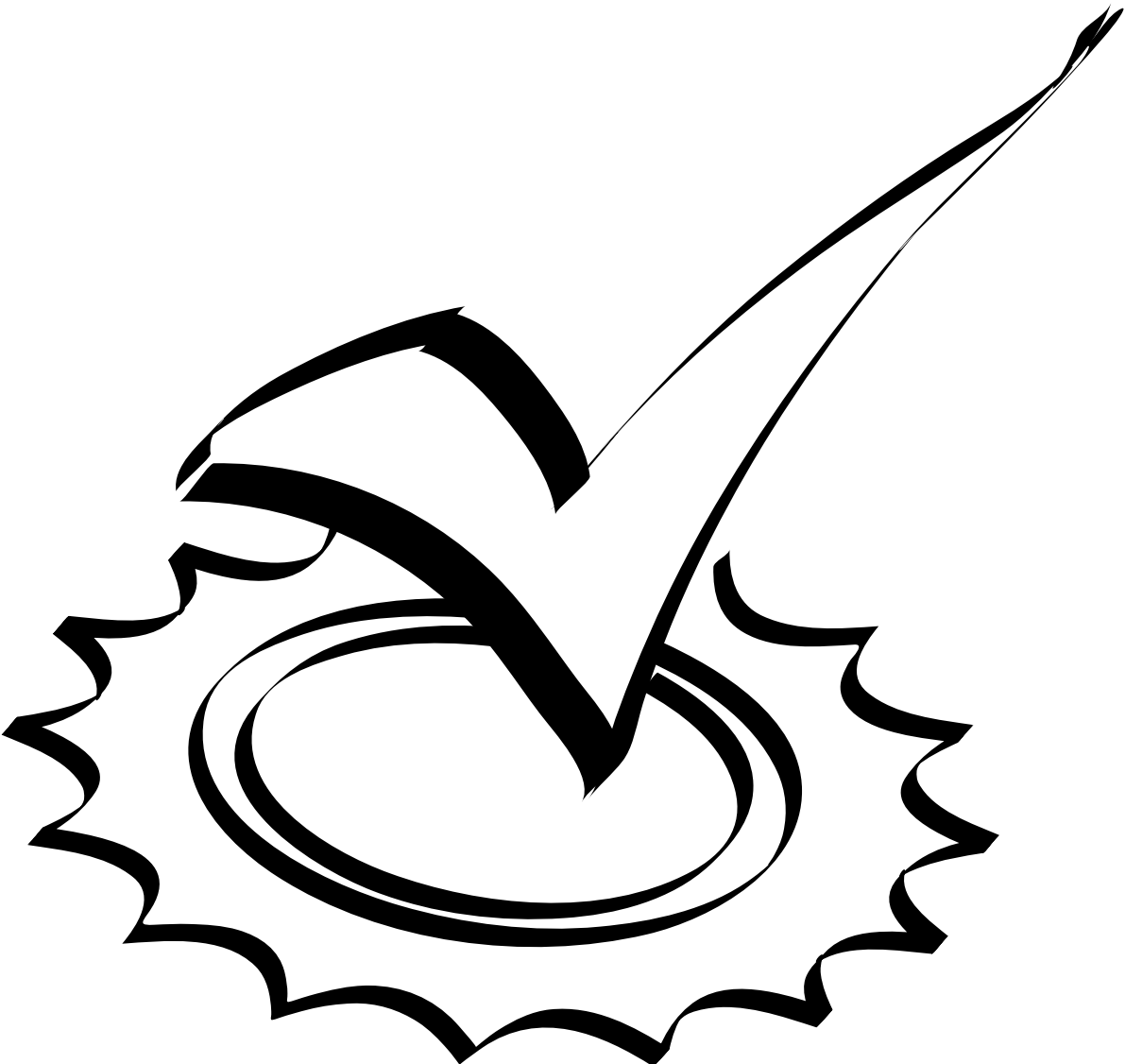
**Events**

The area presents a significant diverse events calendar providing a local attraction as well as a drawcard for visitors to the area. One of the most prominent is Tulip Time that takes place within the Bowral Town Centre. Events such as this place a heavy demand on the existing infrastructure and facilities. Long term benefit may be obtained by providing for flexible venue spaces that will cater for the diverse events that are held throughout the year.

The provision of flexible venue spaces that will cater for the diverse events that are held throughout the year, will also provide a level of amenity throughout the year<sup>xi</sup>.

<sup>xi</sup> “Here there is a general desire to capture and renew all that is best about cultural activity ..... - the ability to bring strangers (domestic and immigrant) together; to provide platforms for cultural engagement and creativity; and to foster social inclusion” In Jayne, M. and Bell, T. Small cities: urban experience beyond the metropolis. Routledge Questioning Cities series (2006)

Quality



**Quality**

The nature of the urban environments within the Southern Highlands and the qualities sought within the communities, places and Town Centres that form it, may first and best be represented in the public realm formed by its streets. As the places that we use everyday, where we access our homes from, do our business, recreate and meet others. They are the point at which we connect to the rest of our community, the region and beyond.

They are the places that our visitors first see when entering our communities, where they form their first impression of where we live and the values that we hold in our community. These are the places where we showcase the image and aspirations of the community that we work, live and play in.

To ensure that the future of the urban environments of the region have the instilled values that will contribute to the provision of a quality place, it is worthy to develop a set of Quality Principles.



# Quality Principles for Streets

The following Quality principles for Streets reflects a set of guiding ideas. With the use of these guiding principles it is intended that the future streets and streetscapes of the Town Centres will be of a quality that will provide well for a functioning and sustainable built environment while reflecting the needs and aspirations of the people who reside and work within it.

## Community Engagement and Involvement

Distinguish and consult stakeholders who may share a commitment and responsibility toward the ongoing care and consideration for streets to secure thoughtful, integrated and committed outcomes.

## Activity, Interaction and Exchange

Provide a street environment that consists of well designed, quality places that maximise opportunities for formal and informal, social and economic exchange;

Ensure there is space for public life in our streets where people can gather in comfort and that are of high environmental and aesthetic quality and amenity.

Promote the economic vitality of the region and its centres by the high quality pedestrian, cyclist and public transport friendly streets within and around centre precincts and other significant civic, educational or business facilities.

## Place

Streets play a role in portraying identity and fostering a ‘sense of place’. This requires bolstering through a commitment to maintenance, management, care and responsibility that becomes a shared responsibility within engaged community. Streets and streetscapes initiate, maintain, celebrate and enhance the distinctive qualities of individual places, localities and communities. Ensure designs for streetscapes in the region deliver consistency in quality design, by defining the street’s rhythm and the integration of pedestrian - orientated elements.

In the pursuit of creative or “better” outcomes and pride or “ownership” by local (and the regional) communities, facilitate the involvement of artists and local citizens in the design, development and management of streets and streetscapes.

## Accessible & Connected

Acknowledge that streets and public thoroughfares are places where all individuals can move easily and without hindrance. The network of streets and other related parts of the public realm of the Town Centres are easily identifiable, understood and desirable to residents and visitors. Aspire to a public realm that is accessible by all through application of universal design principles in the design process.



**For the Pedestrian**

*Recognise that well designed streets and streetscapes are human in scale and focus upon the needs of people and their ability to interact within them. To cater for the pedestrian it is vital that the paths of movement area: convenient, accessible and safe for people at all times, day or night, weekday or weekend, winter or summer.*

**Integrate with Public Transit**

Ensure priority is granted to strategically and conveniently located transit hubs to foster a goal of catering for the needs of a pedestrian orientated community.

Enhance the quality, attractiveness, equity and efficiency of the public transit systems in the region by placement of access nodes at points of high pedestrian activity and where the street system and pedestrian permeability of the town centre buildings, open spaces, alleyways and access ways provide a legible, navigable and accessible “high amenity” environment<sup>xii</sup>.

<sup>xii</sup> A walkable pleasant and safe environment that connects spaces and places of interest, engagement and interaction is also an important “Anchor” in attracting and keeping people within a Town Centre.

**Sustainable**

The Wingecarribee Shire Council 2031 Community Strategic Plan identifies “Sustainability” as a key Guiding Principle. Through choosing to live sustainably, the community is recognising its intent in establishing parity that links modern living, the needs of the economy, society and the environment and will direct a clear undertaking to accomplish a sustainable community and exercise community leadership with respect to livability growth and development;

Smart Town - Technology connectivity.-“towns with good connectivity, transport and all-round joined-upness (sic) to support their thriving knowledge industries”<sup>xiii</sup>

<sup>xiii</sup> “Smart towns look after the baby boomers” Engineering and Technology Magazine 10 November 2010 E7T Staff.

Give guidance on key decisions that impact on the sustainability of the Town Centres; and exercise leadership by incorporating sustainability policies, strategies and practices into Council’s own operations and decision making processes.

The intention of integrating a sustainable approach is to educate, motivate and support the community, business and industry partners in establishing, implementing and achieving sustainability for the betterment of the region.

**Sustainability Framework**

Sustainability is a key element of Council’s planning framework and is incorporated into all facets of decision making and policy development. To support a desire to achieve sustainable goals it is appropriate that emphasis is given to the robustness and lifespan of materials and finishes within the “Public Realm”. This often requires initial capital outlay in planning for a sustainable future rather than delivering immediate needs. It is appropriate that streets, and the elements of streetscape within them, are responsibly and sustainably developed and maintained at a high quality for their full lifespan.

Ensure sustainable street and streetscape design acknowledges and responds to the dynamic changes that may evolve in the region’s climate conditions.



# 1.11 General Overview

*While each of the major Town Centres has its own distinctive character, qualities and scale, there are several elements that engage a common link.*

## Railway infrastructure

The historic development of the Main Southern Railway in 1867 traditionally limited the development of the Town Centres to a single side of the railway line.

## Natura/Rural landscape enclosure

The geography of the region with valleys and wooded ridges provides a distinctive setting within which each of the towns comfortable sit. The scale, street pattern and configuration of each town centre allow visual engagement with the rural/natural context that is integral with the connection to the character of the Southern Highlands.

## Streetscape Quality

A common element throughout the Town Centres is the retention of verandah awnings over the public footpath areas. Many regional towns removed their verandahs in the 1960's and 1970's and installed facade treatments in a move to "modernise" the traditional town

centre, reduce maintenance and liability obligations and maintain customers who were attracted to newer shopping centres.

The retention and integration of protective awnings and verandahs provides several benefits:

## Weather protection

Enclosure and intimacy, where there is a separation from the traffic of the street, and an engagement with the shop-front.

## History and Meaning

Places across the Region have their own particular qualities, their individual characters, which reflect their natural and man-made contexts.They reflect not only their natural settings of landscapes, geology, aspect, shape, relationship to surrounding regions and environs, but also their built environments, collective cultural history, social and economic enterprise, relationships to major infrastructure elements such as

transport connectivity. Some are clearly quite unique and iconic and seen as such by most within the regional community and to visitors. Consider for example the way the region's places meet the rugged rural highlands landscape or its rivers or the historic qualities of traditional towns. But this does not represent the Region as little more than a myriad collection of individual places and with no overall character or "sense of regional identity". The identity of the Southern Highlands, its settlements and Town Centres strongly includes and should continue to include the more obvious high-profile iconic places.

However they do not exist in isolation and the region and its community can equally be held together by broader outcomes such as an observable commitment to excellence in the urban quality within the public realm of streets and other spaces;

the strength of the widespread overt celebration of the special qualities of the region's landscape and heritage; the innovative and artistic exploration of consistent regional references and design approaches that, while linking across the region, do not deny the energetic celebration of "the local"; or the broad engagement of the many diverse communities within the region in place-making. There is a natural balancing act between LOCAL and REGIONAL (particularly the association and level of engagement with major urban centres such as Sydney) which provides a creative dialogue, not a contest. While it is appropriate and necessary to provide a level of service and amenity within the Town Centres that is equitable with that of a major city, it may not be appropriate to simply adopt a city or urban centric approach to the public realm of a rural centric Town Centre.

# 1.12 Master Plans-Observation

*The public realm, composed of the streets, parks, public spaces arcades and alleyways provides the collective, social, cultural and democratic heart of a Town Centre.*

Is the foundation of an inclusive approach, in providing shared amenity for the enterprise and community?  
An augmented, cohesive and improved public realm is pivotal to furnishing the foundation for a vibrant and successful Town Centre.

- Specifically, it should be used to underpin the analysis and inform the design of proposed development sites / works in order to Influence the understanding of the site context, including its existing infrastructure and character,
- Guide design and development decisions to ensure a seamless integration of the public and private domain,
  - Inform the choice of materials, furniture, plants and other elements to be used within the Town Centre, and
  - Provide physical solutions for recommendations contained within the various planning instruments and strategies that apply to each Town Centre.

As with all groundwork documents, this approach should be considered flexibly, with a time-frame of applicability to ensure its continued relevance and usability to each Town Centre as they may evolve and develop over time. It is recommended that this document provides a guideline for ongoing assessment, decision-making and development.  
In addition to the review of existing documentation, the analysis process utilised first hand observation and community input. This material is collated for each of the Town Centres under review, and forms the basis for the development of indicative catalyst projects.



