

DRAFT

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL

THE ENTRANCE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

OCTOBER 2011

THE **DESIGN** PARTNERSHIP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Entrance has long been synonymous as a coastal getaway – a place of relaxation and refuge, particularly for those from Sydney seeking to escape the hustle and bustle. The town was formed on these foundations and since the construction of the first guest house in 1885, visitors have continued to arrive.

The town has changed and evolved through the decades.

Visitors still come, and tourism is likely to always form a key part of the economy, but the town is increasingly being called home by permanent residents - associated services are becoming established as a result.

The building form and urban structure has changed too, and the town continues to grow. These changes are reflected in the evolution of policies which affect the area. Wyong Shire Council, the State Government and Central Coast Tourism have developed a range of strategies which effect the future of The Entrance and aim to provide direction and guidance for the town and wider region.

Based on these emerging strategies, and precipitated by the work carried out as part of *The Entrance Peninsula Planning Strategy* and the *Iconic Development Sites* program, Wyong Shire Council has taken the lead role in project managing the preparation of this masterplan.

This project is about forging a sustainable, strong and energetic town, about harnessing the best of The Entrance and creating a vision for the future.

This was achieved through a series of stakeholder workshops, held over a period of six months. The overarching Vision and Key Urban Design Principles were developed as a result of those workshops.

The vision and key urban design principles were used to build a strong urban framework – this is achieved by dissecting the function and use of each 'layer' of the town and through an analysis of these layers, both individually and in conjunction with each of the other important 'layers'.

The outcome of the masterplan process is presented in plans, diagrams, figures and accompanied by text and explanation in the later pages of this document.

Whilst Wyong Shire Council has taken the lead role, this project has been progressed as a partnership - a collaboration of information, ideas and experiences from a wide range of stakeholders including government organisations, specialist Council staff, land owners, business leaders and community representatives.

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PART 1 : INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Since construction of the first guest house in 1885, The Entrance has been synonymous with providing a seaside escape. The opening of the rail service between Sydney and Newcastle in 1889 opened the area up to visitors - leading to a succession of holiday homes, guest houses and coastal retreats.

From that base a successful town has prospered. The role of The Entrance in providing services to tourists and holiday homes for summer months still continues, but there is a growing full-time population and the economy is now expending to service industries which are not strictly focussed on the needs of visitors.

The urban form has evolved too.

The boats which once linked the two sides of the channel were replaced by a timber bridge in 1935, and this single lane structure was replaced with the current bridge in the 1960's.

The ferry that operated across Tuggerah lake from Wyong River has been substituted with road transport infrastructure and the utilitarian boat traffic that once existed on the lake has now been replaced almost exclusively with craft for recreation and fishing.

Single detached houses and guest houses still exist in some locations, but many have been replaced with medium density apartments (particularly in locations near to the town centre). Extensive coastal homes exist on some sites and facilities have been upgraded to various degrees.

The ever-changing nature of The Entrance has been accompanied by an evolution in strategic and planning policy. This included a major revitalization project in the mid-1990's.

At this time the Pelican Plaza (site of the daily pelican feeding) was completed (1995) and during 1996 a range of revitalisation works were constructed (including Vera's Water Garden, landscape works and the pedestrian promenade area).

It's time to continue the evolution of The Entrance.

BACKGROUND TO THE ENTRANCE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

In April 2011, Wyong Shire Council brought together a range of stakeholders in order to establish the groundwork for the completion of a Masterplan for the Entrance – to set the future direction for The Entrance as an attractive, sustainable, vibrant and viable town centre.

This follows on from previous work completed by Council on *The Entrance Peninsula Planning Strategy*, as well as other studies and projects being undertaken (both by Council and other parties). This includes work by the NSW Department of Industry & Investment, Central Coast Tourism, The Revitalise the Entrance group as well as a range of community and business stakeholders.

Everyone has fond memories of The Entrance – this project is about harnessing those memories, building on the foundations of the town and forging a sustainable, vibrant and viable future.

PURPOSE OF THE ENTRANCE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

The purpose of The Entrance Town Centre Masterplan is to establish a direction and vision for the future of the town.

The Masterplan aims to create a framework for the next level of design – there is a lot to consider.

The Entrance continues to undergo change and is at a key watershed in its evolution. The once tourist dominated centre is beginning to change – of course tourism will still be a significant economic driver, but more full-time residents and service industries are emerging. Key development sites have the capacity to provide change and harness investment in The Entrance. Each of these sites draws on the unique design strengths of their location, offering a diversity in building form and function for the locality. Given the variety of key site developments, the diversity of uses proposed and the strengths of each of the design teams, these buildings/spaces will all be different – this is a good thing. Successful centres are not homogenous – we do not want to create a bland, boring town centre location with buildings and spaces which are simply repeated over again. We need to encourage interest through diversity in design. The iconic development sites now provide us with an opportunity to create new, interesting and varied spaces throughout The Entrance.

Whilst encouraging design diversity for the key development sites, there will need to be some elements which draw together these developments so that they appropriately relate to each other and their respective surroundings. This masterplan aims to provide the key public domain spaces and textures that will provide continuity, whilst respecting the individual needs of each site and the architectural merit of each of the individual proposals. The Masterplan aims to pull it all together to provide a consistent direction and maintain a focus.

It is important to note that this document is about the future of The Entrance. Some of the recommendations and proposals put forward in this plan will need to be further investigated and issues such as engineering and costings will need to be considered. More detailed review of appropriate staging and construction will be made following the adoption of the masterplan.

The Masterplan will guide development, drive investment in community assets and assist in the prioritising of resources to provide appropriate amenity, create a strong identity, and foster a sense of place.

It is about respecting the past, harnessing existing assets and having a view to the future.

STRUCTURE & PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this report is set out in four parts, as follows:

PART 2 - HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

In providing a future vision and direction for The Entrance, it is important to understand the history and background of the locality. This includes a review of previous planning studies and strategic reports, as well as consideration of matters raised during stakeholder consultation and community workshops.

PART 3 – THE VISION & KEY URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Key Urban Design Principles set the overall direction for the masterplan. These principles have been based upon the themes that were developed during the consultation process.

PART 4 – URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Urban Design Framework represents the urban structure of The Entrance. This includes an analysis of open space, the pattern of streets, pedestrian network, building forms and uses.

Every urban settlement has a unique framework, the intention of this Masterplan is to build upon the existing framework and develop its successful parts. A primary focus of this study is to ensure efficiency to enable the town to function as a whole, ensure commercial viability and facilitate a sense of place.

The urban framework is comprised of a series of 'layers'. Each layer develops the previous layers by adding new functions, ideas and elements. Each addition may change the ideas and assumptions made previously. This demonstrates that the design of the urban framework is evolutionary, not sequential. This is the process that Wyong Shire Council, in consultation with the community workshop group, has adopted to produce this masterplan.

PART 5 - TEXTURE: PUBLIC DOMAIN CONCEPTS

The Textural layer is the detailing of the public domain - this is the evolution of the urban framework into a physical form.

In this phase we define the material & forms of the public domain including street trees, water features, parking, public art, street furniture and public elements including locations for cycle and bike parking. These elements are the interface between the public and private realms.