PART 03 VISION FOR HASTINGS POINT

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Hastings Point is a small coastal village nestled within a natural landscape.
3.1 Vision for Hastings Point

Hastings Point functions primarily as a low key holiday destination for temporary residents and visitors and a coastal settlement for permanent residents.

Hastings Point has a finite urban area which is defined by the surrounding natural systems; by the ocean to the east, the nature reserves to the south and the creeks to the west, north and south.

It is the integrity of the natural landscape which surrounds and penetrates the settlement that is fundamentally important to the future of Hastings Point. This requires the careful consideration of any urban changes within the constraints of protecting the natural environment.

Maintaining and ensuring the integrity of existing conservation areas and the creek and estuary is enshrined in planning legislation, management plans and throughout this document.

Hastings Point will continue to provide access to its public areas; creeks, beaches, headland and parks but it will also need to protect those natural areas from over use.

Given its small scale, the settlement will look to the larger nearby settlements for urban services such as schools, employment, shopping and other services. Hastings Point will continue to provide only basic services which include a general store, a post office and restaurants, several shops, and no larger retail outlets or supermarkets.

To reinforce Hastings Point’s role as a coastal holiday destination and residential location, buildings are to reflect coastal architectural styles and the design of areas around buildings are to contribute to the ‘natural and green’ qualities of streets and laneways and the Tweed Coast Road.

Buildings are to respond to the environment and the local context by employing passive solar design principles and be designed to address site and contextual constraints.

Pedestrian amenity is to be improved along the Tweed Coast Road by the addition of trees and vegetation and the slowing of traffic through the locality.
Hastings Point existing built form character is predominantly low scale single and two-storey buildings with some 3 storey residential flat buildings within the northern entry precinct.
Along residential streets pedestrian amenity is to be retained by retaining the blending of public and private landscapes and the retention and addition of mature vegetation and trees. Soft engineering approaches are encouraged along residential streets to retain the informal beachside character.

Within the defined urban footprint is expected some residential lots will redevelop to accommodate multi-dwelling buildings which will contribute to providing a range of housing types to suit different ages and lifestyles such as aged housing, larger dwellings for families, tourist accommodation and smaller flats for smaller families or single people.

The caravan parks and camping areas are important uses in Hastings Point and are to be retained. Camping on the headland is to be monitored and managed to ensure that it does not damage surrounding vegetation.

The over-arching issue for the future of Hastings Point is for it to be reinforced as a small coastal village nestled within a natural landscape.
Figure 3.1 Illustrative plan of Hastings Point
3.2 LOCALITY ANALYSIS

Understanding the physical features of a locality helps to identify constraints and opportunities for the protection, development and management of the natural and built landscape. Within Hastings Point, natural and built landscape features include:

- Environmental protection;
- Flooding;
- Water table and Acid Sulfate Soils;
- Scenic protection and views;
- Urban vegetation, and
- Circulation and access, and building types and precinct areas.

3.2.1 Environmental Protection

The ecological values of the locality are paramount as the settlement is framed and embedded in a natural landscape with high environmental values, including Cudgera and Christies Creeks, coastal dunes, littoral rainforest, melaleuca and swamp sheoak forests.

Environmental values have been recognised and legislated by inclusion in appropriate environmental and open space zones. Areas zoned environmental protection in the Hastings Point vicinity include the Cudgen Nature Reserve to the west of Hastings Point, the headland, the south dunes behind the southern beach and the north dunes behind the northern beach.

Cudgera Creek upstream from the bridge is recognised as a SEPP 14 Coastal Wetland. The littoral rainforest on the dunes behind the southern beach is recognised as SEPP 26 Littoral Rainforest. State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 14 – Coastal Wetlands identifies areas where the habitat values, ecological and hydrological process of wetlands need to be conserved and protected from the impact of development.

Wetlands are a key component of the water cycle, playing critical roles in maintaining the general health of rivers, estuaries and coastal waters. They assist in mitigating the effect of floods through water storage and retention, absorbing pollutants and improving downstream water quality and providing habitats for animals and plants, include a number of species that are threatened or endangered.

Littoral rainforests are areas of high biodiversity and typically contain threatened or endangered species. They are identified in State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 26 which applies strict management controls. Littoral rainforests also include a buffer zone from the edge of the mapped area to protect the core area from edge effects.

The Hastings Point locality contains important habitat for a diverse array of native fauna and flora. Certain areas have high conservation value and contain a number of endangered ecological communities and regionally significant vegetation communities. The retention of remnant vegetation and their associated buffers establishes the basis for a network of habitat links and/or corridors within the area.

All of the various natural systems surrounding the settlement combine to create consolidated natural corridors that create separation between settlements and preserve the coastal and bush setting of the settlement.

The Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 aim to protect threatened species and significant flora and fauna corridors. It is also a requirement of the Far North Coast Regional Strategy (2006) and the North Coast REP 1988 that significant vegetation be protected.

The Tweed Coast Estuaries Management Plan 2004-2008 Cudgen, Cudgera and Mooball Creeks outlines the roles and values of providing appropriate buffers zones to the waterways in the LGA, including Cudgera and Christies Creeks. Buffers referred to in Management Plan are to ‘protect and enhance scenic quality, water quality, aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity and wildlife habitat and corridors’. Buffers are to be revegetated to provide a perimeter of habitat alongside the waterways and between urban areas and the waterways. Focus should also be placed on the stabilisation of eroded foreshores and steep embankments.

The Tweed Coast Estuaries Management Plan 2004-2008, Cudgen, Cudgera and Mooball Creeks, states that ‘the minimum 50 metre buffer zone around the estuary banks recommended in the 1997 Estuary Management Plan appears to be appropriate’ however the application of this to different site conditions will result in the actual distance and management of the area being subject to detailed merit-based assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The concept is to establish an estuary buffer along all creek edges and to protect the integrity of those that already exist by weed eradication and revegetation and other measures as set out in the Tweed Coast Estuaries Management Plan 2004-2008, Cudgen, Cudgera and Pottsville-Mooball Creeks.

Informal pedestrian tracks have developed throughout the dunes to the north and the south. In some locations these tracks are multiplied in close proximity. The strategy sets out to minimise tracks through the dunes through closing multiple tracks and rehabilitating the reclaimed tracks. Defining one track in each location will still allow for pedestrian access to the foreshore. Refer also to Section 3.2.7 Circulation and access for locations and more information.

Camping on the headland is an important use within Hastings Point and attracts many people during the summer months. The key principle is to ensure that camping does not trample or destroy vegetation and that the integrity of the headland ecology is preserved. Refer to Part 4 - Precinct Specific Strategies for more information.
PART 03 - VISION FOR HASTINGS POINT

Figure 3.2 - Environmental Protection
Tweed Development Control Plan - Section B23
3.2.2 Flooding and Sea Level Rise

Hastings Point is a settlement situated at the confluence of the Cudgera and Christies Creek catchments and the tidal estuary which makes its way through the settlement to the ocean. Much of the urban land in the settlement is located adjoining this sensitive natural system and is subject to inundation during peak flood events.

The estuary is somewhat protected from sea surges during major storm events, however, low-lying sites as indicated in Figure 3.3 have been shown in flood studies conducted by Tweed Shire Council to be flood affected.

The land indicated on Figure 3.3 opposite is likely to be flood affected by 1 in 100 year storm events and probable maximum floods.

Within these areas, developments need to comply with the development controls set down in the Tweed Development Control Plan Section A3 - Development of Flood Liable Land. This will ensure that developments are constructed in accordance with appropriate flood planning levels to avoid property losses and that developments make adequate provision for emergency response, with measures such as high level evacuation routes to maintain resident safety during flood events.

Notably, areas within Hastings Point that are particularly flood prone include:

- North Star Caravan Park (A).
- Lots along Creek Street (B).
- Lot 156 (C).
- Hastings Point Holiday Park (D).
- Lots along Young Street (E).
- Rear of lots that abut Cudgera Creek along the Tweed Coast Road (F).

While filling of land may be permissible with consent, the impacts of filling flood prone land on the natural environment, existing development, and the visual and physical character of Hastings Point need to be carefully considered due to the sensitivity of the natural environment, and the potential for adverse impacts on adjoining land which may include:

- unsightly retaining walls and/or batters at boundaries,
- adverse impacts on significant ecological systems and species,
- adverse impacts on ground water conditions,
- obstruction of stormwater and flood flow paths, and
- cumulative impacts.

Basement carparking is only permissible on sites where protection from the ingress of flood water to a level 500mm above the design flood level is feasible, and is consistent with the Part 4 - Precinct Specific Strategies contained within this Code.
3.2.3 Water Table and Acid Sulfate Soils

Hastings Point is subject to fluctuating ground water levels which may be quite shallow, relevant to ground surface levels.

Most of Hastings Point is generally quite low lying with some lots being close to the high water mark.

Excavation and filling of land, the removal of vegetation and other man-made changes to the natural environment may result in disturbance to ground water.

A high water table in combination with certain soil types can have implications for foundation design, road and drainage construction. Additionally, groundwater has a greater potential to become contaminated by certain land uses.

Further, disturbance of potential or actual acid sulfate soils may occur, resulting in the discharge of acidic runoff which can adversely affect aquatic life and vegetation.

Acid sulfate soils (ASS) generally occur in low lying areas below RL 5 AHD.

The term ASS refers to soils that are producing acid (actual acid sulfate soils) and those that could become acid producing, if disturbed (potential acid sulfate soils).

Potential acid sulfate soils are naturally occurring soils containing iron sulfides (pyrite). They become actual acid sulfate soils when the pyrite is exposed to air, often because of human activity. Once oxidised the addition of water results in the production of sulfuric acid.

In July, 2000, the National Working Party on ASS released the National Strategy for the Management of Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils. The Strategy provides a framework for governments, industry and the community to manage development on these soils. It seeks an integrated approach to management and provides general background about the impacts of acid generated from disturbance of these soils.

Areas that are more likely to contain acid sulfate soils include:

- North Star Caravan Park (A).
- Creek Street (B).
- Lot 156 (C).
- Hastings Point Holiday Park (D).
- Young Street (E).
- Rear of lots that abut Cudgera Creek along the Tweed Coast Road (F).

Figure 3.4 identifies likely areas affected by acid sulfate soil and are categorized in accordance with the elevation within which ASS may be found. For instance a Class 1 area is more likely to encounter ASS closer to the surface than a Class 5 area. More information on Classes and their interpretation can be sourced from Council staff and from the Acid Sulfate Soil Manual (ASSMAC, 1998).

Developments that may disturb acid sulfate soils must be planned and managed to mitigate likely impacts.

Developments that are likely to disturb Acid Sulfate Soils will be required to be supported by an Acid Sulfate Soils Investigation and Management Plan at the Development Application stage.

Refer to Part 4 - Precinct Specific Strategies.
3.2.4 Scenic Protection and Views

Given the close proximity of the natural environment around and through the settlement, the existing visual qualities of the natural environment are intrinsic to Hastings Point.

Hastings Point is valued for the visual qualities of its surrounding natural environment. It also is an urban area and fulfils the function of providing for human habitation and human use and provides for access to and enjoyment of its surrounding natural environment including its foreshores.

Buildings are therefore necessarily a part of the settlement and also contribute to its visual character. As such buildings are and will continue to be visible within many parts of Hastings Point and within its identified visual settings.

The intent of this plan is not necessarily to hide buildings, nor to restore the settlement visually back to its original state before human habitation, but rather to ensure a balance between viewing, from key public places, the natural environment and buildings together as a whole.

The overall visual identity is to be that of a small coastal settlement set within a natural environment. The key to achieving this is to ensure buildings are designed with reference to the visual setting or settings in which they appear. The effect of new structures and buildings within a visual setting should:

- ensure that the key complements of that visual setting are not obscured,
- not be more visually obtrusive than existing buildings within that visual settings,
- not be visible within visual settings that currently do not have buildings and structures,
- respect the key principles of visual settings.
- Where buildings are visible within a visual setting they are to be well designed, climatically appropriate and represent a small coastal settlement rather than a larger urban settlement.

The visual settings in Hastings Point have been chosen for their importance within the settlement. Importance is given to views from public places that many people use and enjoy.

Private views are not considered primary to the character of Hastings Point and are therefore not mapped in this plan although the principles of view sharing are encouraged.

The visual settings identified in this plan include:

A - From the headland.
B - From the creek foreshore park looking north and west.
C - From the bridge looking south
D - From the bridge looking north
E - From the bridge looking west.
F - Down Creek Street.
G - Down Young Street.
H - Down the northern part of the Tweed Coast Road.
I - Down the southern part of the Tweed Coast Road.

Within each of the above visual settings, key aspects of the view have been identified which are important to retaining the view. Aspects of the view which require improvement have also been identified to further strengthen Hastings Point as a small coastal settlement encased within a natural environment.

The implication is that those parts of the view that are important to the character of Hastings Point, whether on private or public land, must be retained and as such underpin development controls for private land and guidelines for public domain improvements.

Those parts of the view requiring improvement also constitute development controls for private land and guidelines for public domain improvements.

Visual settings and controls for developments within them are found in Part 5: Visual Settings and are also identified in Part 4: Precinct Specific Strategies.
3.2.5 Public Open Space and Public Facilities

Public open spaces in Hastings Point are a significant aspect of the settlement’s uniqueness, its attractiveness and livability. Public spaces are also easily accessed from the main road. Many of these public open spaces are in close proximity to the water, either the estuary, the creeks or the ocean.

Public open spaces in Hastings Point include:
- the northern dunes and beach;
- the estuary foreshore at the boat shed;
- Christies Creek foreshore;
- Cugdera Creek foreshore;
- the Creek Forshore Park;
- the headland, and
- the southern dunes and beach.

The qualities of these spaces and the uses that occur within them vary significantly from one space to the next offering residents and visitors a wide variety of active and passive activities and natural experiences within the locality area including swimming, snorkelling, surfing, fishing, boating and canoeing.

The over arching characteristics common to all spaces is having either relatively intact or remnant vegetation and landform that has generally not been significantly altered. This gives all the spaces a natural rather than man-made quality. It is important this natural quality is retained, strengthened and protected.

Many of the public open spaces in Hastings Point are primarily for nature conservation although some recreational and educational uses also occur within them, generally pedestrian or small boat access only. These spaces include:
- the northern dunes,
- Christies Creek foreshore;
- Cugdera Creek Foreshore;
- the headland, and
- the southern dunes.

These spaces are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.2.1 Environmental Protection as their primary function is to protect the environment. The remaining areas also have a natural appearance and contribute to nature conservation however they are primarily for relaxation, recreational and educational purposes, these include:
- the estuary foreshore at the boat shed, and
- the Creek Foreshore Park.

Estuary foreshore at the boat shed.

The estuary foreshore at the boat shed is a hardened area on the waters edge that has a boat storage facility with vehicular access. This area is the most modified part of the estuary edge. Given the estuary is valued for its ecological integrity and natural qualities this type of edge treatment is not likely to be extended nor replicated elsewhere and confined to where it occurs today.

Creek Foreshore Park

The ‘Creek Foreshore Park’ is an important recreational and relaxation space within Hastings Point. This area is valued by families as it has a calm water beach many days of the year and a relatively flat and open grassed area for picnics and barbecues. It also has a children’s play area and an amenities block and is in close proximity to the shop and caravan park. It also has on street parking and an informal boat launching area for small crafts.

This area should be retained and enhanced as an informal park within a natural setting, whilst providing some additional native vegetation for shade and improvements to the children’s play area, bbq’s and picnic shelters.

Any new vegetation is to be composed of local indigenous species to complement and extend the natural estuarine environment. The footpath is to be extended along the Tweed Coast Road generally linking the amenities block with the children’s play area. The boat launch area is to be retained. The current configuration and location of parking is to be retained.

More detailed strategies for each public open space is set out in Part 4 - Precinct Specific Strategies and Visual Settings under the precinct within which they are located. If a space occurs in more than one precinct it is detailed under both those precincts.
3.2.6 Urban Vegetation

The natural coastal landscape is a defining feature of Hastings Point. This is complemented by a diverse range of introduced semi-tropical plant species throughout the settlement which contributes to Hastings Point being a unique coastal settlement on the Far North Coast of NSW and along the whole of the NSW Coast. For the purposes of this document the term urban vegetation relates to vegetation on private lots generally to the front and the rear but in some cases also to the sides of lots.

Vegetation to the front of lots is important as it contributes to the quality of public streets and roads and therefore also contributes to the quality, livability and character of Hastings Point as a whole.

Vegetation to the front of lots is important in Hastings Point as it can;
- visually unify a street where there is an inconsistency in terms of built form; where there are many different building styles, heights and setbacks,
- provide shading over the street and footpath, thereby improving pedestrian amenity,
- improve the micro climatic conditions on lots and streets,
- contribute to the integrity of ecological systems by providing wildlife habitat,
- help retain the green and natural qualities of Hastings Point as it is today along many streets.

Whilst many lots have a significant amount of vegetation within the front setback, others including some lots along Young Street and parts of the Tweed Coast Road do not. It is desirable that vegetation be planted in these locations in the future to further reinforce the green and natural qualities of streets throughout Hastings Point.

Species selection for the front of lots is to include remnant and new native trees and shrubs, intermingled with exotic and semi-tropical planting.

Throughout the locality many of the private allotments abut diverse natural areas such as dunes and the creek edges of both Christies and Cudgera Creeks to bushland areas. As such urban vegetation to the rear of lots forms an important transitional area from urban to natural vegetation settings and play an important role in protecting the integrity of the natural systems they abut. These rear setback areas need to be carefully designed and managed. Wherever possible urban vegetation to both the front and rear of lots is to protect existing indigenous vegetation and complement plant species in existing and new riparian buffers.

Additional planting is to be of similar species to support the viability of isolated pockets of native vegetation. It is important that existing trees and shrubs are retained where ever possible. Figure 3.7 indicates where urban vegetation is to occur in Hastings Point. The diagram differentiates between urban vegetation located within front setbacks and within rear setbacks.

A more detailed analysis of existing native vegetative communities and preferred planting lists has been attached at Part 7.2 of this Code.

For the design of front and rear setback refer to Part 6 - Building Type Controls, for setback dimensions refer to Part 4 - Precinct Specific Strategies.

Other natural areas such as additional areas on private lots for creek riparian buffers, the park, dune, the headland and the creeks are not covered in this Figure but can be found in Section 3.2.1: Environmental Protection.
3.2.7 Circulation and Access

Circulation and movement within Hastings Point relies on the formal road network, informal access tracks and bush paths, and semi-formal and constructed boat ramps. Hastings Point is located along the Tweed Coast Road, the main road linking Tweed coastal settlements and as such also functions as a through road. As a central spine to the settlement the Tweed Coast Road is also the main pedestrian and cycle route and provides access to nearly all locations and facilities in Hastings Point including:

- the shops;
- the caravan park;
- service stations;
- the Creek Foreshore Park;
- the headland;
- all residential streets, and
- the amenities block and carparks.

As such the Tweed Coast Road is a multi-functional public area providing for pedestrian, cars, buses and bicycles concurrently. The Tweed Coast Road is fundamental to the functioning and amenity of Hastings Point and needs to be recognised for its importance to pedestrians. As a strategy the Tweed Coast Road is to have slowed traffic, additional road crossings, street trees and vegetation and where possible widened footpaths and additional parking.

The back streets including Young, Creek and Peninsula Streets, are quiet residential streets. Pedestrians and cyclists accessing other parts of the settlement need to use the Tweed Coast Road rather than these residential streets as they generally do not link through to other parts of the settlement. These streets are pleasant pedestrian places as they have narrow driving lanes, wide grassed verges and unmade edges. It is important that these characteristics are retained and that they continue to be safe, pleasant public spaces as well as provide vehicle access to residences. As such water sensitive urban design and soft road edge treatment should be explored rather than a formed concrete edge and gutter.

Cycle access through the settlement is along the shared cycle path on the Tweed Coast Road. This path should be widened where possible to enhance the cycle facility.

Supplementing this formal system of streets is an extensive system of informal pedestrian tracks and pathways. These tracks and pathways link pedestrians to the creeks, ocean foreshores and beaches through natural areas such as dunes, foreshore reserves or parks. These tracks and pathways are generally unformed. Over time multiple tracks have formed in some locations that has lead to trampling of vegetation and in places have lead to erosion. The main locations for these tracks are:

- between the southern beach and the Tweed Coast Road;
- between the northern beach and Peninsula Street;
- from the headland road to the Creek Foreshore Park and the southern beach, and
- between the Tweed Coast Road and the foreshore of Cudgera Creek;

The system of tracks is an important characteristic of Hastings Point and should be retained as informal pedestrian paths where appropriate. In order to protect the natural environment in locations where multiple tracks have formed, access will be rationalised with generally one main track retained and the others are to be revegetated.

The launching of boats, canoes and other small crafts is possible from defined locations; one to the south of the estuary in the Creek Foreshore Park and the other from the north of the estuary at the boat shed. These are to be retained.

The headland road provides access to the camping area and the headland, it also provides parking on the headland; it is to be retained and defined where necessary to ensure that car manoeuvring does not occur on vegetated or grassed areas. Public domain improvements in this area should consider a formalised beach access track from the car park area to South Beach.

It is desirable to consider a new public link from Creek Street towards Christies Creek. This could be extended by a public park and pedestrian track to the foreshore of Christies Creek. This would provide a defined area for pedestrians and avoid informal tracks developing elsewhere along the creek foreshores.

The caravan park laneway has the potential to provide an area adjacent to the shop which could be used for outdoor seating and eating. This would create a functional and pleasant area for alfresco dining and informal socialising.

There are paper roads through the conservation area to the west of Cudgera Creek which are not expected to ever become formed roads. Strategies for each street and the Tweed Coast Road and pedestrian access are found in the precinct in which they are located in Part 4: Precinct Specific Strategies.
3.2.8 Precincts and Predominant Building Types and Precinct Areas

Hastings Point has a variety of building types ranging from:

- un-subdivided urban land;
- single dwellings;
- town houses;
- residential flat buildings;
- retail buildings;
- commercial buildings, and
- public buildings.

Hastings Point also has caravans, cabins and tents that provide accommodation both short and long term, formal and informal, on both private and public land.

In the future it is likely that many of the older cottages will be replaced and sites redeveloped whilst other relatively new buildings are not likely to change in the near future, maintaining a mix of building types.

It is important that planning decisions regarding the distribution of suitable building types throughout Hastings Point;

- recognises natural constraints in particular environmental protection, retention of vegetation, flooding and acid sulfate soil,
- represents what realistically can be achieved on a given site within a given precinct without undermining the existing character;
- contributes to the visual and pedestrian amenity of the street or road in which they are located,
- provides a density commensurate with its location within the settlement,
- be commensurate with the dominant built form on surrounding lots,
- contributes to the identified visual settings,
- complements the configuration and accessibility of sites,
- recognises topographical constraints, and
- contributes to the character of a small coastal settlement nestled within a natural setting.

The plan in Figure 3.9 has been developed by overlaying these considerations and represents the capacity of each lot in terms of the building types possible. The groupings of the precincts have been determined based on existing built form character combined with topographical and environmental constraint criteria. The precincts defined in Figure 3.9 have also been determined with emphasis on the public domain.

Precincts are focused on streets and the road to recognise the importance of the public domain and to recognise that buildings contribute to the quality of streets and roads. Both sides of the street or road are considered together to result in a consistent design approach. The precincts also include the open space areas that are an important component of each precinct.

The precincts are:

- Peninsula Street and the Northern Entry;
- Creek Street,
- The Centre; and
- South Hastings Point.

Parts Peninsula Street and the Northern Entry Precinct are suitable for residential flat buildings where buildings are setback from the dunes, step with the topography and are screened by vegetation along the Tweed Coast Road.

Lots around the bridge and estuary have a significant impact on views within the centre of the settlement and must remain low and small in scale.

Buildings along Creek Street must complement the low scale, well landscaped residential qualities of the street.

In the village Centre there is the opportunity for shop-top housing provide some additional residential density in proximity to the shop. Commercial land may redevelop also in the future to provide more retail or restaurant/cafe uses and street friendly uses.

Sites along the Tweed Coast Road in the southern precinct are more suited to houses, dual occupancies and town houses given the visual sensitivity of some lots, the small size of many lots and the topographical and environmental constraints.

Detailed information and controls for precincts are provided in Parts 4 and 5. Design direction and controls for building types are found in Parts 6 and Part 7.