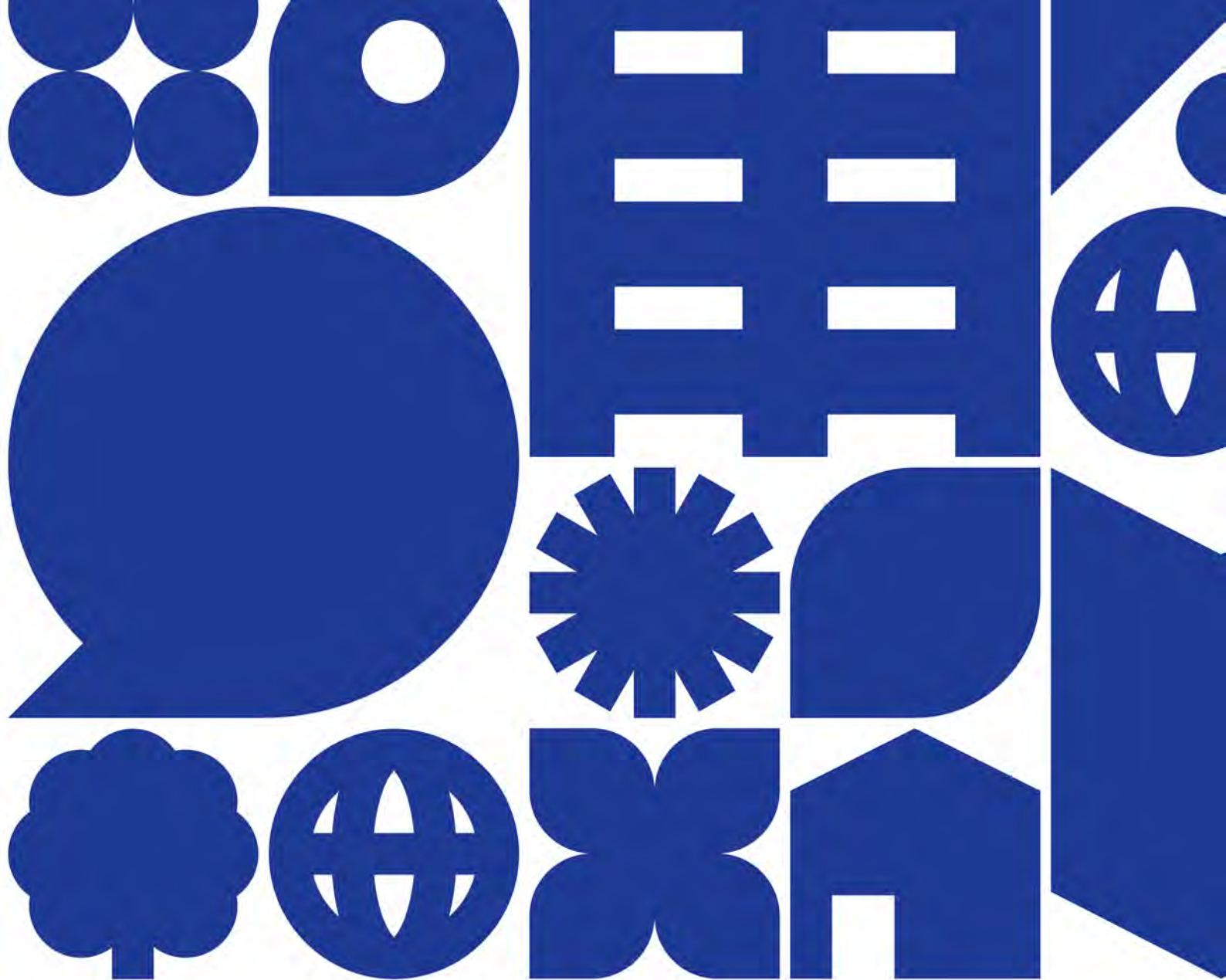




State of Play report

Southern Beaches Plan

era

Final | May 2026

Era Advisory acknowledge palawa as the Traditional Owners of lutruwita (Tasmania).

They are the original custodians of our land, sky and waters.

We respect their unique ability to care for country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour and pay our respect to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom has and will ensure the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded.

Always was, always will be.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CBD	Central Business District
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CTST	Community Transport Services Tasmania
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)
LGA	Local Government Area
LPS	Local Provisions Schedule
LUPA Act	<i>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</i>
MAST	Marine and Safety Tasmania
NEPM	National Environment Protection Measure
PAL Policy	State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land 2009
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania
RLUS	Regional Land Use Strategy
SAP	Specific Area Plan
STRLUS	Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy
TPP	Tasmanian Planning Policies
UGB	Urban Growth Boundary

Executive summary

Current state of play

The Southern Beaches area is undergoing a clear transition from a collection of coastal holiday settlements to an increasingly permanent residential community.

Population growth, housing demand and commuter patterns are placing pressure on infrastructure, services, the road network and the natural environment, in a context where the Southern Beaches remains Tasmania's largest unserviced residential area. Historic subdivision patterns, reliance on on-site water and wastewater systems, and exposure to coastal and climate-related hazards significantly constrain how and where growth can occur. At the same time, the Southern Beaches' landscapes, beaches and village character underpin its liveability and appeal.

This State of Play report establishes the evidence base to inform the Southern Beaches Plan. It relies on a desktop review of available data and documentation to identify key opportunities and constraints that will shape future project directions. It highlights the need for a coordinated, place-based approach that prioritises consolidation within existing settlements, protects environmental and cultural values, manages risk, and aligns land use with service and infrastructure capacity.

This report provides the foundation for exploring realistic growth options, guiding future investment, and supporting a shared vision for how the Southern Beaches can evolve over the next 20 years in a way that is safe, sustainable and responsive to community needs. It also highlights that the future of the Southern Beaches requires a nuanced approach to strategic planning that encompasses core data sources, local knowledge and an understanding of broader trends and pressures.



Future opportunities and challenges

The snapshot summaries below distil the key findings from each section of this report and explain their implications for the Southern Beaches Plan. They provide a concise overview of what we know about local conditions, constraints and trends, and how this evidence will inform future planning directions, priorities and decision-making as the project progresses.

People, housing and economics

What we know

The Southern Beaches community is shifting toward a more permanent residential profile, with high home ownership and substantial commuting, alongside housing pressures influenced by slowing approvals, a strong holiday home component and very low rental vacancy. Land supply and demand settings in the Draft STRLUS and supporting REMPLAN work provide a starting point, but require further interrogation to reflect environmental constraints including Rural Living zoned land and the role of intensifying use of existing dwellings.

What this means for the Plan

The Plan will need to manage growth in a way that responds to a changing demographic profile and changing household needs, while maintaining its role as a coastal community. This includes providing clearer direction on housing diversity and addressing infrastructure and servicing constraints that limit delivery. Given high levels of out-commuting, the Plan should also prioritise access, connectivity and local services, while enabling modest, locally appropriate employment opportunities that support daily needs.

Built form and heritage

What we know

Built form reflects the area's shift from shack settlements to permanent housing, with low-density, low-rise development shaped by coastal landscapes. Aboriginal heritage values are landscape-based and closely tied to coastal and wetland environments, while historic heritage is embedded in settlement patterns, modest buildings and community places rather than formally listed sites.

What this means for the Plan

The Plan will need to guide gradual change in a way that respects settlement character, heritage values and infrastructure limits, while providing clearer direction on where and how infill and new development can occur. Recognition of Aboriginal and historic heritage will be essential in shaping land use decisions, public realm improvements and future development expectations.

Environment and landscape

What we know

The Southern Beaches contains high-value coastal landscapes, threatened vegetation communities, important habitats and interconnected beaches and waterways. Parts of the area is exposed to bushfire, coastal erosion, inundation and flooding, with climate change expected to intensify these risks over time.

What this means for the Plan

Environmental and hazard constraints will be central to determining appropriate growth patterns. The Plan will need to work with the landscape, avoid development in high-risk areas, and embed climate adaptation and resilience into land use, infrastructure and settlement planning.

Open space and social infrastructure

What we know

The area benefits from extensive coastal foreshore, reserves and trail networks, but has limited local parks and growing demand for community, recreation, health and youth services as the permanent population increases. Facilities are unevenly distributed, and seasonal visitation places additional pressure on infrastructure and access.

What this means for the Plan

The Plan will need to protect and enhance access to existing open space while addressing gaps in local parks, recreation facilities and social infrastructure. Future planning will need to consider the timing, location and scale of facilities to support year-round liveability and a more diverse community.

Service and utility infrastructure

What we know

There is no reticulated water or sewerage in the Southern Beaches, and no planned connection in the foreseeable future. Development relies on on-site wastewater and stormwater systems, which result in environmental issues and place limits on lot sizes, densities and land use. Electricity and telecommunications are generally reliable, while waste services are well established but affected by growth and seasonal demand.

What this means for the Plan

Infrastructure constraints will remain a defining factor in shaping future growth. The Plan will need to align land use and development expectations with servicing capacity, protect environmental values, and support realistic, staged change rather than assuming major infrastructure upgrades.

Transport and movement

What we know

The Southern Beaches has high car dependence, limited public transport coverage, gaps in walking and cycling infrastructure, and increasing pressure on local roads from population growth and heavy vehicle movements. Seasonal visitation intensifies parking and access issues at beaches and community nodes.

What this means for the Plan

The Plan will need to prioritise safer local connections, improved access to public transport, and land use patterns that reduce reliance on private vehicles over time. Transport capacity, safety and place outcomes will be key considerations in shaping future development and investment.

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1 Introduction

1.1 About the project

1.1.1 Project overview

Sorell Council (Council) is preparing the Southern Beaches Plan (the Plan) to guide the sustainable development of the area over the next 20 years, 2026 to 2046. The Plan will articulate a shared vision for land use and sustainable development in the Southern Beaches area. It will identify required amendments (if any) to the Sorell Local Provisions Schedule and provide the required strategic evidence to facilitate these changes.

The project focuses on the townships of Dodges Ferry, Lewisham, Carlton River and Primrose Sands while also taking a holistic view of the area's relationship with, and connections to, Sorell and Greater Hobart. The Plan will:

- Be based on an understanding of community needs, economic opportunities, population trends, local planning context, and the external 'big picture' environment that influences the places people want to live, work, visit and invest in
- Address the legacy of historical subdivision and un-serviced development, providing a pathway for infrastructure upgrades and sustainable land use
- Respond to the needs of a growing and diverse community, ensuring access to housing, transport, and social infrastructure
- Balance the protection of environmental and scenic values with the realities of ongoing growth and changing community expectations
- Support Council in engaging with residents, both long-standing and new, to build understanding, manage change, and foster a shared vision for the future
- Provide a blueprint for sustainable development not only in housing, but in physical infrastructure such as roads and footpaths.

1.1.2 Project stages

Stage 1	Feb – Mar 2026 Project initiation and engagement plan
	Commencing the project on common ground with good foundations and creating an engagement approach that builds social license.
Stage 2	Feb – Apr 2026 Background review and technical assessments
	Understanding the planning environment of the study area. Identify future needs, key opportunities and challenges.
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1.1.3 The Structure Planning process

The Southern Beaches Plan will function as a traditional Structure Plan and be developed in line with the Structure Plan Guidelines reference below. The decision to name the project 'The Southern Beaches Plan' is to ensure the intent and scope of the project is understood and accessible to the community, recognising the term 'Structure Plan' is not common vocabulary and can be considered planning jargon.

1.1.3.1 What is a Structure Plan?

A structure plan is a strategic document used by local government to guide the planning, land use and development of a local area. It can be used to guide the application of the planning scheme through zoning, overlays and specific provisions.

A structure plan is not a population or economic strategy. Rather, it seeks to manage predicted growth and change in an area, having regard to an analysis of the planning environment. It sets out clear priorities for where to allow growth (such as housing, shops and industry) and where to protect land because of environmental values, natural hazards or other reasons.

A structure plan is used to apply state and regional planning policies, such as State Policies and the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy, locally. The scope of this structure plan also includes consideration of key activity areas and identifying the desired future character for the settlements.

A structure plan must be based on robust data and assumptions to set realistic goals for the future. Therefore, a structure plan considers population trends, community needs, local planning context, economic drivers, development trends, and land use demand and supply.

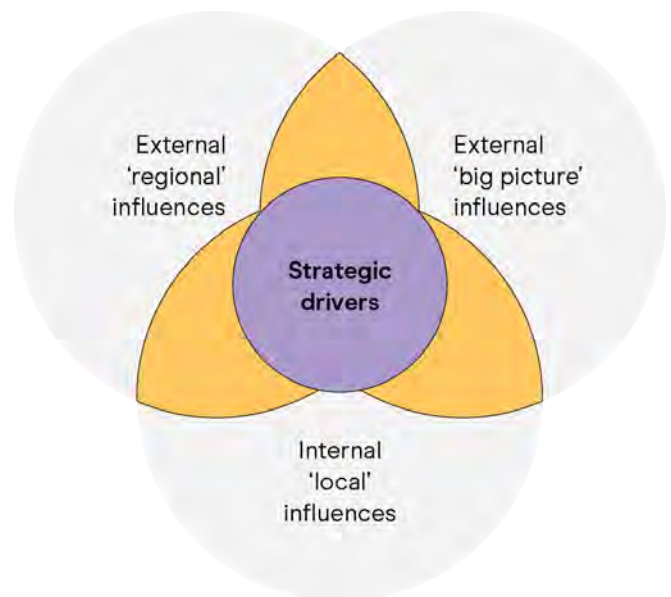
The planning environment comprises three broad components:

- The macro, external 'big picture' environment, which comprises the broader economic, social, technological, environmental, legislative and policy factors that influence what the strategy needs to consider and respond to. Council has no influence over these external factors, and they include the policy settings in the Tasmanian planning system, climate change considerations, and state and federal economic and social policies.
- The micro, external 'regional picture' environment, which comprises the external factors that Council has capacity to influence or shape. These will include community perspectives, population projections, and industrial and economic drivers.
- The internal 'local' environment, which comprises local, specific factors like land characteristics, infrastructure capacity and Council's strategic plan.

These elements of the planning environment are explored further in this report.

1.1.3.2 Why do we need a Structure Plan for the Southern Beaches?

The Southern Beaches needs a Structure Plan because the area has rapidly shifted from a traditional holiday settlement to a major growth corridor on Greater Hobart's fringe, creating pressures that outstrip its original planning and servicing framework. With sustained population growth, rising housing demand and increasing commuter patterns, the region now faces significant strain on its road network, community facilities and local infrastructure. It remains Tasmania's largest un-serviced residential area, relying heavily



on on-site water, sewerage and stormwater systems that were designed for low-intensity, seasonal use rather than year-round occupation.

As lot sizes reduce and densities increase, these systems are becoming less sustainable and more vulnerable. At the same time, growing expectations around amenity, environmental management and coastal access, combined with seasonal visitation, are intensifying pressure on the natural environment and settlement character. The area's exposure to coastal erosion, inundation, bushfire and flooding heightens the need for a coordinated, place-based approach. A Structure Plan provides the strategic direction required to manage growth, guide land use and infrastructure decisions, protect environmental and coastal values, and ensure the Southern Beaches develops in a safe, sustainable and cohesive way.

1.1.3.3 Structure Plan Guidelines

This Plan will be prepared consistent with the Draft Structure Plan Guidelines released by the State Planning Office in November 2022. The guidelines outline a clear, consistent approach for councils to undertake local strategic planning, defining structure plans as forward-looking documents that guide land use, growth, built form, infrastructure and place outcomes over a typical 20-year horizon. They emphasise the importance of grounding decisions in robust research, data analysis, and a clearly articulated vision that links local priorities with regional land use strategies and the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

The guidelines also set expectations around process, highlighting the need for meaningful stakeholder engagement, options evaluation, implementation pathways, and ongoing monitoring and review to ensure plans remain relevant and actionable. Although non-mandatory, they are intended to support councils to create transparent, well-reasoned and evidence-based plans that respond to identified growth needs or strategic issues within their region.

1.1.4 Engagement

An Engagement Plan has been prepared to guide the project, with communications and activities to be delivered in collaboration between Council and the project team. Project engagement will principally occur at the stages outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Project engagement overview

Stage	Purpose	Stakeholders
Data collection and project introduction	Early engagement to introduce the project, gather data and information and establish public-facing project communications.	• Presentation at Councillor workshop • Key stakeholder meetings/interviews • Establishment of a project-specific webpage hosted on Council's 'Have Your Say' page and associated notification/promotion • A light-touch community survey that focusses on liveability priorities and place visioning
Discussion Paper and emerging options	Provide the community with an opportunity to understand the background context and strategic drivers of change in the townships. The Discussion Paper will contain future options for how the area will grow and change; feedback will be sought on these options.	• Presentation at Councillor workshop • Documents circulated to key stakeholders for feedback • Community engagement through an online survey, pop-up sessions and detailed workshop • Engagement opportunities to be promoted via Council's 'Have Your Say' page and associated communication channels
Draft Southern Beaches Plan	Publicly exhibit the draft Structure Plan and seek broad feedback from the community	• As per previous stage and subject to change

Stage	Purpose	Stakeholders
	and stakeholders in order to finalise for Council endorsement.	

1.2 About this report

1.2.1 Purpose of this report

This State of Play report provides a snapshot of the Southern Beaches now, including the area's character, strengths and challenges. It also provides an analysis of likely trends and the key focus areas for the Plan. This report provides an overview of how the Plan will be developed. This includes:

- A review of the relevant studies and strategies as they relate to the study area. This will help build an understanding of the existing and historical issues facing the area, and consider how ongoing issues can be addressed
- Consideration of trends in residential and seasonal populations and factors influencing the potential future capacity of developable land, utilities and community infrastructure
- Gaining an understanding of the desired future character of each township, underpinned by the community's vision for the area
- Studying each settlement in relation to the settlement hierarchy and activity centre hierarchy for the Sorell LGA and southern region
- Current and future consideration of natural values and hazards, including what challenges the area will face with a changing climate.



2 Context

2.1 Spatial context

2.1.1 Regional context

2.1.1.1 Sorell LGA

The Sorell LGA lies within the south-east portion of Greater Hobart, forming the primary gateway between metropolitan Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula to the south east, and the east coast of Tasmania to the north. Located approximately 25 km from the CBD, the municipality extends across 583 square kilometres of coastal and rural landscapes, including beaches, estuarine systems and forested hills. In the context of Southern Tasmania, Sorell functions as a peri-urban growth corridor, with strong commuter flows into Hobart. The LGA is recognised as one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Tasmania, with population growth exceeding state averages, driven by its affordability, coastal amenity and proximity to metropolitan services.

2.1.1.2 Sorell township

The Sorell township acts as the main service hub for the LGA and surrounding communities, including the Southern Beaches and beyond to the Tasman Peninsula and Glamorgan Spring Bay. It accommodates regional services including major retail, supermarkets, medical centres, government services, schools, recreational facilities, and civic administration. Its location at the junction of the Tasman and Arthur Highways positions it as an important transport hub for the movement of residents, visitors, freight and services across Tasmania's south-east region.

The township is experiencing strong residential development and has undergone sustained urban expansion consistent with its role as a metropolitan-adjacent growth centre. Looking ahead, Sorell's function as a regional hub for employment, education, social infrastructure and commercial activity is expected to strengthen, reinforcing its importance within the LGA and the wider region.

2.1.2 Local context

The Southern Beaches comprise a network of coastal settlements clustered along Frederick Henry Bay and the lower Carlton River, linked by short local road connections and sharing strong environmental, community and service relationships. Their spatial identity is shaped by beaches, estuaries and low coastal landforms, combined with a pattern of residential areas that rely on Sorell for higher-order services while supporting local facilities in the towns themselves. The area's prominent natural features, including surf beaches, bays, headlands and coastal reserves, strongly influence local character, recreation patterns and settlement form.

2.1.2.1 Dodges Ferry

Dodges Ferry is the largest settlement in the Southern Beaches and is surrounded by several significant beaches including Tiger Head Beach, Red Ochre Beach, Okines Beach, and the adjacent Carlton Beach (including Park Beach). These beaches provide swimming, surfing and boating opportunities, with boat ramps, jetties and mooring facilities supporting water-based recreation. The township contains key local services such as a school (Dodges Ferry Primary), neighbourhood shops, community facilities (Okines

Community House) and multiple recreational reserves. The settlement has evolved from a shack community into a permanent residential area with strong coastal amenity, accessible beach networks and a defined local character.

2.1.2.2 Lewisham

Lewisham is located in a narrow coastal corridor with Pitt Water forming its western boundary. The township is characterised by water views and access to Lewisham Jetty which was recently upgraded to support boating and marine recreation. Lewisham has a primarily residential function but benefits from services and facilities in Dodges Ferry and Sorell.

2.1.2.3 Carlton / Carlton River

The Carlton and Carlton River settlements are positioned along the Carlton River estuary, with residential areas extending to inland rural landscapes. The area includes the mouth of the Carlton River, with Steele's Island, Carlton Bluff and the eastern end of Carlton Beach, supporting a mix of recreation and ecological values. While services are limited locally, the area is closely tied to Dodges Ferry for education, services and community facilities. It is also of note that Dodges Ferry has now extended almost the full length of Park Beach, so the distinction between Dodges Ferry and Carlton River as settlements, is less obvious than it has been historically.

2.1.2.4 Primrose Sands

Primrose Sands forms the southern extent of the Southern Beaches and is bounded by the Carlton River (north) and the coast (west and south). The township retains a strong shack character and is spatially separated from the other section of Southern Beaches. However, it also supports a permanent population, with local facilities including a community centre, RSL club, and general store/post office. Primrose Sands Road provides the only access route into the settlement, reinforcing its sense of separation while maintaining functional ties to Dodges Ferry and Sorell.



- Southern Beaches Area (50m buffer)
- Arterial Road
- National/State Highway

Southern Beaches Plan

Figure 1-1
Southern Beaches
Area

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Job No.	2526-056
Rev.	V.1
Date	4 Mar 2026
Size	A3

1.1.2 Project stages

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2.2 Planning and policy context

2.2.1 Policy framework

Land use and development in Tasmania is undertaken within the Resource Management and Planning System (which is commonly known as the planning system). The planning system comprises a suite of legislation, supported by a network of planning schemes, policies and strategies.

A structure plan must be consistent with the policies and strategies in this planning system. In other words, the Plan does not start with a 'blank slate', it already has a robust policy foundation from which it must be developed. The core planning legislation is the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPA Act). Key statutory documents in the planning system include the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) and the Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Sorell.

2.2.2 State policies and strategies

There are four State Policies that the Plan must be consistent with:

State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land 2009 (PAL Policy)

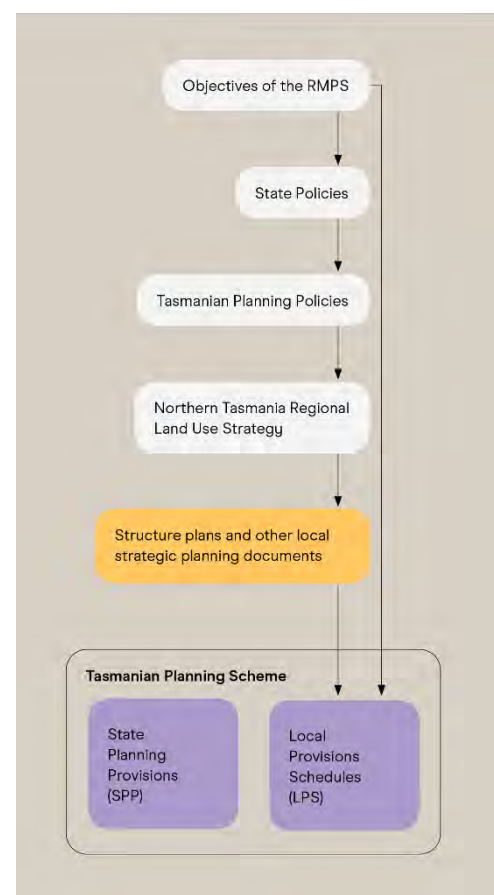
There is land zoned Agriculture at the western edge of the study area in Forcett. All agricultural land in Tasmania is important and should be protected from encroachment by other land uses and development. A key consideration is how to protect agricultural land near the study area that may otherwise become restricted or limited in its use either from use by non-agricultural activities, or being fettered by proximity of non-agricultural activities.

State Policy on Water Quality Management 1997

Impacts from urban development on water quality should be considered, and opportunities to protect water quality along creeks, rivers and other waterways should be maximised. The study area is on the coast, and it has significant waterways and water bodies such as the Carlton River, Blue Lagoon, and Pitt Water.

State Coastal Policy 1996¹

New urban development in coastal areas should be primarily located in existing settlements, and areas not at risk of coastal erosion and related hazards. Ribbon development of residential and other urban uses along the coastline is discouraged; this is particularly relevant when considering any development expansion potential within and around the settlements.



¹ The State Planning Office is currently progressing an amendment to the State Coastal Policy 1996 to allow consideration of appropriate development to occur on actively mobile landforms. More information can be found here: <https://www.stateplanning.tas.gov.au/have-your-say/consultations/regional-land-use-strategy-reviews/amendment-to-the-state-coastal-policy-1996>

National Environmental Protection Measures (recognised as State Policies under the LUPA Act)

The National Environment Protection Measures are statutory instruments that specify national standards for a variety of environmental issues and are primarily relevant at the more detailed planning stage.

2.2.2.1 Tasmanian Planning Policies

The Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs) are the highest-level land use planning policies in the state, coming into effect on 1 July 2026. Their core purpose is to provide a unified strategic direction for Tasmania's planning system to shape how regional land use strategies (RLUS), the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, and future planning reforms are developed and reviewed. They set out common land-use planning aims to be applied consistently across the state, covering issues such as sustainable development, environmental protection, community wellbeing, liveability, and the effective integration of land use and infrastructure.

The TPPs consist of seven thematic policy areas: Settlement, Environmental Values, Environmental Hazards, Sustainable Economic Development, Physical Infrastructure, Cultural Heritage, and Planning Processes. Each policy includes objectives, strategies and implementation statements designed to guide long-term planning outcomes and ensure the right development occurs in the right locations.

The policies influence updates to the RLUS, State Planning Provisions, and Local Provisions Schedules, ensuring planning decisions are transparent, consistent and grounded in statewide priorities. Their intent is to create a holistic, coordinated system that protects key values while supporting growth, resilience and the needs of future generations.

The Plan will consider these policies through the options analysis and two final recommendations are made and framed.

2.2.2.2 Statewide Industrial Land Strategy

2.2.3 Regional policies and strategies

2.2.3.1 Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy

The Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) sets the long-term strategic direction for land use and development across Southern Tasmania (including the Sorell LGA). First created in 2011 and most recently amended in 2025, the strategy is being updated to reflect changing regional conditions, such as population growth, housing pressures, and shifts in the planning system, to ensure it continues to shape a resilient, well-planned future for the region.

Until early 2025, the review process was managed by the Southern Steering Committee and Working Group in collaboration with the Tasmanian Government and councils in the region. Significant progress in the review process was made, and an early draft of the updated STRLUS was delivered. After this, the STRLUS Steering Committee decided to transfer management of the STRLUS review process to the State Planning Office who will now complete the remainder of the review and provide a final draft updated STRLUS to the Minister for consideration.

Public consultation on the draft STRLUS was open from 19 November 2025 to 22 February 2026, inviting community submissions to refine the final document before it proceeds to the Tasmanian Planning Commission. This consultation builds on earlier engagement undertaken throughout 2024 and 2025 on the associated State of Play Report and background analysis.

Key definitions

The STRLUS provides a range of terms relevant to the project. Table 2 includes definition of these terms.

Table 2: Definition of terms used in the draft STRLUS

Term	Definition
Town	means a centre characterised by a main/high street of local shops and services that primarily supports the surrounding agricultural communities. Predominately residential, a rural town will often rely on the nearest rural service hubs for additional services.
Town and village	means centres in other council areas in Southern Tasmania, and in parts of the region outside Hobart's Metropolitan Urban Boundary.
Town and village boundary	means a Settlement growth boundary as indicated by: · a nominated growth boundary spatially depicted on a map around a Town or Village; or · the extent of a Town or Village's Existing urban zoning where there is no separation by non-urban zones.
Transforming town	transforming town means a town or village that's role and function is transforming due to shifting land uses, economic role, population demographics, visitor numbers or other drivers of change.
Tourist destination	Not a defined term ²
Village	Means a centre predominantly residential with a small centre or some small-scale retail and commercial activity, and a limited range of social services and infrastructure, such as a community hall or a school.

Consideration to the draft STRLUS

While the STRLUS review is ongoing, the draft forms a matter for consideration for this project. Importantly, the draft STRLUS proposes a suite of regional strategies and statements of intent as are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Regional strategies and statements of intent

Strategy	Statement of intent	Project relevance
Growth management	Cities, towns and villages grow sustainably and efficiently. Our communities are supported as they grow and change, and are diverse, connected and productive.	· Applies the draft STRLUS settlement direction locally by planning for Dodges Ferry (Town) and Lewisham/Carlton Beach/Primrose Sands (Villages) as a connected coastal network with shared facilities and travel patterns · Responds to 'transforming' settlement pressures by guiding infill/consolidation within existing footprints (rather than outward expansion), given land constraints and coastal/environmental limits · Supports growth management that reflects the Southern Beaches' role as a major unserved

² The draft STRLUS states that planning for towns and villages that are identified as tourist destinations provide sufficient capacity to accommodate projected demand for short stay tourist accommodation and for permanent residents and seasonal workforce requirements, particularly in locations without access to reticulated water and sewer (where larger tourist accommodation facilities may be constrained).

Strategy	Statement of intent	Project relevance
		residential area and its functional relationship with Sorell as the main service hub.
Environmental values	Land use and economic activity respect and respond sustainably to the region's unique natural environment and biodiversity, waterways, geodiversity, and scenic character and coasts are protected.	- Protects key local assets that define character and liveability, including coastal foreshore, lagoons/estuaries (Carlton River, Blue Lagoon, Pitt Water) and remnant bushland reserves supporting biodiversity - Provides a basis to manage cumulative impacts from growth and year-round use on coastal vegetation, dunes, reserves and access tracks (including volunteer-supported Landcare areas) - Aligns land use change with local priorities for biodiversity protection and habitat restoration.
Environmental hazards	The community is protected from and resilient to potential environmental hazards and changes to natural systems resulting from climate change and human activity.	- Embeds bushfire, erosion, inundation and flooding risk into land use decisions across all townships - Supports avoidance of intensified development in the most hazard-constrained coastal and low-lying areas - Integrates hazard considerations with the unserved context, recognising risks of wastewater/stormwater system failure and contamination during heavy rainfall and inundation events.
Sustainable economic growth	Planning facilitates investment and supports a diverse, sustainable, and resilient economy underpinned by the region's unique environment, qualified and skilled workforces, infrastructure capacity, and accessible employment and economic precincts.	- Supports small-scale local business and services in appropriate locations, particularly Dodges Ferry - Recognises the Southern Beaches' strong reliance on Sorell for employment and higher-order services - Balances settlement growth with protection of surrounding rural and productive land.
Physical infrastructure	Southern Tasmania invests in and prioritises infrastructure in its existing settlements, while new infrastructure is delivered in logical and sequential ways, supporting the equitable sharing of costs to provide for communities to prosper economically and socially.	- Directly responds to growth in Tasmania's largest unserved residential area reliant on on-site systems - Aligns land use change with known constraints in water, wastewater, stormwater and transport capacity - Supports staged upgrades to access, safety and amenity as the permanent population increases.
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage underpins the character of Southern Tasmania and connections between its people and the natural environment, particularly for Aboriginal people. Recognising, protecting, celebrating and sharing natural and built cultural heritage values is central to maintaining the region's environment, for thriving communities and the regional economy.	- Recognises Palawa heritage values embedded in coastal and wetland landscapes - Guides change that respects the Southern Beaches' historic shack settlement pattern and coastal identity - Supports place-based interpretation and community connection through public spaces and access networks.

Settlement and growth management

The draft STRLUS provides an outline of the role and function of the towns and villages across Southern Tasmania and relates to those places that are outside the Metropolitan Urban Boundary. The classification of each town and village considers a range of functions that each place either currently serves or are planned to serve over the next 25 years and provides guidance as to how it may grow. Many of the towns and villages across the region serve multiple roles reflecting the complexity of inter-relationships between places in the region.

Table 4 provides a summary of the towns and villages matrix within the draft STRLUS. Importantly, all settlements are recognised for their growth, with some notes as a 'Tourist destination' and/or 'Transforming town'. The analysis underpinning the draft STRLUS classifies the Southern Beaches as a statistical area and notes that when it was defined for these purposes, it was to seek an understanding of the contribution that the area was making to Sorell LGA's growth, which was understood to be significant, despite the servicing constraints of the area. By comparison, the current STRLUS classifies Dodges Ferry, Carlton Beach, Lewisham and Primrose Sands as 'Dormitory suburbs' with a low or very low growth strategy and consolidation growth scenario.

In the Activity Centre Hierarchy, the current STRLUS classifies Sorell as a 'Major Satellite of Greater Hobart' while the draft shifts this to a 'District Centre' and Priority Growth Area, and Greenfield Growth Area. The draft STRLUS states that a 'District Centre' will primarily offer convenience goods, services, and some community facilities to the surrounding districts; be well-connected by high-quality bus services; and may service rural communities when located near the fringe of the Metropolitan Urban Boundary. This classification reinforces Sorell's role as the key service and employment hub for the LGA including the Southern Beaches.

Table 4: Towns and villages matrix

Location	Classification	Population status	Tourist destination	Transforming town	Current STRLUS comparison
Carlton Beach	Village	Growth	x	x	'Dormitory Suburb' Very low growth strategy Consolidation scenario.
Dodges Ferry	Town	Growth	x	x	Classified as a 'Dormitory Suburb' with a very low growth strategy and consolidation scenario.
Lewisham	Village	Growth	-	-	Classified as a 'Dormitory Suburb' with a very low growth strategy and consolidation scenario.
Primrose Sands	Village	Growth	x	x	Classified as a 'Dormitory Suburb' with a very low growth strategy and consolidation scenario.
Sorell	District Centre	Growth	-	-	Major Satellite of Greater Hobart

Spatial application

The draft STRLUS contains a suite of maps which show the nominated boundaries for towns and villages in the southern region. This includes a collective boundary for Dodges Ferry and Lewisham as shown below.

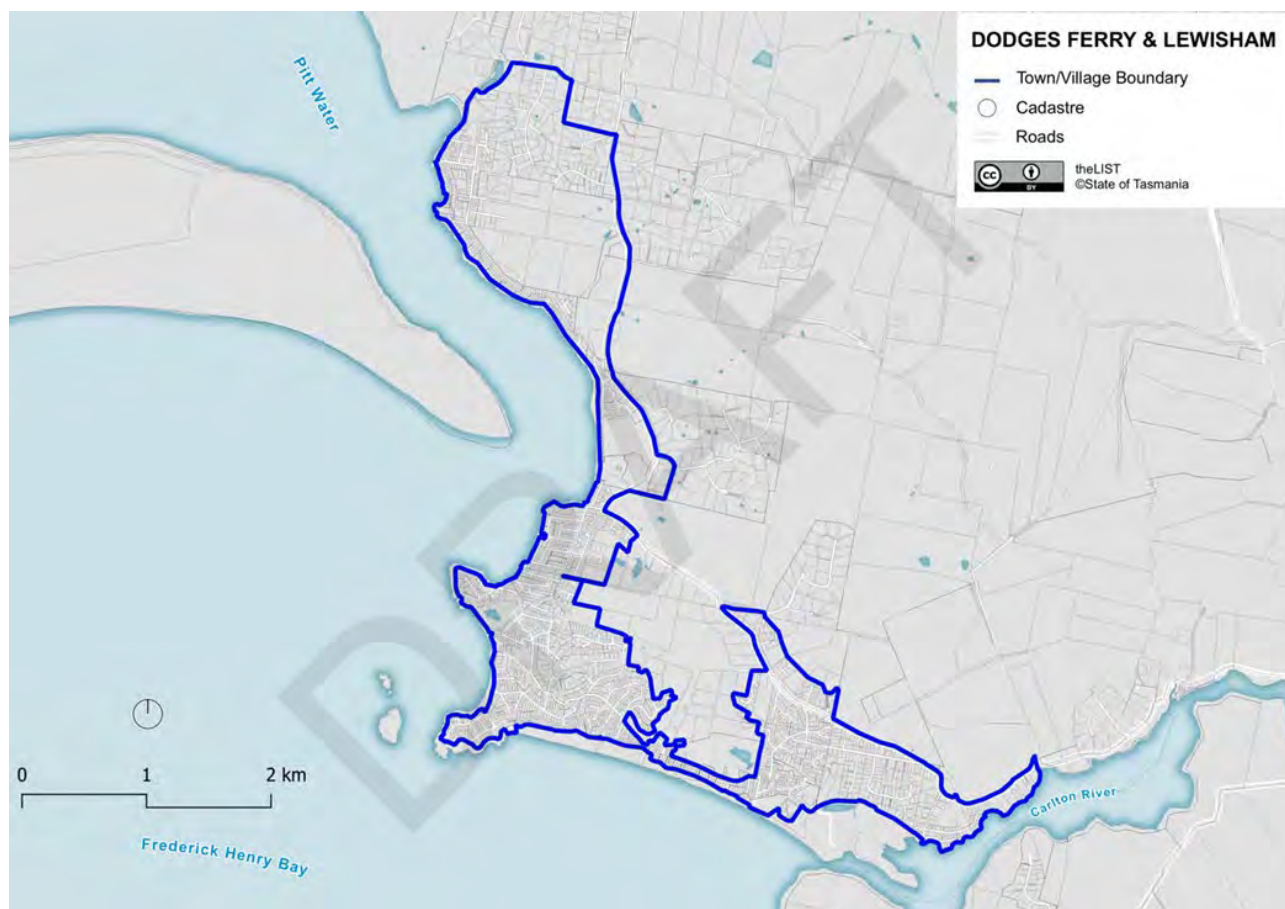


Figure 1: Nominated town boundary for Dodges Ferry and Lewisham

2.2.4 Local policies and strategies

2.2.4.1 Sorell Strategic Plan 2019 - 2029

The Sorell Council Strategic Plan 2019–2029 sets a 10-year framework to guide how Council manages growth, invests in infrastructure, supports its communities, and upholds its ‘Community, Coast, Country’ identity. The plan outlines Council’s purpose, vision and values, and establishes four core objectives:

- To facilitate regional growth
- Responsible stewardship and a Sustainable Organisation
- To ensure a liveable and inclusive community
- Increased community confidence in Council.

The Plan was developed through community engagement and internal workshops, and provides direction for budgeting, advocacy, operational priorities and long-term decision-making, aiming to balance population growth with environmental protection, financial sustainability and quality service delivery.

2.2.4.2 Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Sorell

The *Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Sorell* took effect on 21 December 2022. This planning scheme comprises the State Planning Provisions, which provide consistency on use and development standards

across the state, and the Local Provisions Schedule (LPS), which provides the zoning, overlays and planning rules specific to the Sorell local government area (LGA).

The zoning of land within the LGA informs the potential supply of future residential land, and the overlays guide development on land subject to constraints such as bushfire, inundation and values like natural assets.

The following zones are currently used in the Sorell LPS under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. These are also shown overpage as they apply to the study area.

- Low Density Residential
- Rural Living
- Village
- Local Business
- Light Industrial
- Rural
- Agriculture
- Landscape Conservation
- Environmental Management
- Utilities
- Community Purpose
- Recreation
- Open Space

Guideline No. 1 – LPS: zone and code application, issued under Section 8A of the LUPA Act, provides a guide to applying zones and codes under the LPS. The use of these zones will be reviewed as part of developing the structure plan and appropriate recommendations. This will be key to determining the supply and demand for land, and whether there is the potential for rezonings or back-zonings to ensure an appropriate supply of land is provided to facilitate and stimulate growth.



Southern Beaches Area (50m buffer)

Arterial Road

National/State Highway

Tasmanian Irrigation District

Tasmanian Planning Zones

Low Density Residential

Rural Living

Village

Local Business

Light Industrial

Rural

Agriculture

Landscape Conservation

Environmental Management

Utilities

Community Purpose

Recreation

Open Space

Southern Beaches Plan

Figure:
Land Use Zoning

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2.3 Document review

Era has undertaken a thorough review of background documentation supplied by Council; this includes relevant plans, strategies and reports which relate to the study area and/or the Sorell LGA. The review provides a rich information base for the project and will be referred to throughout the structure planning process to ensure important data, findings and engagement outcomes from previous work can actively contribute to the Plan.

3 People, housing and economics

3.1 Community

The following content is informed by the Community, Housing and Economic Profile prepared by Urban Enterprise, and supplemented by desktop research and analysis undertaken by Era.

3.1.1 Data sets

Analysis draws on two spatial lenses to align available datasets to the Southern Beaches study area. Localities (suburbs) are used for the core population and demographic profile across Lewisham, Dodges Ferry, Carlton, Primrose Sands, and Carlton River enabling comparison between settlements. While the Forcett township is not within the study area boundary, the Forcett locality overlaps the study area and includes some existing housing and population, so it has been included for completeness and to provide a broader assessment at this early stage of the project. Locality boundaries change across 2011, 2016 and 2021, but this is not expected to materially affect the analysis.

Analysis also draws on aggregated ABS SA1s for select population and dwelling approvals analysis. These SA1s broadly align with the study area, but the report notes that parts of Carlton River and a small north-eastern portion of the study area fall outside the selected SA1 geography and are therefore not captured. The Forcett SA1 is included on the same basis as the locality analysis, as part of the SA1 overlaps the study area (again noting the township itself is outside the boundary).

It is important to note that this project will occur during a Census year, but that new Census data will not be available prior to the anticipated completion date. This highlights the importance of strategic interrogation of data and ground truthing in stakeholder engagement and other data sources to ensure recommendations are robust, despite the delay in provision of most recent data.

3.1.2 Demographics

At the 2021 Census, the SA1 profile area accommodated 6,863 residents, compared with 7,466 residents across the broader localities profile area. Population growth between 2016 and 2021 averaged 2.5% per annum in the SA1 area and 2.6% per year across the localities, both slightly below the Sorell LGA growth rate of 3.0%. Dodges Ferry is the largest settlement, with 2,646 residents (35% of the population), followed by Carlton (18%) and Primrose Sands (16%). Carlton recorded the strongest population growth over the period, increasing by around 50 residents per year.

3.1.3 Households

Household composition reflects the older age profile. At the 2021 Census, couples without children (29%) and lone-person households (26%) were the most common household types, while families with children accounted for 24% of households. Average household size across the study area was 1.8 persons per dwelling, lower than Greater Hobart (2.4 persons). There is a narrative that more young families are moving to the area, and this is an important consideration which will be explored through stakeholder engagement noting new Census data will not be available during the project timeline.

Median weekly household income was \$1,425, slightly below the Greater Hobart median of \$1,542. Home ownership is the dominant tenure, with approximately 83% of dwellings owner-occupied (owned outright or with a mortgage), compared to 71% in Greater Hobart, and a correspondingly lower proportion of rental households.

3.1.4 Socio-economic index

As of 2021, the Sorell LGA recorded an Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score of 991, which is above the Tasmanian average (966) but below the national benchmark (1,000), indicating relatively lower disadvantage than Tasmania overall. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) score of 993 places Sorell slightly above the Tasmanian average (970) but below the national benchmark (1,000).

3.2 Housing

3.2.1 Dwellings

The study area contained approximately 4,048 dwellings in 2021, representing around 50% of all dwellings in the Sorell LGA. Between 2016 and 2021, dwelling stock increased by around 407 dwellings, equating to an average annual growth rate of 2.1% (approximately 81 dwellings per year), which was below the Sorell LGA average of 2.7%. Dwelling occupancy increased from 73% in 2011 to 77% in 2021, indicating growth in permanent residency, particularly during the pandemic period.

The dwelling stock is dominated by dwellings with three or more bedrooms (68%) indicating a lack of dwelling diversity. Dwelling approvals have averaged around 48 per year between 2015 and 2024, peaking at 61 approvals in 2021, but have declined since 2022. Data prepared by REMPLAN to support the Draft STRLUS indicates modest growth to 2046, with population growth of around 0.6 per cent per annum and dwelling growth of around 0.8 per cent per annum, both below Sorell LGA averages.

3.2.2 Dwelling occupancy

While there has been a strong shift towards an increasing permanent population in the Southern Beaches, holiday homes remain an important part of the dwelling mix. Unoccupied dwelling data from the 2021 Census can provide an indication of the number of dwellings used as non-primary residences. This assumes that people aren't typically on holiday in August, the month when the census occurs, which means that people would likely be at their primary place of residence and not staying in their holiday houses or second dwellings.

Primrose Sands reported the highest number of unoccupied dwellings at the 2021 Census (447 (44.5%)), followed by Dodges Ferry (273 (21.0%)), Carlton River (27 (18.5%)), Carlton (91 (15.1%)) and Lewisham (47 (13.2%)). With the exception of Carlton River, all suburbs saw an increase in dwelling occupation from the 2016 to 2021 Census, indicating the shift towards a more permanent population. This is consistent with anecdotal observations in the area, and the ongoing challenges of finding permanent housing in the Greater Hobart area, pushing families further to the fringes. For context, Tasmania-wide unoccupied private dwellings represented 11.3% of total dwellings on Census night in 2021.

3.2.3 Rental and visitor accommodation

Despite high homeownership in the Southern Beaches area (83%), the 2021 ABS census indicates that the area faces rental availability issues. Rental vacancy rates are critically low, below the REIA's healthy

benchmark of 3%. The vacancy rate for the Southern Beaches area is currently 1.2%³. At the time of writing, there were 10 rental listings active on realestate.com.au. Short-term rentals, such as Airbnb listings, further constrain the long-term rental market. Data supplied by Sorell Council indicates there had been 81 visitor accommodation approvals in the Southern Beaches (as at November 2023), while AirDNA data shows 101 active listings at the time of writing: Primrose Sands (36), Dodges Ferry (28), Carlton (14), Carlton River (12) and Lewisham (11).

3.3 Economics

At the 2021 Census, the study area was home to approximately 3,508 employed residents, representing around 46% of the resident population. The largest employment sectors were construction (15%), health care and social assistance (15%), and public administration and safety (10%). The workforce has a higher representation of technicians, trades workers and labourers, and a lower proportion of professionals and managers compared to Greater Hobart.

The area functions primarily as a residential area, with most employed residents commuting outside the study area. Around 20% commute to Hobart, 17% work within the Dodges Ferry–Lewisham area, and 14% are employed in the Sorell–Richmond area. Local employment is limited, with approximately 688 local jobs in 2021, concentrated in construction, education and training, and accommodation and food services.

3.4 Land supply and demand

3.4.1 General commentary

The Draft STRLUS largely describes the study area as containing ‘transforming towns’ which are towns experiencing shifting land uses, economic roles, population demographics, visitor numbers or other drivers of change. The applicable growth management intent in the Draft STRLUS responds by guiding infill and consolidation within existing township footprints (rather than outward expansion), and in response to land constraints and coastal or environmental limits.

Traditional land supply and demand analysis is driven by population projections. They provide a robust, but sometimes simplified, approach to strategic planning. The Southern Beaches has undergone a significant shift in character and function; from a collection of shack settlements to an area home to an increasingly permanent population. This shift is likely to continue and will see the redevelopment of temporary-use holiday homes to family dwelling inhabited by more people, more often.

In the context of land supply and demand, the Southern Beaches requires a strategic approach that goes beyond a single data set. While core data, such as that prepared by REMPLAN to support the Draft STRLUS, provides a basis for investigation and decision-making, the project must also consider other factors (as outlined in Section 1.1.3.1) that influence the supply and demand story.

3.4.2 REMPLAN analysis

The Southern Tasmania Residential Demand and Supply Study prepared by REMPLAN to support the Draft STRLUS indicate that the Southern Beaches will be home to an additional 960 people by 2046 and have demand for an additional 559 occupied private dwellings and 183 unoccupied private dwellings (considered in this context as holiday homes) in this time.

³ Data obtained for 7173 postcode from SQM Research, May 2025

This analysis states that both theoretical and practical land supply within the study area's Low Density Residential Zone will be exhausted in 22 years' time (based on a population forecast referenced above). While this may appear a somewhat comfortable supply volume, it does not consider the realities of environmental constraints such as flooding, bushfire and coastal inundation; nor does it consider practicalities related to access, lot layout, capacity for on-site services and general development suitability.

More specifically, REMPLAN analysis indicates a dwelling yield of 608 in the study area's Low Density Residential Zone, 495 of which are associated with 'retail parcels'. Retail parcels are defined as existing vacant parcels not of a size that allows further subdivision. They are considered 'available, and most likely to be developed in the short term'. Closer examination reveals that many of these parcels may be subject to environmental constraints which would inhibit or reduce development feasibility, thus impacting supply.

REMPAN analysis did not consider land within the study area's Rural Living Zone, resulting in an incomplete picture of the land supply pipeline. There are sizable clusters of land zoned Rural Living A and D within the study area, some of which lie within the nominated town boundary for Dodges Ferry and Lewisham per the Draft STRLUS which are an important piece of the supply and demand investigation.

Existing non-vacant land (marked 'unavailable' in REMPLAN analysis) will play a role in meeting demand as homes accommodate families full-time, rather than at holiday periods or weekends. Beyond housing, this will also drive a shift in demand for services and facilities across the region, further solidifying the narrative that single data sets cannot be a sole strategic guide.

Further interrogation is warranted as part of this project to understand the suitability (or unsuitability) of land for future development to gain a clearer understand of the true supply and demand pipeline. It is also important to state early that prioritising infill and compact settlements is both best practice and aligned with the Draft STRLUS statements of intent.

What this means for the Plan

Census data: Because updated Census data will not be available during the project timeframe, the Plan will need to deliberately ground-truth trends (including the reported inflow of young families) through engagement and supplementary sources.

Housing need and diversity: The Plan will need to respond to a changing demographic profile by supporting a broader housing mix (including smaller and adaptable dwellings) while managing change in a way that fits local character and lack of servicing.

Rental stress and affordability: Critically low rental vacancy and limited rental supply mean the Plan will need to consider how planning settings can better support rental availability and a more balanced housing market.

Permanent population shift: The Plan will need to respond to continued transition toward year-round occupancy and how this affects infrastructure demand, service planning and housing supply assumptions.

Local economy and commuting: Given the area's commuter profile, the Plan should prioritise access to services and daily needs locally, support modest and appropriately located economic activity, and ensure land use settings do not assume significant local job growth without evidence.

Land supply and feasibility: The Plan will need to take a cautious approach to land supply assumptions by testing 'theoretical' capacity against practical constraints (hazards, access, lot layout, on-site servicing capacity and development suitability), and by interrogating the pipeline beyond a single dataset (including Rural Living zoned land and the role of intensified use of existing dwellings).

Next technical inputs: Retail and industrial land assessments should be used to confirm realistic directions for activity centres, local services and any employment land needs, and to ensure future options are framed in a whole-of-LGA context.

Urban Enterprise will undertake retail needs assessment to guide the planning and development of activity centres, commercial precincts and employment areas. They will also prepare an industrial land assessment to identify whether the structure plan should consider provision of industrial land to meet localised needs. These will be documented into a technical assessment to support the Discussion Paper and will take a holistic view that also considers the needs of the broader Sorell LGA.

4 Built form and heritage

4.1 Township structure

4.1.1 Built form and settlement structure

The built form of the Southern Beaches reflects its transition from coastal holiday settlements to an increasingly permanent residential area. Development is predominantly low-density and low-rise, shaped by historic subdivision patterns, limited servicing and strong coastal and landscape influences. Detached dwellings remain the dominant housing form, with building heights generally limited to one or two storeys.

Historic subdivision layouts continue to influence settlement structure, with irregular street patterns, narrow road reserves, limited footpaths and constrained public realm. These characteristics, combined with reliance on on-site wastewater and stormwater systems, shape lot sizes, dwelling footprints and the feasibility of more intensive development. Built form varies across the Southern Beaches, with Dodges Ferry exhibiting a more consolidated and suburban character around its service and commercial areas, while Lewisham, Carlton and Primrose Sands retain more linear, coastal and informal settlement patterns.

4.1.2 Urban design and public realm

Urban design outcomes across the Southern Beaches are strongly influenced by the coastal setting and historic development patterns. Public life and recreation are centred on natural assets rather than formal civic spaces, with beaches, foreshore reserves, estuaries and coastal trails functioning as the primary public realm. Built form has limited definition of centres or streetscapes outside parts of Dodges Ferry.

Commercial and community uses are typically small-scale and dispersed, contributing to a village character but limiting opportunities for clustering of activity and services. Streetscape quality varies across the study area, reflecting differences in subdivision age, levels of investment and maintenance.

Era Advisory and Playstreet will identify urban design and place making initiatives that can enhance key precincts within the study area. This will be delivered as part of the technical assessments to support the Discussion Paper.

4.2 Local heritage

4.2.1 Aboriginal heritage

The Southern Beaches form part of a culturally significant coastal landscape for the Traditional Owners, the Mumirimina people of the Oyster Bay nation, who have long-standing connections to land, sea and waterways. Estuaries, lagoons and coastal margins within the study area were important places for movement, food gathering and cultural practice, and these connections continue despite extensive post-colonial land use change.

Aboriginal heritage values are primarily embedded in natural features rather than the built environment, and may not be immediately visible. The places listed in Table 5 indicate that Aboriginal heritage in the Southern Beaches is landscape-based, continuous and living, and must be considered in land use change affecting Land, Sea and Sky Country including coastal areas, wetlands and estuaries.

Table 5: Places of Palawa heritage value

Term	Definition
Pitt Water–Orielton Lagoon	A Ramsar-listed estuarine system of international significance that forms part of the traditional lands of the Mumirimina people, with long-standing use for food gathering, movement and cultural practice; Aboriginal values are embedded in tidal flats, saltmarshes and shorelines.
Carlton River estuary	A culturally significant waterway and estuarine landscape historically used for seasonal movement and resource harvesting, forming part of the broader coastal cultural system linked to Pitt Water and Frederick Henry Bay.
Blue Lagoon and surrounding wetlands	Coastal lagoon and wetland systems associated with Aboriginal food sources and travel routes, where cultural values are closely tied to water, landforms and vegetation communities rather than visible artefacts.

4.2.2 Historic heritage

Historic heritage within the Southern Beaches is closely linked to its development as a holiday and shack-based settlement during the twentieth century and its gradual transition to permanent residential use. While there are no formally listed heritage places, the area's identity is strongly shaped by modest beach houses, informal construction, early subdivision patterns and long-standing community facilities.

Elements such as community halls, jetties, foreshore access points and remnants of early shack development contribute to local character and a shared sense of place. The places listed in Table 6 illustrate the Southern Beaches' transition from early settlement and farming to shack-based holiday communities.

Table 6: Places of historic heritage value

Term	Definition
Ferry Farm	Established in the early 1830s by Ralph Dodge, associated with one of the earliest ferry crossings of Pitt Water and early agricultural activity; remnants and interpretation signage remain on the foreshore near Dodges Ferry Primary School.
Lagoon Farm site and Lagoon Park	Former nineteenth-century farmstead now commemorated through signage and public open space, illustrating early rural land use and subsequent adaptation into community recreation areas.
Ferry Hall	A relocated early-twentieth-century timber community hall that has served multiple civic functions over time, reflecting the informal, adaptive reuse characteristic of Southern Beaches heritage.
Lewisham Jetty	A long-standing maritime structure supporting fishing, boating and local transport, representing the area's coastal settlement and recreational history; the jetty remains an active and valued community asset.
Historic shack precincts	While largely unlisted, clusters of modest beach shacks, early subdivision layouts and foreshore access points collectively express the twentieth-century holiday settlement character that defines much of the Southern Beaches' identity.

What this means for the Plan

Built form: Population growth and changing housing needs are beginning to place pressure on the existing built form, with increased interest in dual occupancy, secondary dwellings and incremental infill in some locations. While change remains gradual, these trends highlight the importance of understanding how growth can be accommodated in a way that responds to neighbourhood character, infrastructure constraints and sensitive coastal and bushland settings.

Settlement structure: Incremental redevelopment and dwelling replacement are gradually altering the visual character of some areas, raising questions about how historic settlement patterns and coastal character are recognised as the Southern Beaches continues to evolve.

Urban design and public realm: The existing urban design character provides an important reference point for understanding how future change may occur while retaining the informal, coastal qualities valued by the community.

Aboriginal heritage: Recognition of Aboriginal heritage values is an important consideration when assessing land use change, development pressure and infrastructure works, particularly in areas where disturbance to coastal or wetland environments may occur.

Historic heritage: Understanding the local historic heritage context establishes an important baseline for the Plan, highlighting the interplay between historic patterns, key sites, cultural values and contemporary pressures for change.

5 Environment and landscape

5.1 Natural values

5.1.1 Scenic values

The Southern Beaches provides access to several beaches and coastal areas of high scenic and recreational value, with the character of the area defined by its natural environment. Having grown from a holiday shack location, the area features informal gravel paths, narrow streets and lower density housing. It is understood that there is a strong commitment to maintaining these place characteristics.

Scenic protection areas in the Southern Beaches area under the Sorell LPS include:

- Southern side of Arthur Highway between Iron Creek Bay and Sugar Loaf Road including some areas on northern side in vicinity of Coopers Hill: The southern side of the highway has an agricultural character defined by intensive agricultural activities. The northern side has a predominately vegetated skyline and upper hill face with lower slopes developed for farming.
- Hill face between Shellfish Point and Jones Bay: Prominent hill face when viewed from public areas when viewed from causeway entering Sorell Township.
- Steeles Island (20 River Street, Carlton): A sand island, accessed by a causeway, and located in the Carlton River Estuary / Mouth containing natural coastal vegetation.
- Carlton Bluff: A headland with sparse coastal native vegetation.

5.1.2 Vegetation communities

The Sorell LGA contains at least 10 out of 39 of the Tasmanian threatened native vegetation communities, including several others of national significance. Tasmanian threatened native vegetation communities found in the Southern Beaches area (under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*) include:

- *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forest and woodland on sandstone
- *Eucalyptus ovata* forest and woodland
- *Eucalyptus tenuiramis* forest and woodland on sediments
- *Eucalyptus viminalis* - *Eucalyptus globulus* coastal forest and woodland
- Wetlands

Lewisham adjoins the Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon which is a listed Ramsar wetland. Wetland areas also include Blue Lagoon in Dodges Ferry, which contains freshwater aquatic herbland and freshwater aquatic sedgeland and rushland.

5.1.3 Flora and fauna

The Sorell LGA is known to include globally significant habitat for populations of critically endangered species including the red handfish and swift parrot. Other significant species include the eastern barred

bandicoot and green and gold frog. The Southern Beaches area contains several nature reserves that support natural values including threatened vegetation communities and threatened orchids.

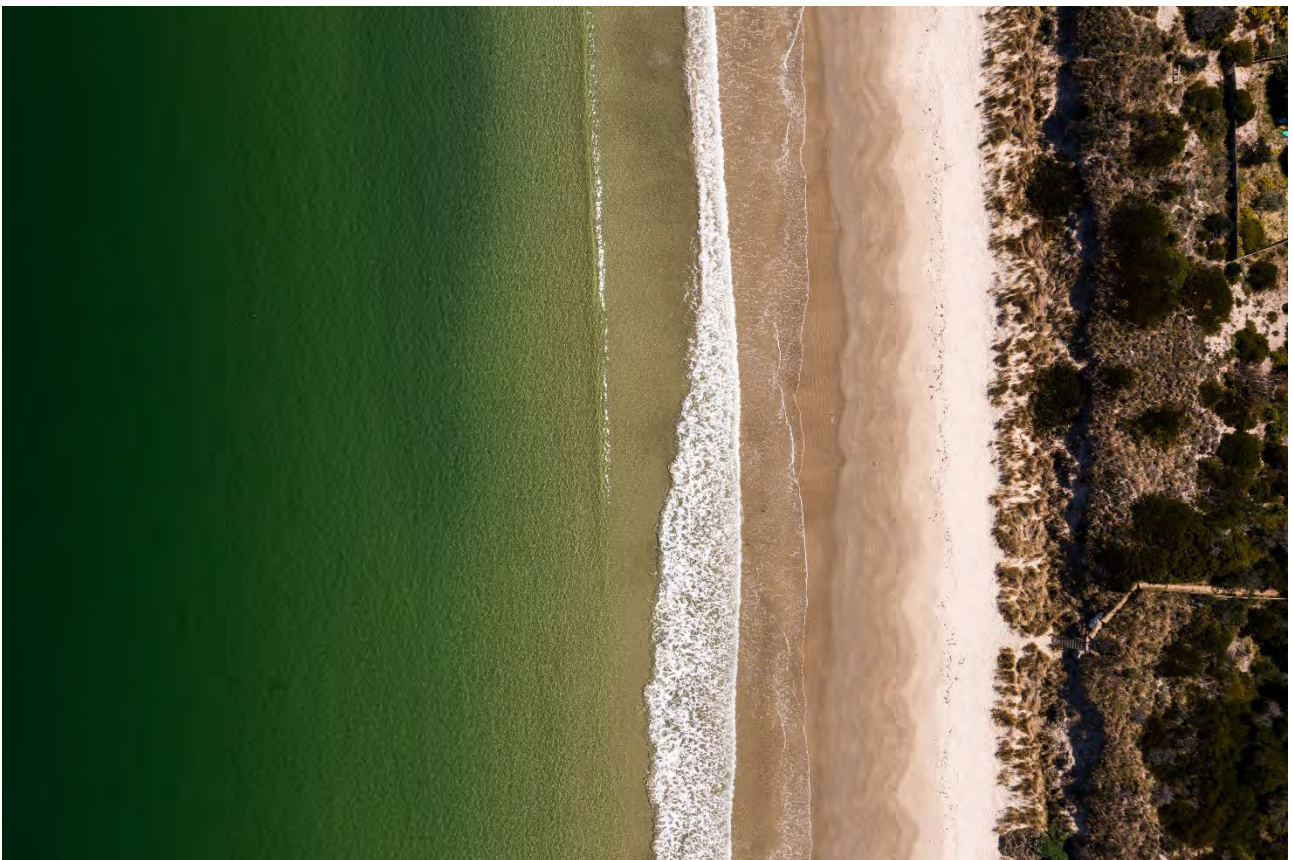
5.1.4 Beaches and waterways

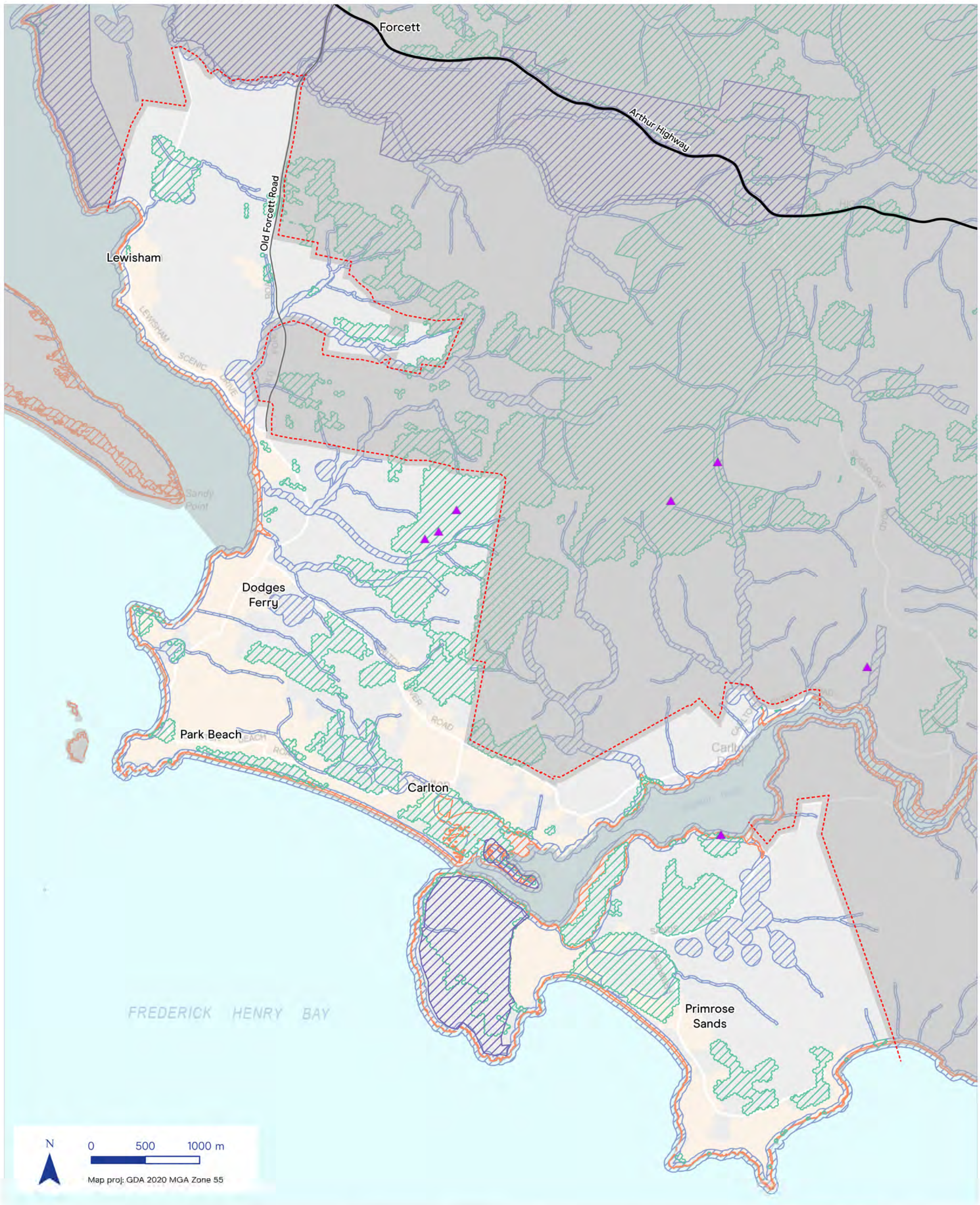
The Southern Beaches coastline is characterised by long sandy beaches, rocky headlands and estuarine systems. The coastal system is shaped primarily by Pitt Water, the Carlton River, and Frederick Henry Bay. Beaches include Okines Beach, Tiger Head Beach, Red Ochre Beach, Blue Lagoon Beach, Park Beach, Carlton Beach and Primrose Sands Beach. The Carlton River mouth forms a deep inlet at the eastern end of Carlton Beach. It creates a natural divide between Carlton and Primrose Sands.

5.2 The local landscape

The Southern Beaches area is characterised by low-lying coastal plains, extensive dune systems, long beaches (Carlton Beach and Primrose Sands), and coastal lagoon and estuarine features (Blue Lagoon and Carlton River). These landforms create a predominantly sandy, wind-shaped coastal environment with dunes, shorelines, and tidal flats forming the core geographical character of the region.

This region features a mix of grazing, horticulture, and irrigated cropping, with major products including beef, pork, potatoes, strawberries, and raspberries. There is increasing diversification into regenerative agriculture, direct market sales, and new vineyards and berry farms, such as Heritage Farms Tasmania and Fields Farm. The South East Irrigation Scheme supplies reliable water to support agricultural output around Sorell and Forcett, and agricultural land adjacent to the roads leading into Lewisham and Dodges Ferry. However this water is not available for non-agricultural uses.





- Southern Beaches Area (50m buffer)
- Arterial Road
- National/State Highway
- Raptor Nests

Tasmanian Planning Overlay

- Scenic protection area
- Priority vegetation
- Future coastal refugia area
- Waterway and coastal protection area

Southern Beaches Plan

Figure:
Natural Values

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5.3 Natural hazards

5.3.1 Climate change

The Sorell Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2024 was developed under the Southern Councils Climate Collaboration Project (2021-24), with the aim to improve the capability of Sorell Council to manage the risks associated with climate change.

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan assessed the vulnerability of Council infrastructure and community assets in relation to climate hazards. Key climate change vulnerabilities identified were:

- Increased call on council's emergency response team in the face of the threat of unprecedented fire emergencies resulting in increasing pressure to ensure evacuation centre procedures are up to date to cover all potential scenarios, and that buildings are fit for purpose.
- Increasing frequency and intensity of bushfires exacerbating the potential for evacuation and access issues on some council roads serving residents in remote and isolated areas.
- A trend towards heavier rainfall events and unprecedented flooding resulting in infrastructure damage or failure (e.g. road surfaces and bridges).
- Natural resource management challenges due to changing conditions favouring invasive species to the detriment of local biodiversity.
- Increasing coastal inundation causing damage to coastal assets; pressure on council to protect private assets; issues for planning decision making in coastal areas.

A structure plan discourages development in areas at risk, especially in relation to sensitive uses. It also should be ensured that infrastructure and services that service a wider area are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk. Given most of the study area comprises private freehold land, considering risk mitigation measures in future development and subdivision will be key to ensure appropriate adaptation to climate change impacts into the future.

5.3.2 Landslip

As the Southern Beaches area is primarily a low-lying coastal landscape, there is a relatively low landslip risk in comparison to Tasmania on average. There are some landslip hazard areas identified across the Southern Beaches, predominantly in the low landslip risk hazard band. There are small pockets of medium landslip risk hazard bands, including on the coasts of Spectacle Head and Carlton Bluff.

5.3.3 Bushfire

The majority of Sorell Council including the Southern Beaches area is considered bushfire-prone land. Many parts of the Sorell municipality are closely connected to large areas of managed and unmanaged bushland, and the municipality has experienced firsthand the impacts of bushfire with the Dunalley bushfires in 2013.

5.3.4 Coastal erosion

Much of the Southern Beaches coastline is identified as being prone to coastal erosion, or in a coastal erosion investigation area. High coastal erosion hazard areas include Park Beach, Carlton Beach and Primrose Sands Beach.

5.3.5 Flooding and coastal inundation

Flood hazard in the Southern Beaches is primarily concentrated along creek lines, drainage corridors and low-lying coastal land, including areas around Carlton River, Dodges Ferry, Lewisham and Primrose Sands. SES mapping identifies flood affectation extending inland from the coastline and estuarine environments, with some overlap affecting existing residential areas and key transport routes, including sections of Carlton River Road, Lewisham Scenic Drive and Arthur Highway. Higher-hazard flood extents (H4–H6) are generally confined to watercourses and adjacent low-lying land, while lower-hazard areas (H1–H3) extend more broadly across floodplains and overland flow paths.

What this means for the Plan

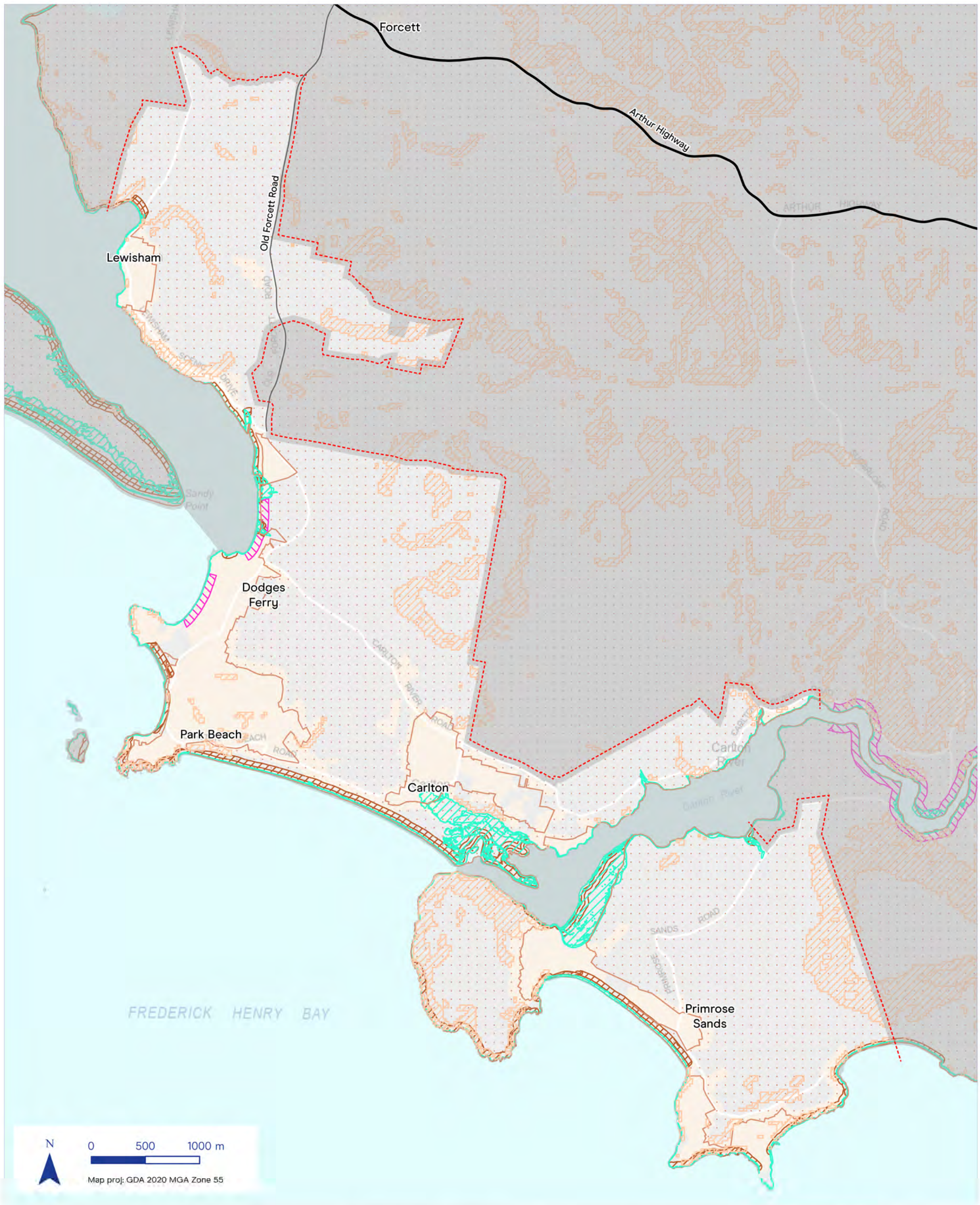
Local landscape: The Southern Beaches' low-lying coastal landforms, estuaries and dune systems strongly shape settlement patterns and access, meaning future planning will need to work with landscape constraints and coastal processes rather than override them.

Natural values: High scenic values, threatened vegetation communities, important habitats and interconnected beaches and waterways highlight the need for growth options that protect ecological function, biodiversity and the coastal character that underpins liveability.

Natural hazards: Widespread exposure to bushfire, coastal erosion, inundation and localised landslip means hazard risk will be a key consideration in determining where future development is appropriate, constrained or avoided.

Climate change: Increasing climate-related risks reinforce the importance of embedding adaptation, resilience and risk-aware land use decisions into future planning directions for the Southern Beaches.

Playstreet will undertake a landscape analysis to understand how the local environment and landscape context can inform future recommendations. This will be delivered as part of the technical assessments to support the Discussion Paper.



- Southern Beaches Area (50m buffer)
- Arterial Road
- National/State Highway

Tasmanian Planning Overlay

- Landslip hazard
- Bushfire-prone areas
- Coastal inundation hazard
- Coastal erosion area - investigation area
- Coastal erosion area

Southern Beaches Plan

Figure:
Natural Hazards

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Rev. V.1
Date 4 Mar 2026
Size A3



Southern Beaches Plan

Figure:
Flooding

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Size A3

6 Open space and social infrastructure

6.1 Open space

6.1.1 Parks and reserves

Parks and reserves in the Southern Beaches are abundant, with communities having access to extensive coastal foreshore area and trails, and nature reserves. The community has an active group of volunteers working as the Southern Beaches Landcare Coastcare; this is reflected in the number of rehabilitation projects and education programs undertaken.

Key parks and reserves in the study area include Payeena Reserve, Parnella Reserve and Casurina Reserve in Dodges Ferry, Samuel Thorne Reserve in Lewisham and Spectacle Islands Nature Reserve. More formally, Council commissioned North Barker to prepare Reserve Management Plans for Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve, Payeena Reserve, Parnella Reserve, Samuel Thorne Reserve and White Gums Reserve.

There are beach access paths, steps, planting and signage at Carlton Beach, Carlton River, Park Beach, Red Ochre Beach, Samuel Thorne Reserve, Primrose Sands and Connolly's Marsh. There are also wetlands and saltmarshes at Blue Lagoon and Okines Beach at Dodges Ferry, Townsends Lagoon at Lewisham, Carlton River and Primrose Sands.

Dodges Ferry is well serviced with district scale parks such as the Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve and Boat Park. In general, the Southern Beaches area has minimal local family parks. This reflects its previous holiday home character; however, as the permanent population grows and the number of both aging and young people increases, a greater variety of facilities is required.

Primrose Sands represents a community in transition from a holiday home settlement to a more established and active community with an increasingly permanent population. Similarly to Dodges Ferry, the area includes large swathes of coastal foreshore open space and foreshore trails, but minimal local parks.

6.2 Recreation

6.2.1 Active recreation

The Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve includes the local football oval for the Dodges Ferry Football Club and facilities such as change rooms and score boards. It is located next to the Dodges Ferry Primary School, Okines Community House, and the Dodges Ferry skate park. The skate park was upgraded in 2017 and is understood to be well-utilised. Across the road from the Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve, the Southern Beaches Swim Centre is currently being built to provide a multi-use aquatic facility.

The Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club includes parking, toilet facilities, and established walkways to the beach. The Primrose Sands Community Centre provides an indoor basketball court which doubles as a community hall, and a neighbourhood house type facility. There are outdoor playground facilities,

including play equipment for toddlers, a small bike pump track, skate facility, a basketball hoop, and outdoor seating areas.

6.2.2 Passive recreation

The Southern Beaches area provides access to extensive foreshore areas that provide for passive recreation activities. The Lewisham to Carlton trail links the Lewisham Boat Ramp, along the foreshore, to Dodges Ferry and Carlton Beach beyond. It provides a valued coastal link that is well used by the community. In Primrose Sands, there are trails throughout the dunes and along the foreshore that are used by the local community.

Established gravel and sealed walking trails extend along Old Forcett Road, and parts of Lewisham Scenic Drive, Carlton Beach Road, and Carlton River Road, as well as smaller streets with footpaths. In general, pedestrian connectivity is good, with established walkways and minimal cul-de-sacs, reflecting a historic settlement pattern.

The Okines Community House, which is adjacent to the Dodges Ferry Recreation Park, includes a community garden with regular working bees. Boating and fishing facilities include the Dodges Ferry Boat Ramp, Lewisham Boat Ramp and Gypsy Bay Boat Ramp.

6.2.3 Play

The Sorell Playspace Strategy provides an audit of the municipality's fourteen existing playspaces and outlines a long-term approach to improving play provision as the community grows. It identifies five existing playspaces in the Southern Beaches:

- Lewisham Boat Ramp (Lewisham) – Local playspace
- Lewis Court Reserve (Lewisham) – Local playspace
- Boat Park (Dodges Ferry) – Regional playspace
- Snake Hollow Park (Carlton) – Local playspace
- Primrose Sands Community Hall (Primrose Sands) – District playspace

The strategy identifies actions for delivering better-equipped, well-shaded, inclusive and age-diverse playspaces across the Southern Beaches, with a focus on addressing access gaps, improving supporting amenities such as toilets and seating, and enhancing play variety through natural, unstructured, and community-aligned design.

6.3 Social infrastructure

6.3.1 Community

The Okines Community House in Dodges Ferry operates with the aim to provide a safe and friendly environment where Southern Beaches residents can meet, share information and resources and strengthen community networks. Initiatives include a community garden, food cooperative, and bike shed. The Primrose Sands Community Centre host regular community events including the Primrose Sands Community Market.

6.3.2 Health

There are no major district hospitals located in the Sorell LGA. The nearest major hospital is the Royal Hobart Hospital, which offers specialised services and an emergency department. The Sorell Medicare Urgent Care Clinic opened in December 2025 and offers free, immediate treatment for non-life-threatening conditions, providing priority care without the need for emergency department visits.

There is one community medical centre and family practice located in the Sorell LGA, offering a range of services. There are two private family medical practices in the Sorell township and one private doctors' surgery in Dodges Ferry. There are no identified aged care services in the Southern Beaches.

There are three ambulance stations in the Sorell LGA. The Sorell Ambulance Station is a full-time station with paramedic crews rostered on 24-hours per day. Dodges Ferry Ambulance Station is a double branch station with a paramedic rostered on 24-hours per day as well as volunteer support staff. The Dunalley Ambulance Station is a volunteer only station.

6.3.3 Education

There are three government schools in the Sorell LGA – Sorell School (K-12), Dodges Ferry Primary School and Dunalley Primary School. Dodges Ferry Primary School is the only school in the Southern Beaches.

While the total enrolments for the other two government schools in the Sorell LGA have remained relatively constant with year-to-year variations, enrolments at Dodges Ferry have increased since 2018 by over 100. This is despite a slight decline in the number of school aged persons (i.e. 5 to 14 years) in the Southern Beaches area between 2016 and 2021. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$25 million for a major redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School to provide additional capacity, and contemporary learning areas, support spaces, and amenities.

Indie School Sorell is a non-government school in the Sorell township that provides an alternative education for young people aged 15-18. The Southeast Tasmania Study Hub in the Sorell township offers local support services and study facilities for students enrolled at any university or vocational education and training provider.

Era understands that a notable portion of school aged residents travel out of the Southern Beaches area to attend school, particularly high school. This has an impact on vehicle movements and how residents move through the region, while also exposing gaps in public transport connections for school students. It is also understood that Sorell Council is in ongoing discussions with Catholic Education Tasmania regarding a new school development near the Sorell township.

6.3.4 Arts and culture

Community-based arts and cultural activities are delivered in the Southern Beaches area through several local venues. Okines Community House provides regular markets, arts and crafts workshops, and monthly film screenings run by the Dodges Ferry Film Society, which presents films selected by its members.

Live music performances are regularly held at Okines Community House, the Lewisham Tavern, the Dodges Ferry Hotel and the Primrose Sands RSL. The Primrose Sands RSL runs an occasional courtesy bus to transport residents to and from events. Red Ochre Studio in Dodges Ferry hosts ceramics classes, workshops and events.

6.3.5 Youth

The Sorell Social Strategy was prepared by GHD for Sorell Council in 2024. The report identified that the Sorell LGA has a shortage of spaces and services tailored for older children and youth, particularly in the Southern Beaches. This has contributed to feelings of loneliness, boredom and social isolation of young people in the area. Spaces that are designed for young people are important to maintain social connections, promote healthy lifestyles and reduce potential incidences of anti-social behaviour.

Childcare facilities are offered at Gumnut Long Day Care Centre and Gumnut Outside School Hours Care, both in Dodges Ferry.

What this means for the Plan

Open space: Extensive coastal foreshore, reserves and trail networks are a defining strength of the Southern Beaches, meaning future planning will need to focus on protecting access, improving functionality and addressing gaps in local park provision as the permanent population grows.

Recreation: Strong demand for both active and passive recreation highlights the importance of reinforcing key community hubs, improving connectivity between settlements, and ensuring recreation facilities evolve to meet changing demographics and year-round use.

Social infrastructure: Growth in the permanent population is increasing pressure on community facilities, health, education and youth services, reinforcing the need to plan for the timing, location and scale of social infrastructure to support liveability and wellbeing across the Southern Beaches.

Era Advisory will undertake a social infrastructure needs assessment to identify current and future social infrastructure requirements to support community wellbeing and liveability within the Southern Beaches. This will be delivered as part of the technical assessments to support the Discussion Paper.



7 Service and utility infrastructure

7.1 Water, sewer and stormwater

7.1.1 Water supply

The Southern Beaches area is not served by reticulated water. The population relies on rainwater and water carters that provide delivery services. Water carters are a key source of heavy vehicle traffic through residential areas across the LGA, and can cause traffic congestion, particularly in areas with narrow road reserves.

It is understood that reticulated water will not be connected to the townships in the Southern Beaches for the foreseeable future, noting it is not referenced in TasWater's regional Master Plan. Lack of reticulated water places limitations on the types of commercial developments that can occur within the Southern Beaches.

7.1.2 Wastewater and stormwater

Sorell Council manages wastewater and stormwater in the Southern Beaches via the Southern Beaches On-site Wastewater and Stormwater Management Specific Area Plan (SAP) in the Sorell LPS. The purpose of the SAP is to ensure that sufficient land is available for on-site wastewater management, and that stormwater quality and quantity is managed to protect natural assets, infrastructure and property. This SAP applies to land within the Low Density Residential Zone and Local Business Zone.

The Southern Beaches is not serviced by reticulated sewerage. It is understood that reticulated sewerage will not be connected to the townships in the Southern Beaches for the foreseeable future, noting it is not referenced in TasWater's regional Master Plan. The growing residential population continues to rely on on-site wastewater management systems. The provisions of the SAP ensure that a site of development has a sufficient and suitable area of land available for on-site wastewater management. Sewerage is an increasingly significant issue across the Southern Beaches with an increasing permanent population and subsequently increasing pressure on existing septic systems.

Stormwater management is becoming a more significant issue for LGAs across the state due to an increasing number of storm events, more urban development, and an increasing population. Under the *Urban Drainage Act 2013*, Council has an obligation to provide and manage appropriate stormwater drainage within urban areas of the municipality. To meet the acceptable solution under the SAP, all development must be capable of connecting by gravity to a public stormwater system. To satisfy the performance criteria, development must be capable of accommodating an on-site stormwater management system.

Lots in the Southern Beaches area must be of an appropriate size to manage both wastewater and stormwater onsite. This has implications for residential development patterns.

7.2 Hard waste management

Council considers waste management a core service for Sorell residents. Council provides a kerbside garbage and recycling collection service to all residences and some commercial properties. In addition to kerbside services, Council operates recycling centres in Dodges Ferry and Sorell, as well as a Recycling Hub at the Council Offices.

7.3 Electricity and telecommunications

The Southern Beaches is electricity serviced by TasNetworks. The Southern Beaches area has generally good mobile coverage with 5G available. Telstra Public Phone booths are available at Dodges Ferry, Carlton, Lewisham and Primrose Sands. Free national calls can be made using the public phones.

What this means for the Plan

Water supply: The absence of reticulated water and reliance on rainwater and carted supply will remain a defining constraint on growth, land use intensity and the type of development that can be supported in the Southern Beaches.

Wastewater and stormwater: Ongoing reliance on on-site wastewater and stormwater systems places clear limits on lot sizes, densities and development feasibility, meaning future planning will need to carefully balance growth aspirations with environmental protection and system capacity.

Waste management: While waste services are generally well established, population growth and seasonal demand will require ongoing consideration of service efficiency, access and impacts on the local road network.

Electricity and telecommunications: Generally reliable electricity and telecommunications services provide a strong foundation for day-to-day living and business activity, but future growth will need to consider resilience, capacity and servicing expectations as the area continues to transition to a more permanent residential community.

8 Transport and movement

8.1 Active transport

The Sorell Active Transport Strategy outlines a 10-year plan to improve walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure across the Sorell Local Government Area in response to rapid population growth, high car dependency, and limited existing active transport options. The Strategy included a gap analysis that identified the following findings for the Southern Beaches area:

- Lack of walking, wheeling infrastructure leading to people walking and riding next to motorists on highspeed road conditions such as Arthur Highway and Old Forcett Road
- Lack of walking, wheeling and riding infrastructure connection to bus stops
- Insufficient sight distance for people driving, walking, wheeling and riding at intersections and curves especially on roads such as Old Forcett Road
- Lack of walking, wheeling and riding infrastructure to access other settlements such as Sorell with higher attractors leading to isolation especially for young people
- Lack of walking, wheeling infrastructure such as footpaths not available in a connected network in many of the smaller population centres in the LGA such as Lewisham.

8.2 Public transport

Metro Tasmania's eastern service only reaches as far as Seven Mile Beach in the adjacent Clarence LGA. The Sorell LGA relies on regional bus services operated by Kinetic and Area Connect. Kinetic operates general access, intercity and school bus services across Tasmania. There is a Kinetic bus depot located in Dodges Ferry. Area Connect is powered by Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) and provides timetabled bus services for regional areas. Sorell Council continue to advocate strongly for improved and increased service provision across the Southern Beaches.

Bus services in the Southern Beaches currently consist of:

- Monday to Friday: seven daily outgoing bus services from Carlton to the Hobart Interchange via the Southern Beaches and Sorell, operated by Kinetic. Eight daily incoming services.
- Saturday/Sunday/Public Holidays: four daily outgoing bus services from Carlton and the Hobart Interchange via the Southern Beaches and Sorell, operated by Kinetic. Five daily incoming services.
- Twice weekly service between Primrose Sands and Sorell that is pre-booked and collects patrons from the door, operated by Area Connect.

CTST and Area Connect also offer flexible transport options to assist people with undertaking daily activities and accessing jobs and training.

Transport disadvantage has been previously identified within the Southern Beaches community as a significant impediment for young people accessing education, training and work opportunities. In addition to the limitations of the bus service, the costs associated with the bus service also impact on the community's ability to use it.

8.3 Road network

Old Forcett Road and Carlton River Road are the key arterial routes through the Southern Beaches area, with no highways in the Southern Beaches road network. Local roads comprise the remainder of the road network. Growth in the Southern Beaches area has contributed to pressure on the Hobart to Sorell road corridor. The Sorell Southern Bypass opened in 2023 to provide a direct route to the Southern Beaches and the Tasman Peninsula and has reduced traffic through the Sorell township itself. Heavy traffic across the Southern Beaches consists predominantly of water tankers and garbage trucks.

8.3.1 Parking

Car parking across the Southern Beaches is generally characterised by informal and small-scale provision that supports beach access, community facilities and local activity nodes. Parking is predominantly accommodated through on-street spaces and modest off-street areas located near foreshore reserves, boat ramps and community facilities, reflecting the low-density coastal settlement pattern and village character of the area.

Demand increases seasonally during peak summer periods and public holidays, particularly at popular beaches. High-use areas such as Park Beach and Carlton Beach experience constraints on available parking, with local streets in proximity to popular beaches, cafes and services also experiencing congestion. Parking areas are commonly shared rather than being dedicated to individual land uses.

What this means for the Plan

Active transport: Limited and disconnected walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure means future planning will need to prioritise safer local connections, particularly between neighbourhoods, community facilities and public transport.

Public transport: Constrained bus service coverage, frequency and high cost reinforce the Southern Beaches' reliance on private vehicles, highlighting the importance of land use patterns that support future service improvements and access to stops.

Road network: Growth-related pressure on the local road network, combined with narrow road reserves and heavy vehicle movements, means transport capacity, safety and function will be key considerations in shaping future development patterns.

Parking: Seasonal peaks and informal parking arrangements at beaches and community hubs highlight the need to balance access, amenity and local impacts as visitation and permanent population continue to increase.

Avandra Advisory will identify and map current street environments within the study network via the Austroads Movement and Place Framework and other Tasmanian applications. Key transport challenges and opportunities will be documented into a technical assessment to support the Discussion Paper. This task will identify opportunities to improve the public domain and streetscape, particularly within the Dodges Ferry Local Business Zone and key community nodes, using a Healthy Streets approach.

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