

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

# Port Welshpool Marine Precinct Plan

Draft | Oct 2017



South Gippsland  
Shire Council



MEINHARDT

GROUP GSA



ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS



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**Cover image**

Port Welshpool, image courtesy of South Gippsland Shire Council

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# 1 Introduction

## About the project

The Port Welshpool Marine Precinct Plan (the 'Precinct Plan') is an initiative of South Gippsland Shire Council ('Council') aimed at revitalising the region and township through foreshore enhancement and marina development. Council has obtained funding from Regional Development Victoria and commissioned Water Technology, in collaboration with Meinhardt, Essential Economics, and GroupGSA to prepare the Precinct Plan.

The purpose of this project is to work through the complex challenges that have affected the Precinct for several years in order to develop a strategic framework and concept design for how the foreshore area should be enhanced, and how a marina should be developed. To do this effectively, the Precinct Plan seeks to cater for the communities of Port Welshpool and Welshpool, as well as residents of the wider Gippsland Region. It also intends to satisfy the interests of the custodian agencies that manage environmental, operational, and safety interests within the Precinct.

The project study area is depicted on the opposite page.

## What's in the precinct plan?

The Precinct Plan contains strategies for marina development, public space enhancement, increased economic and recreation activity (on-shore and off-shore), operational activities, and long-term capital investment. Together, this array of strategies is intended to enhance the appeal and functionality for the Precinct's regular users, tourists, visitors, and the local community.

## Why prepare a precinct plan?

There are several reasons for preparing the Precinct Plan:

- In terms of recreation, Port Welshpool is very well-placed to cater for a regional catchment comprising the South Gippsland municipal area, as well as notable parts of the Latrobe, Baw Baw and Wellington areas. This accessibility, combined with Port Welshpool's productive fishing grounds, proximity to Wilson's Promontory, and access to natural assets within Corner Inlet, create potential for capturing a greater amount of tourism than at present.
- Port Welshpool is the only natural deep sea port east of Western Port Bay, and enjoys shelter from weather due to surrounding islands and features. This makes it suitable for assisting offshore industries and accommodating boating charters.
- There are no major coastal marinas between Phillip Island and Lakes Entrance, creating a large recreational boating catchment.
- Having regard for commercial operations, the town's port facilities are well placed to service several off-shore businesses. These include off-shore energy, livestock, cargo, and potentially commercial fishing.
- From a local perspective, the Precinct is of considerable value in terms of community identity, employment, and recreation. Although a decline in economic activity has been experienced, the Precinct holds the potential for improving the current situation.
- The present port and marina facilities are excessively close, creating safety risks due to conflicts between commercial and recreational land uses.

## Background

The project is part of a larger regional strategy, namely the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project, which features a marina (a key subject of the Precinct Plan), an extension of the Great Southern Rail Trail (now completed to Welshpool), renewal of Long Jetty (now underway), the dredging of Toora Channel, and redevelopment of the Agnes Falls tourist area. Collectively, these sub-projects create an economic and tourism impact that have the potential to attract increased visitors to the South Gippsland Region.

In addition to the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project, numerous other strategies and studies have been prepared, which contain relevant information for this project. These include the following:

- Port Welshpool Marina Economic and Design Assessment, Essential Economics and Water Technology 2014
- Eastern Districts Urban Design Framework, Planisphere 2013
- Seasonal Population Impacts in Coastal Towns, South Gippsland Shire Council 2015
- Gippsland Regional Coastal Plan, Gippsland Coastal Board 2015
- Gippsland Boating Coastal Action Plan, Gippsland Coastal Board 2013
- Gippsland Ports' Position Paper on the Port Welshpool Long Jetty, Gippsland Ports 2016
- Various Gippsland Ports Studies (to the extent these are directly relevant to the marine precinct design)
- The Victorian Coastal Strategy, the State of Victoria 2014

For brevity and simplicity of reading, the detailed implications arising from these projects are discussed within the Background Report.



Figure 1 | Study Area

The process at a glance

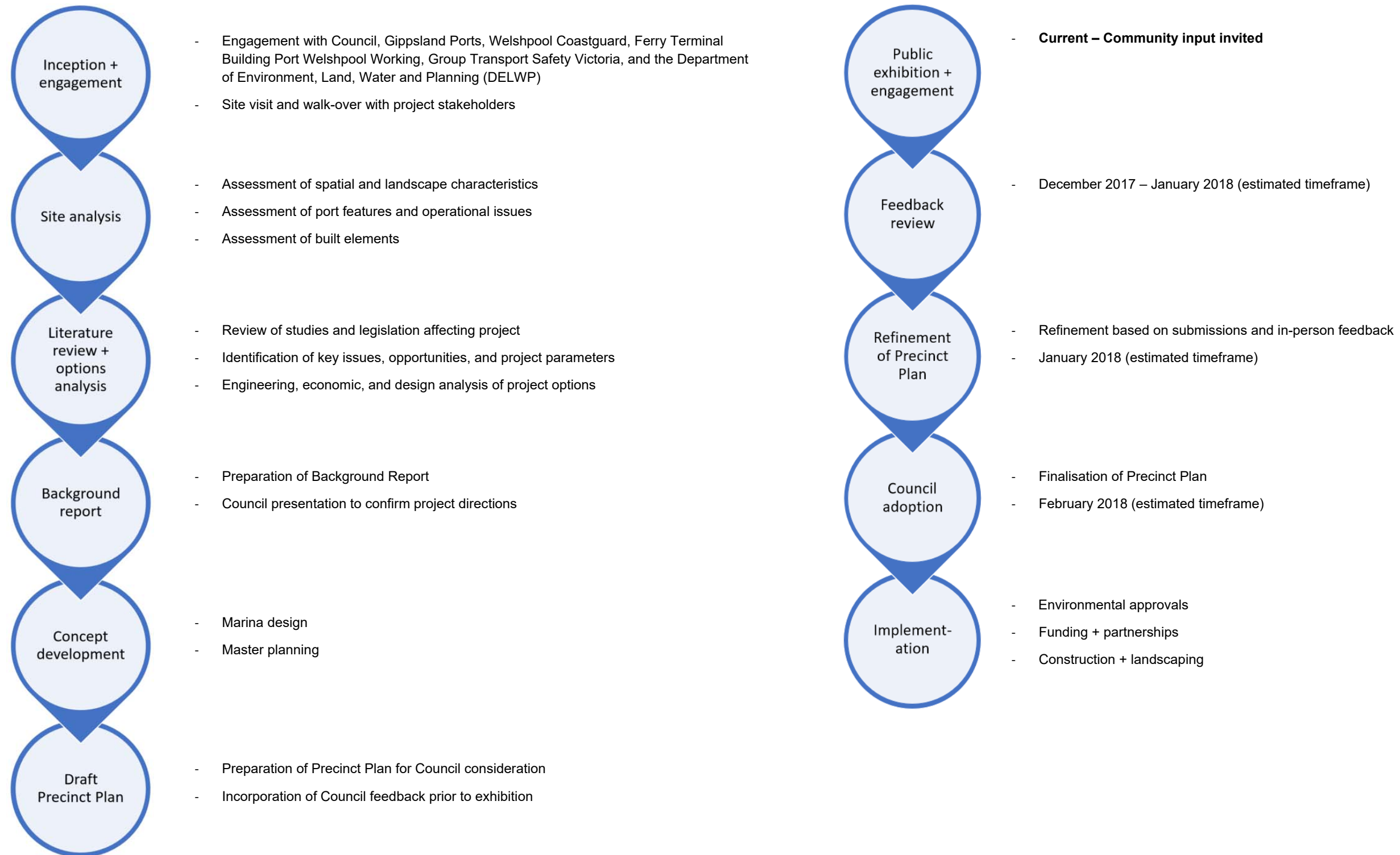


Figure 2 | Project Methodology

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## 2 Context

### Overarching factors

Port Welshpool plays an important regional role, as it is the only natural deep sea port east of Western Port Bay. It is sheltered from most weather by Wilsons Promontory, Big Snake and Little Snake Islands. Further, the Port is well-known for its productive fishing grounds and has been a base for the local fishing fleet, as well as wildlife cruises. These and other key characteristics result in the study area being an attractor of regional activity from across Gippsland and beyond, especially in terms of recreational boating and fishing.

At the municipal scale, the study area represents the primary boating and fishing facility for the various townships within the Shire. It's ongoing use and enhancement are a matter of Shire wide interest, especially within the context of other work being undertaken by Council.

From a local perspective, community feedback and previous work clearly demonstrate that the Precinct is of considerable value in terms of community identity, employment, and recreation. Although a decline in economic activity has been experienced, the Precinct holds the potential to improve the current situation. At present, the town contains a general store, hotel, maritime museum, boat storage, and garage. There is potential for this range of commercial uses to be expanded, especially noting the State-level role of the Port. Additionally, local influences may arise from the Barry Beach Marine Terminal, the potential sale of Exxon assets on land and water, and the future development of the 'Star of the South' offshore wind energy project.

### Economics

The following tourism-related factors are of relevance this project:

- There are no major coastal marinas located between Phillip Island and Lakes Entrance. Other marinas in the area are generally small, including Port Albert (a 25-minute drive from Port Welshpool) and Port Franklin (a 25-minute drive).
- Demand for boating has been particularly strong in the Gippsland region where boat registrations increased by approximately 25% (representing an additional 3,360 boats) between 2003 and 2012. A similar trend has been observed for the Corner Inlet area over this period, with boat

registrations increasing by 22% (representing an additional 2,100 boats). These boat registration growth rates are approximately twice that experienced across the State, highlighting the ongoing strength of the Gippsland and Corner Inlet recreational boating markets.

- Between 2011 and 2031, the forecast demand is approximately 285 new boat registrations a year for the Gippsland study region (assuming the 2011 ratio of 15 persons for every registered boat in Gippsland remains constant).
- Significant growth in recreational boating has occurred across Victoria between 2003 and 2012, with total boating registrations increasing from 146,990 to 170,450 over this period, growth of 11.6% over the period (Tibar Services, Gippsland Vessel Registration Analysis – 2012 Addendum, 2013).
- Small boat registrations represent 83% of all registrations in Victoria between 2005 and 2009 (Draft Gippsland Coastal Boating Action Plan, 2012).

Taking these factors into account, as well as marina construction costs, it is estimated that a minimum of 155 berths will be needed to create the appropriate business case over a 30-year horizon.

An options assessment was undertaken by the project team to identify whether these berths should be located to the east of the existing port, or beside Long Jetty. In brief, the higher quality seagrasses and environs to the east of the existing port, combined with the higher costs and weaker economic case, showed that that the new berths should be located beside Long Jetty.

In terms of the port's commercial operations, the safety and function of the harbour can be improved through the removal of conflicts between users, along with better distribution of uses. This has the scope for improving the medium to long term prospects for accommodating supporting vessels for offshore industries, including both the existing industries and potential support for the new Star of the South project.



**Figure 3a | Estimated Boating Catchment**

*Source: Adapted from Port Welshpool Marina Economic and Design Assessment 2014*



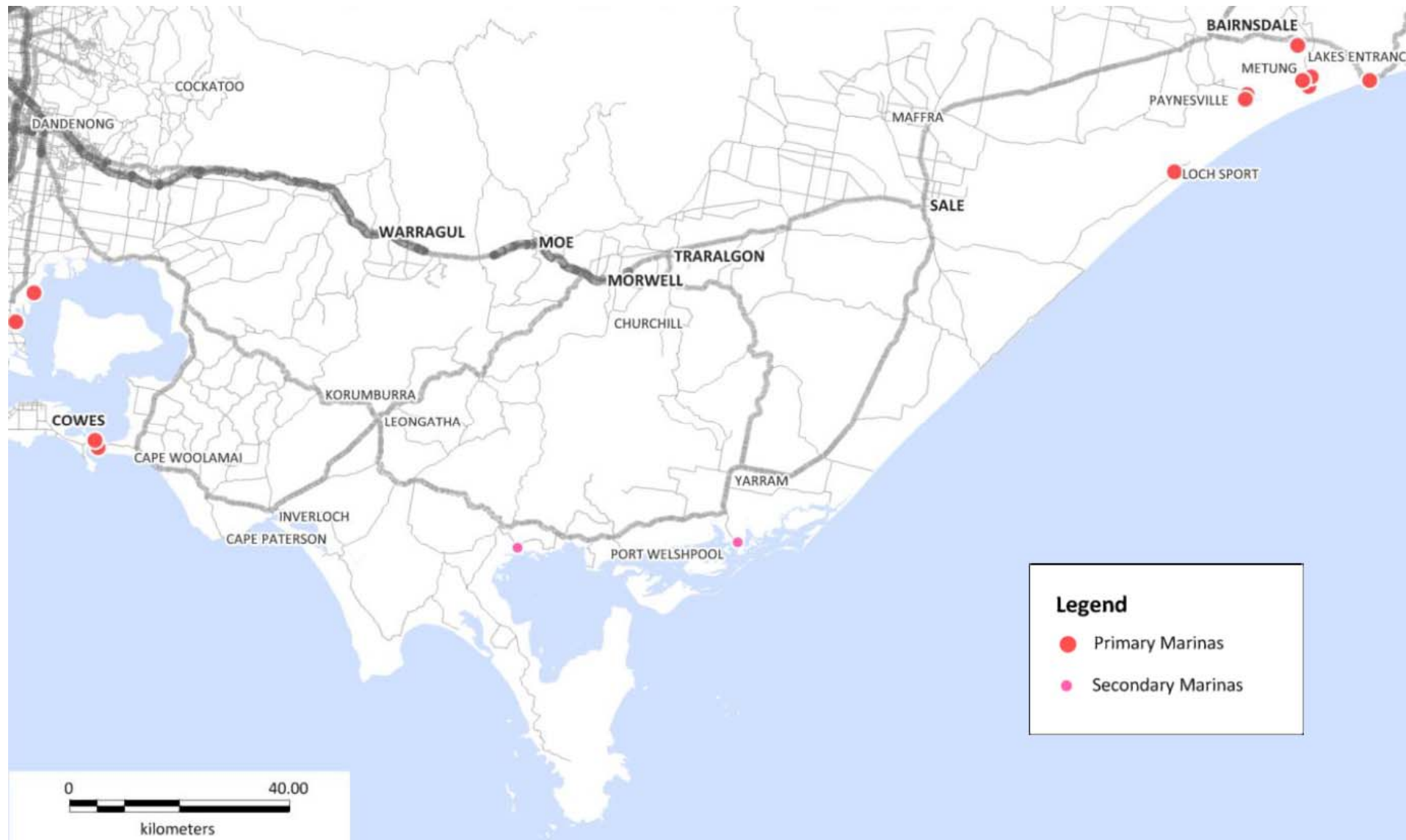


Figure 3b | Primary and Secondary Marinas on the Eastern Victorian Coast

Source: Port Welshpool Marina Economic and Design Assessment 2014

## Environment

Corner Inlet, located east of Wilson's Promontory, contains pristine environs and is one of the 64 internationally significant Ramsar wetland systems in Australia (Corner Inlet Ramsar Site: Ecological Character Description 2011). The Ramsar site includes the marine, as well as associated landward systems, which combine to form the overall ecological significance of the site.

In addition to the wetland systems, the marine environs immediately south of the study area contain seagrasses, some of which are disturbed, whereas others are in higher quality conditions.

Several pieces of legislation apply to this area, with the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the 'EPBC Act') being the principal instrument.

At a more local level the study area:

- Is set within the context of the South Gippsland Coastal Plains, which define regional landscape character and form part of the State network of coastal landscapes.
- Enjoys a strong relationship with the natural environs of Wilsons Promontory, and islands to the south of Port Welshpool.
- Has connections to the Nooramunga Marine Park to the east.
- Is book-ended by estuaries to the east and west.

Together, these factors constitute sources of inspiration and design parameters for the Precinct plan. In future, their importance will increase as these will form important inputs for detailed landscape design, as well as the environmental approval processes which will follow this Precinct Plan.

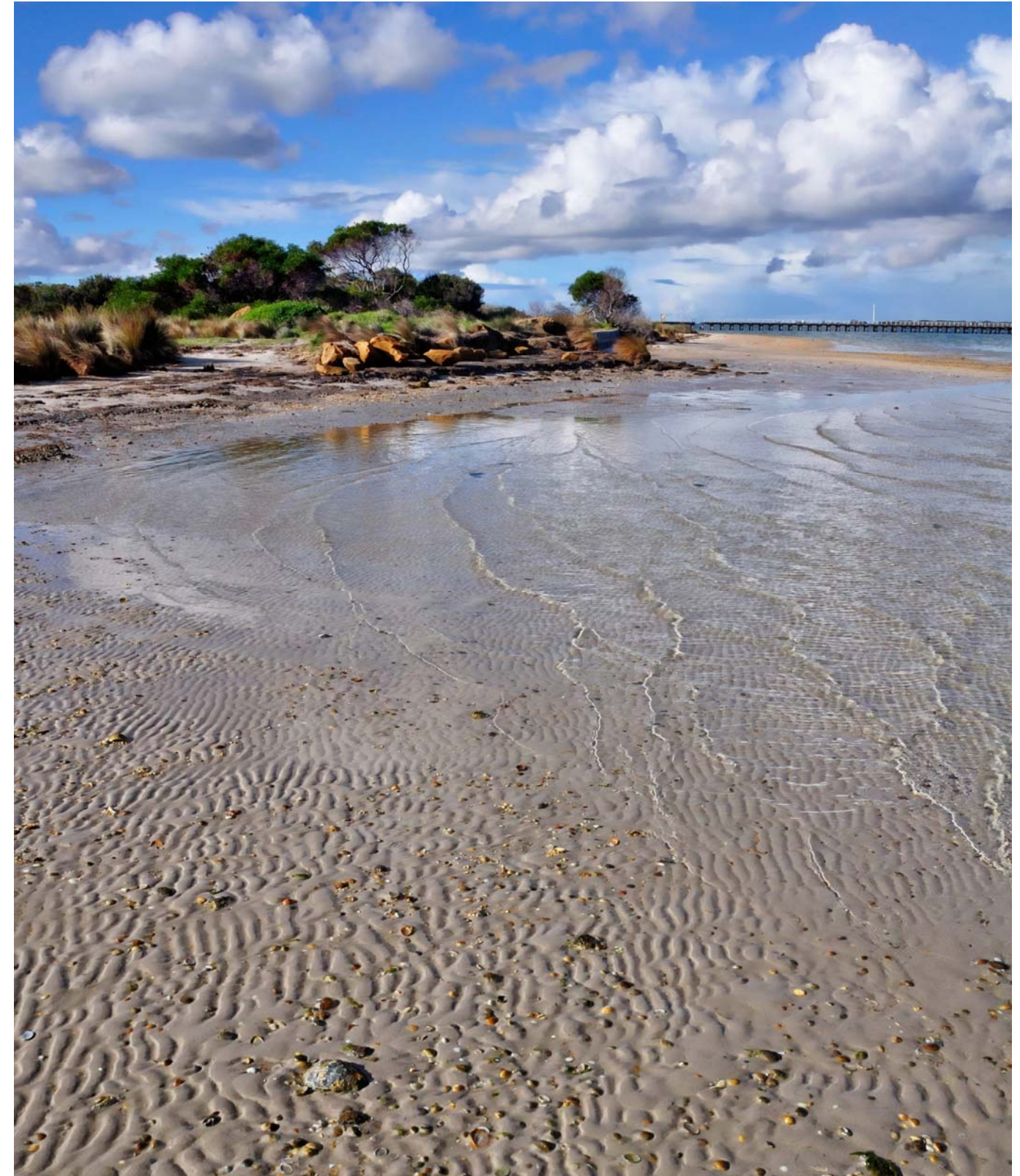


Image | Port Welshpool Waterfront Looking East



## 3 Site analysis

### 3.1 Spatial characteristics

The study area covers a 1.4km stretch from east to west, with the approximate landward area comprising some 19 hectares.

At present, the predominant impression of the study area is that of a vast space that is need of enhancement, with an inordinate cluster of activity at the port. As visitors enter the town, there is little sense of arrival, with power poles being a dominant feature, Long Jetty presently in disrepair, and no sources of activity or amenity that are readily discernible. There is also a lack of activity until people arrive at the port area. Within the port area, there is increased activity and there are positive built form elements, but significant improvements are possible.

While these issues seem to dominate, there are also several positive elements in the landscape and built form. Additionally, there is potential to distribute land uses and enhancements strategically to create more appealing spaces.

The following observations describe the characteristics of individual spaces in the study area:

- The interface between the town entry and foreshore provides scenic glimpses of the Corner Inlet Marine Park and off-shore islands (albeit the views are interrupted by electricity poles and cabling). 'Long Jetty' is also located at this interface, creating an opportunity for an inviting visitor experience. However, this interface is entirely un-enhanced. Relative to other boating and marine recreation locations, this results in a lack of address and appeal to the non-local public.
- The eastern end of the study area also interfaces with a bowls club and caravan park, which are not overtly visible from the town entry and have little visual relationship to the foreshore.
- The foreshore area between Lewis Street and the beach consists primarily of grass and is expansive in nature, although there are some coastal trees. This area abuts the public beach, which is bound to the east and west by coastal shrubs. The area between the vegetation is the primary beach interface/access, but has an under-developed relationship with the asset.
- Moving from west to east, just prior to arrival at the port area, the foreshore begins to cater for public needs through a playground and covered structure. However, this level of enhancement remains basic in comparison to its potential. Moving eastwards from this location, there is a grassed area adjoining Lewis Street, which appears to have no distinct characteristics, followed by an area containing a rotunda and public toilets, which is in turn followed by grassed areas until the foreshore terminates at a residential interface.

- The western section of the port is highly utilised by users who compete for space for a range of activities. There can be some 200 vehicles, including yachts and trailers, fisherman's boats and vehicles (generally parked in a small area between the boat ramp and coastal vegetation), livestock vehicles, B-Double trucks, etcetera.
- The central section of the port contains the Gippsland Ports Depot, as well as the slipway and sheds for Parks Victoria and Fisheries functions. This area is an integral component of the port, but creates challenges for competing uses due to its central location.
- The area immediately to the east of the Gippsland Ports Depot has a more

defined entrance and formalised parking that leads to the former 'Ferry Terminal' building, which now functions as a community space. This section is characterised by vehicular parking and community activity functions (including the 'Sea Days' festival).

- The south-eastern corner of the port contains an unsealed surface and is spatially undefined, likely due to the itinerant nature of the activities. This area is accessible from the formal car parking to the west and from Lewis Street to the north. Part of the area is used for net stretching, which competes for space with vehicular movements. This area has the potential for developing a more resolved relationship with other parts of the port.



Image | Study Area  
Looking East from the  
Corner of Lewis St and  
Albert Rd



### 3.2 Coastal processes

To underpin the marina and precinct design, detailed assessment of the local conditions has been undertaken. Among other things:

- Topographic and bathymetric datasets for Port Welshpool have been combined to provide an overall elevation map of the area.
- Environmental conditions have been assessed and the general and extreme conditions in the vicinity of Port Welshpool have been considered.
- Wind climate, wave climate, tidal currents, extreme water levels, coastal processes involving sediment transport, and water quality conditions have been considered.

Detailed consideration of these and other factors is provided in the Background Report, and design constraints and responses are considered in subsequent chapters of this Precinct Plan.

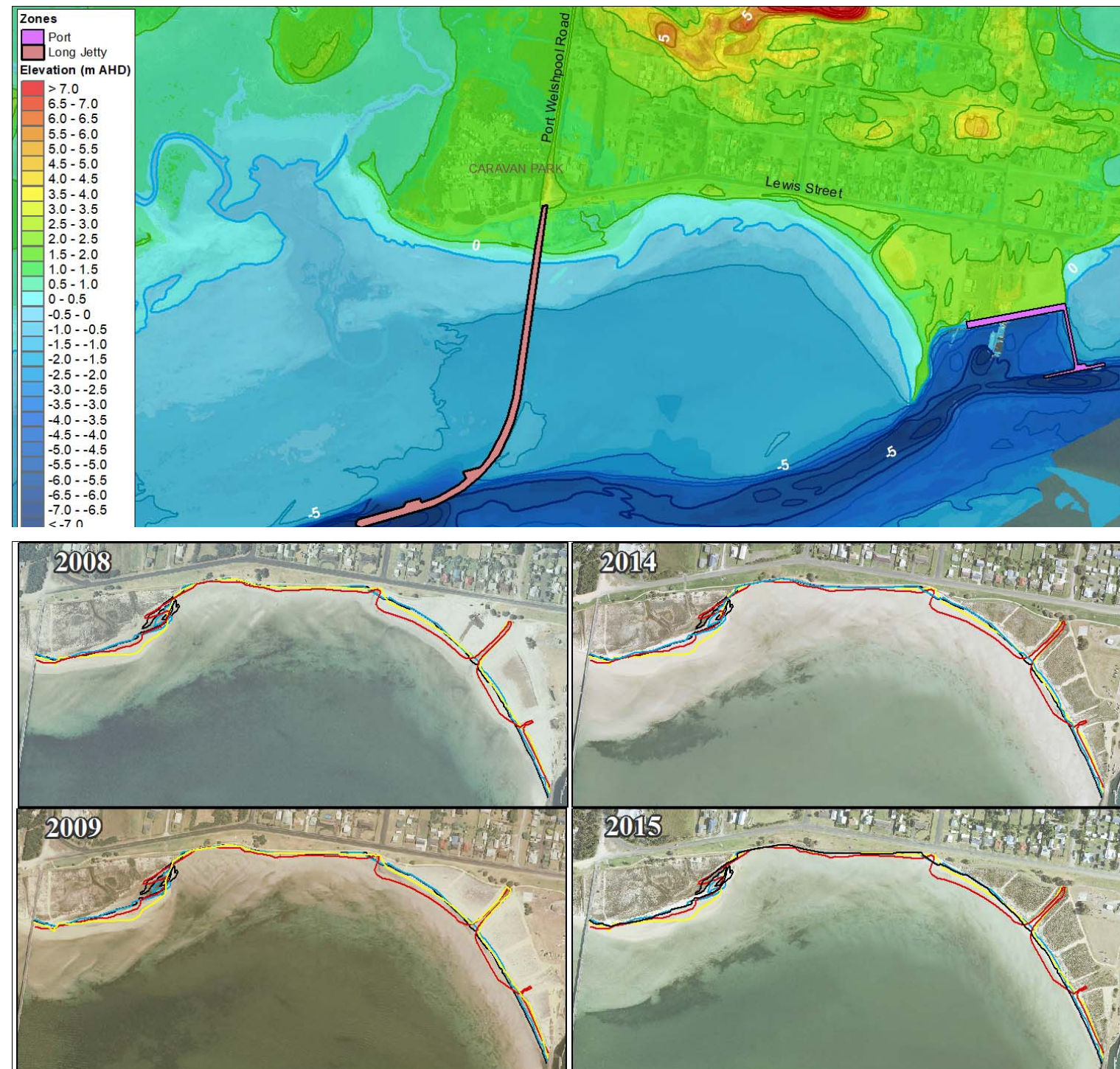


Figure 4 | Port Welshpool Topography and Shoreline Comparisons



### 3.3 Operational characteristics

At present, port operational and functional needs compete heavily with the recreational demands within the study area. This is an unavoidable consequence of the commercial and recreational uses being located within 315 metres of coastal frontage, and there being 70 metres between the Shire’s busiest boat ramp, the Roll-on and Roll-off (‘RoRo’) berth, the Slipway Jetty, and the Coast Guard facilities. In addition, challenges are created due to the distribution of land uses, with commercial uses in the centre of the precinct and recreational uses on either side.

Recreational uses within the Precinct include boating, yachting, fishing, and kayaking, which are highly popular at summertime. Yachts visit from Tasmania, stay 3-4 days and then travel to Port Phillip Bay. These rely on food, water, fuel, overnight accommodation and other necessities that can be obtained from the town. Itinerant vessels also dock at the Port, seeking fuel and water, which are particularly important for small vessels travelling to Wilson’s Promontory. Importantly, as previously noted, recreation boating for small to medium sized boats has increased considerable within the catchment.

Commercially, livestock operations increase the amount of traffic and activity within the Port monthly (which is less than the previous frequency), cargo operations occur, and charter boating occurs and may increase over time. Off-shore energy holds potential for increased activity over time, and commercial fishing continues to have some requirements. These operations are currently below previous activity levels, yet potential remains for intensification. In terms of safety, the Coast Guard plays an essential function, but relies on poor standard facilities, and experiences severe difficulty in launching rescue vessels during poor or extreme weather.



Figure 5 | Existing Port Infrastructure



Image | Depot Wharf

## 4 Key issues + opportunities

The majority of the issues and opportunities within the Precinct go hand in hand and are accordingly discussed together within this section. It is intended that these issues will be resolved through the design responses that follow in the subsequent chapter.

### Spatial issues + opportunities

- 1 - The intersection treatment of Port Welshpool/ Lewis Street and the Bowling Club Road is poorly defined and therefore displays an underwhelming traffic island.
  - O: Formalise intersection treatment and improve landscaped traffic island to enhance the foreshore entry appearance.
- 2 - The spatial experience and attraction, west of Long Jetty and along the Bowling Club Road, lacks interest and is underutilised due to the accessibility.
  - O: Encourage recreational and sightseeing tourism, with views to Corner Inlet and Wilsons Promontory. In conjunction, enhance the existing foreshore path.
- 3 - The vista looking south along Lewis Street is interrupted by power lines.
  - O: Increase existing street trees to provide a strong landscape feature along foreshore and to reduce visual clutter created by overhead power lines.
- 4 - Lack of on-street parking along the south side of Lewis Street and access to beach.
  - O: Provide on-street parking along the south of Lewis Street for potential tourists, fishers, kite surfers, and the like.
- 5 - The narrow foreshore area has no consistent landscape treatment, and features limited furniture and picnic facilities. Lewis Street has an austere character with the only obvious attraction being the port facilities and beach.
  - O: Improve and supply additional outdoor furniture to provide additional leisure and encourage a place to stay. Additionally, enhance the sense of arrival and identity with a themed landscape along the entire foreshore area.
- 6 - Illegible connection to the existing picnic area, skate park and playground area.
  - O: Improve path network from picnic area to pergola.
- 7 - Existing public boat ramp conflict with commercial port activities and location of Coast Guard buildings.
  - O: Relocate or upgrade Coast Guard buildings and launch facilities.
- 8 - Informal car parking area:
  - Large open expanse of gravel and grass;
  - Unattractive and uninviting;
  - Used for net haul-out and repairs;
  - Ill-defined uses and spaces for activities;
  - Confused access and circulation.
  - O: Landscape selected portions as potential public open space areas, and other areas as higher amenity functional areas. Options could include defining the pier edge as working port (with area for net haul-out and other required activities), providing more public-focused spaces and uses, or a combination.
- 9 - Township linkages: Links to the Hotel across Lewis Street, and further towards the Maritime Museum, Rail Trail, etcetera, are lacking.
  - O: Improve link between hotel, key uses, access features, and former ferry terminal/ docks
- 10 - The existing pier is old and in need of maintenance and interferes with the functioning of the port.
  - O: Reconfigure commercial activities (re-fuelling, fishing, coast guard, etc.) to better use turning area.
- 11 - Boat trailer parking is informal and inefficient.
  - O: Improve the access definition and parking bays to enable efficient use of the area (especially boat trailer parking numbers).





Figure 6 | Spatial Issues and Opportunities

**Economic issues + opportunities**

I: Seasonality: Commercial activities aimed at the general public will be subject to the risks associated with higher levels of activity during the summer months, and lower levels of activity during the cooler times of the year. The impact of seasonality is greater due to the small local permanent population able to sustain business at quieter times, noting that Port Welshpool is presently not a major tourism location.

O: Regional focus: Focussing on a large catchment, with a diversity of uses is likely to assist in managing limited demand during off-peak periods.

I: Existing commercial areas: Existing commercial uses (although limited in number) are concentrated in proximity to the port.

O: Points of difference: There is an opportunity to create points of differences between spaces within the study area to address impacts on existing commercial operators. An appropriate scale of uses would involve a small café, a takeaway food/general store aimed at serving the needs of visitors (and residents), marina users and recreational boaters (e.g. bait, fishing supplies, etc).

O: Improve connectivity and wayfinding between the Precinct and existing commercial businesses to ensure negative economic impacts on existing businesses are minimised.

I: Boat storage: The existing marina misses the opportunity to capture regional demand, as it is difficult to expand the marina due to the need for turn-around spaces and a safe harbour for marine vessels, along with heavy competition for space near the boat ramp.

O: A new/expanded marina and dry berthing facilities can be provided.

I: Under-utilised spaces: Spaces along the waterfront are not capitalised on as there are inefficient uses in areas that have significant public value.

O: Uses can be distributed more appropriately and new uses can be considered (such as Recreational Vehicle (RV) accommodation where appropriate). The maritime museum could be relocated to the waterfront, where it would enjoy an improved connection with the water.

Note, more detailed economic considerations (including economic drivers) are contained in the Background Report. For brevity, only key matters are discussed in this section.

**Operational issues + opportunities**

I: Conflict: There are competing commercial and recreational uses within a small space in the port area, without any buffers for operational convenience and safety

O: Better separation between recreational and commercial users through long term re-configuration of the harbour to separate recreational and commercial activities.

I: Marina site choice: Marina development within the existing port area is hampered by the requirements for a vessel turn-around area and compromise commercial functions, and marina options outside the Port area involve dredging and environmental impacts.

O: Site choice based on a balanced and objective consideration of commercial and environmental constraints.

I: Traffic management: Parking and movement are difficult and disorderly during peak periods.

O: Parking and movement areas can be refined and formalised in conjunction with the design of new facilities and features.

I: Boat ramp: Launching/retrieval facilities are at capacity during peak periods.

O: Additional or improved ramps can be provided in conjunction with marina design.

I: Berthing: There is insufficient wet and dry berthing available, and current dry berthing is far removed from the water.

O: Additional wet and dry berthing can be provided in appropriate locations. :

I: Port Welshpool is designated as a Regional Boating Precinct by the Boating Coastal Action Plan due to its role, but facilities are not proportionate to the designation.

O: A suite of improvements can be made to community focussed facilities, landscaping, paths, amenities, etcetera.

I: Commercial demand: Demand associated with commercial operations (fishing, oil and gas industries, wind energy support, livestock, cargo, charter vessel tourism and fishing operations) is uncertain.

O: Freeing up of commercial spaces to improve safety may also enable adaptation in accordance with changing commercial opportunities.

O: Combining selected uses/activities to increase efficiency, while relocating conflicting uses.

O: Potential for spaces such as Marginal Wharf to be used by recreational vessels when not required for commercial vessels for loading/unloading, refuelling, and for crane, equipment and truck operations, etcetera.

I: Operational compound: Maintaining Gippsland Ports' operations within the context of surrounding recreational uses.

O: Expansion of compound (where appropriate) and refinement of movement patterns to minimise conflicts and risks.

I: Marine rescue: Coast Guard buildings and launch facilities are sub-standard, and hinder operations during bad weather.

O: Relocation or upgrade of Coast Guard buildings and facilities.

I: Dredging: Maintenance dredging needs will increase with new marina development.

O: Noting that dredging is infrequent and periodic, spoils from the existing maintenance area and any newly dredged area can be used for beach enhancement and maintenance, as well as the creation of new spaces (where appropriate).



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## 5 Master plan

### Design strategy

The master plan has been founded on a vision and core principles that bring together the regional strengths of the location, what the community and local users value, and characteristics that are specific to the natural and built setting of the precinct.

Strategic enhancement measures are proposed across the 19-hectares of land that comprise the Precinct, as well as on the surrounding marine environs. The master plan illustrated on the opposite page provides an overview of the strategies for the Precinct as a whole, which is comprised of 3 Areas that have distinct identifiable functions. The subsequent sections provide more detailed strategies for the 3 Areas.

The master plan has been envisioned as a long-term strategy that will be delivered over a 15-20-year time horizon, and will combine with the Corner Inlet Tourism Development project to deliver region-wide benefits.

### Reading the master plan

To ensure the master plan and its supporting area-based plans deliver considered design solutions, a vision and design principles have been established. These have been used to test all design responses, ensuring that none of the recommendations in this Precinct plan are piecemeal.

Overarching strategies have been developed for the study area as a whole, followed by detailed strategies for 3 specific areas within the overall Precinct. These detailed strategies are categorised into core strategies (such as those which establish identity), followed by supporting strategies (such as parking requirements).

### Vision

The Port Welshpool Marine Precinct will be a recreational anchor for the South Gippsland and Port Welshpool communities, drawing visitors and maritime enthusiasts from across the region and beyond.

Together with the Long Jetty redevelopment, the wider Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project, and the proximity to Wilson's Promontory, the Precinct will help create an enviable collection of tourism and recreational opportunities. These opportunities will collectively appeal to visitors and encourage them to choose Port Welshpool and Corner Inlet as a destination.

The water will be celebrated, with boating and marine access facilities catering for the increasing demand from across the region.

Equally, the Precinct will be a valuable asset for the local communities of Port Welshpool and Welshpool, contributing to identity and place qualities, as well as local economic function.

### Principles

- 1 - *Celebrate* the water, environment, and community spirit.
- 2 - *Diversify* activities to encourage visitors to stay.
- 3 - *Transform* key spaces into drawcards for locals, visitors, and maritime enthusiasts.
- 4 - *Improve* spaces that already play public and commercial functions, but are presently not reaching their potential.
- 5 - *Protect* spaces and features that are of ongoing value to the community and environment.

### Overarching Strategies

- 1 - Create a sense of arrival.
- 2 - Provide a new marina and boat ramp to create key drawcards.
- 3 - Create an attractive open space and recreational node at the Precinct entry, alongside Long Jetty.
- 4 - Improve the relationship between the beach and the foreshore.
- 5 - Enhance the walking experience between Areas 1 and 3.
- 6 - Integrate native vegetation.
- 7 - Improve the functionality of the Port by removing landside conflicts and safety risks.
- 8 - Improve the seaward functionality of the Port.
- 9 - Enhance the waterfront address and visitation in the Port area.
- 10 - Strengthen community usage of public areas.
- 11 - Inject new activity into the Port area.





**Legend**

- PROPOSED TREES
- EXISTING TREES
- NATURAL FEATURES
- DREDGING
- PROMENADE BOARDWALK
- OPEN SPACE LAWN
- PATH NETWORK
- PROPOSED CAR PARK SPACE
- PROPOSED ROAD
- EXISTING COASTAL PLANTING
- EXISTING AMENITIES/ SKATE PARK/ STRUCTURES
- BUILDING ENVELOPE
- PROPOSED RV LOCATION
- EXISTING PORT/ JETTY
- PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACES/ ELEMENTS
- POTENTIAL DRY BERTH LOCATION

Figure 7 | Master Plan

## 5.1 Area 1 – the marina

### Precinct identity

As a hub of recreational activity on both land and water, Area 1 is intended to be the cornerstone of the overall Marine Precinct. At the regional level, the precinct will draw visitors and patrons from across the Gippsland Region and beyond, tying in with the broader Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project. Together with the Long Jetty restoration, the new marina precinct will cater for boating, yachting, fishing, hospitality, children's play, passive recreation, and the general enjoyment of the waterfront environs.

From the community perspective, Area 1 will play 3 essential functions:

- A - Act as an entry statement into Port Welshpool, strengthening the town's identity and expressing the community's pride in its public spaces.
- B - Provide significantly enhanced spaces for the community's day-to-day enjoyment.
- C - Improve economic activity within the township by drawing a higher number of visitors and maritime enthusiasts.

The measures proposed are intended to have transformative value for the town and the regional maritime catchment. Specific strategies are described as follows.

### Core strategies

- 1 - Long Jetty – Utilise the co-location advantage with Long Jetty (currently undergoing restoration) to maximise benefits of major investments in public works.
- 2 - Town entry – Improve sense of arrival through low-height landscaping, which protects view lines into the marina precinct and towards the water.
- 3 - Town connections – Provide landscaping treatments which enable connections to existing town, particularly the caravan park and bowls club, which have synergies with the proposed marina precinct.
- 4 - The marina and boat ramp – Provide a new marina that fulfils the objectives of the Corner Inlet Tourism Development project by improving facilities for boating and yachting, while also functioning as a visitation anchor. Relocate and enhance the boat ramp facility to synergise with the new marina and resolve conflict/safety issues from the Port Precinct.
- 5 - Open space and amenities:
  - 5a Provide public spaces and elements such as a playground and picnic facilities, which encourage activity at the Long Jetty/Marina junction, enabling the activity and spaces to be viewed upon arrival into the township.
  - 5b Provide quality landscaping utilising local and exotic species which suit the coastal climate and are consistent with existing species within the local area.
  - 5c Provide paths that connect key spaces, while enabling leisure walks and 'pause points.'
  - 5d Construct a viewing tower for bird watching, star gazing, and general viewing towards offshore natural assets.
  - 5e Install informational signage for educational and tourism purposes focussed on natural assets, such as Corner Inlet, Nooramunga Marine Park, Wilson's Promontory, Little Snake Island and Big Snake Island. Assimilate the signage into the design by embedding it into paving or boardwalks, or otherwise integrate it into design features within the Sub-Precinct.
- 6 - Commercial and amenity hub – Provide space for a café, chandlery, and small tourist information centre. Ensure café space has water views and spatial/visual connections with key waterfront spaces and features. Construct toilets, showers and amenities in proximity to the commercial facilities.
- 7 - Natural features – Plant endemic coastal shrubs to the west of Long Jetty and the east of the marina breakwater to improve the natural coastal feel and biodiversity values along the foreshore.

### Supporting strategies

- 8 - Car parking – Provide on-street parking on either side of the eastern and western sections of Lewis Street, generally as illustrated. Protect the centre-line formed by Long Jetty from visual obstruction by parking. Parking spaces should be sufficiently removed from the view line, but should be sufficiently proximal to the open space areas for convenience, as illustrated. Integrate on-street parking into the broader landscape design.
- 9 - Boat trailer parking – Provide approximately 100-120 boat trailer parking spaces to cater for peak demand.
- 10 - Boat ramp – Provide a 2-3 lane boat ramp, with a pontoon or finger jetty adjoining the ramp.
- 11 - Marina berths – Construct a 155-berth marina, generally as illustrated. The marina design responds to local conditions, based on an analysis of local coastal processes and wave conditions.
- 12 - Dredging:
  - 12a Use dredge spoils to reclaim the area that will include the new boat parking, open space and associated recreational areas.
  - 12b Use excess dredge spoils for beach nourishment to the east of the breakwater (refer to the discussion pertaining to Area 2).
- 13 - Consider new dry berthing facilities to the north of Lewis Street (refer to chapter 6)





**Legend**

- PROPOSED TREES
- EXISTING TREES
- NATURAL FEATURES
- DREDGING
- PROMENADE BOARDWALK
- OPEN SPACE LAWN
- PATH NETWORK
- PROPOSED CAR PARK SPACE
- PROPOSED ROAD
- EXISTING COASTAL PLANTING
- EXISTING AMENITIES/ SKATE PARK/ STRUCTURES
- BUILDING ENVELOPE
- PROPOSED RV LOCATION
- EXISTING PORT/ JETTY
- PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACES/ ELEMENTS
- POTENTIAL DRY BERTH LOCATION

Figure 8 | Design Strategies for Area 1

## 5.2 Area 2 – the beach

### Precinct identity

The opportunity to develop Area 2 into an identifiable section of the overall Precinct is created as a result of design measures across the Marine Precinct, as well as natural processes. It benefits from increased activities and features within Areas 1 and 3, which effectively book-end Area 2 and provide additional activity and visual interest. This provides scope for creating a more comfortable space than presently exists. This opportunity is supported by natural factors, namely the coastal processes that currently cause sand to gradually move from east and west. Over a period of time, this process is likely to respond to the construction of the marina by depositing sand to the east of the breakwater. While this will be a gradual process, it builds the case for depositing any excess dredge materials to the east of the breakwater so that an enhanced beach can be established and maintained into the future.

These factors come together to create an opportunity for establishing an identifiable Beach Sub-Precinct. Gippsland residents within the catchment who want to access a beach will have an attractive new opportunity to do so, and visitors to the Marina and Port Sub-Precincts will be able to access an additional recreational area that encourages them to stay longer.

Area 2 will also play an essential connectivity function by providing landscaped paths and street furniture to create a more pleasant experience to encourage and support walking and cycling between Sub-Precincts.

### Core strategies

- 1 - The beach and amenities – Enhance the beach to the east of the breakwater to capitalise on the more comfortable environment that is created by increased levels of activity surrounding it. Create a more human-centric setting than the expanse that exists at present, and support beach usage by installing showers and in strategic locations, as depicted on the plan.
- 2 - Water sports centre – Provide a space or covered structure for the hire and launching of kayaks, kite surfing equipment, and the like. This should be a low cost, but well-designed/placed feature that supports water sports and provides a point of interest and activity to strengthen the role of the existing play space and picnic area to the north. This area is gained through the relocation of boat parking from its current location to Area 1.
- 3 - Landscaping – Provide new landscaping, pathways, and improved seating facilities along Lewis Street to create an improved sense of place and support leisure activities.
- 4 - Natural features – Protect and enhance the coastal planting in the eastern section of Area 2

### Supporting strategies

- 5 - Beach protection – Evaluate the need for a groyne(s) to assist with maintaining sand that is deposited through beach nourishment and natural processes.
- 6 - Parking – Provide parking parallel parking along Lewis Street, integrated into landscaping measures.





**Legend**

- PROPOSED TREES
- EXISTING TREES
- NATURAL FEATURES
- DREDGING
- PROMENADE BOARDWALK
- OPEN SPACE LAWN
- PATH NETWORK
- PROPOSED CAR PARK SPACE
- PROPOSED ROAD
- EXISTING COASTAL PLANTING
- EXISTING AMENITIES/ SKATE PARK/ STRUCTURES
- BUILDING ENVELOPE
- PROPOSED RV LOCATION
- EXISTING PORT/ JETTY
- PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACES/ ELEMENTS
- POTENTIAL DRY BERTH LOCATION

Figure 9 | Design Strategies for Area 2

## 5.3 Area 3 – the port

### Precinct identity

As it stands today, Area 3 is a hive of activity during peak periods, with a rich mix of recreational and commercial uses that often compete for space. This mix of uses provides interest in a number of respects, as it locates several activities in sufficient proximity to create vibrancy during peak periods. However, this proximity also results in competition for space, conflict between operational and recreational needs, and safety risks. Accordingly, this Precinct Plan seeks to rationalise the location and mix of land uses to address the issues, while maintaining an appropriate mix to provide activities that are different to those in Area 1 (the Marina Sub-Precinct).

From a community perspective, Area 3 has a strong connection to existing commercial uses in the township, is the venue for the Sea Days Festival, and is home to the Ferry Terminal Building that now serves as a much-valued community hub.

From an operational point of view, ongoing port operations are an essential part of the Sub-Precinct's identity. The Gippsland Ports compound houses key facilities, and the surrounding land and waterside components cater for (or can cater for) fishing, off-shore energy, cargo, livestock, and tourism charters. Berths are used by fishing and recreational vessels and there is also slipway which is capable of slipping vessels up to 75 tonnes. While some infrastructure is aged or otherwise of poor quality, the safe harbour and various supporting infrastructure components contribute significant value to Area 3.

### Core strategies

- 1 - Waterfront address – Improve the waterfront address by providing seating and landscape design elements along Marginal Wharf, particularly between the Ferry Terminal Building and Fisherman's Jetty.
- 2 - Maritime Museum – Investigate the relocation of the Maritime Museum to an adjoining the Ferry Terminal Building. The underlying purpose is to improve the connection of the museum to the water and activate the area beside the Ferry Terminal Building to a greater extent.
- 3 - RVs - Provide a new caravan park or recreational vehicle (RV) stop-over facility with a dump-point to actively encourage RV visitation.
- 4 - Investigation area – Consider the long term future of the Investigation Area between the Gippsland Ports compound and Lewis Street. Improve landscaping as an interim measure and consider long term proposals for land uses which contribute to the Sub-Precinct and achieve improved connections with the town, without detracting from the Marine Sub-Precinct.
- 5 - Landscaping – Provide new landscaping, pathways, and improved seating facilities along Lewis Street to create an improved sense of place and support leisure activities.
- 6 - Install informational signage for educational and tourism purposes focussed on the Port's industrial and commercial heritage, as well as key off-shore connections. Examples of signage subjects include energy industries (e.g. the Kingfish oil field and the Star of the South), livestock sources such as King Island and Flinders Island, etcetera. Assimilate the signage into the design by embedding it into paving or boardwalks, or otherwise integrate it into design features within the Sub-Precinct.

### Supporting strategies

- 7 - Boat Ramp – Decommission the boat ramp for public use due to recreational/operational conflict and associated safety risks. Undertake decommissioning in conjunction with the construction of the new boat ramp in Area 1.
- 8 - Ferry Berth – Remove or upgrade the Ferry Berth to address safety and adequacy of the infrastructure and berths during poor weather conditions.
- 9 - Compound – Expand the Gippsland Ports compound into the current boat parking area (to be decommissioned when parking is provided in Area 1).
- 10 -Movement – Dedicate part of the accessway to the west of the Gippsland Ports compound to operational use only (e.g. livestock trucking and port operations), with the northern section also being accessible by the water sports centre/space.
- 11 -Coast Guard – Upgrade Coast Guard buildings and storage, and provide improved berth for to facilitate safe and rapid launch during poor or extreme weather conditions.
- 12 -Fuel – Maintain fuelling facilities and consider expansion of facilities in response to future demand. Ensure appropriate areas are dedicated for expansion purposes and the potential replacement of underground pipe facilities.
- 13 -New uses – Consider new uses, such as maritime research facilities. Locate uses in the compound (subject to support from Gippsland Ports) or in a publicly accessible area, depending on whether educational/tourism access will be provided.
- 14 -Consider new dry berthing facilities within Area 3 (refer to chapter 6)





**Legend**

- PROPOSED TREES
- EXISTING TREES
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- PATH NETWORK
- PROPOSED CAR PARK SPACE
- PROPOSED ROAD
- EXISTING COASTAL PLANTING
- EXISTING AMENITIES/ SKATE PARK/ STRUCTURES
- BUILDING ENVELOPE
- PROPOSED RV LOCATION
- EXISTING PORT/ JETTY
- PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACES/ ELEMENTS
- POTENTIAL DRY BERTH LOCATION

Figure 10 | Design Strategies for Area 3

## 6 Implementation

### Overview

This chapter provides implementation guidance in connection with several elements of the Precinct Plan which are not discussed in detail in the previous chapters. While it is not intended to be an exhaustive or complete list of implementation actions, it provides essential considerations for specific strategies that need to be developed further in connection with due diligence and detailed design prior to construction.

### Environmental due diligence

The proposed marina is expected to minimise the environmental impacts on nearby seagrass communities and environmental features, as the location is understood to be among the more disturbed locations along the foreshore.

However, environmental approvals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) and other legislation will be required. These approvals will involve detailed studies and investigation into the site conditions.

As one of the earliest steps in advancing the Precinct Plan, it will be necessary to establish the full scope of approval requirements, and initiate approval processes proportionate to the works being proposed at any given time. Generally, it should be assumed that a full Environmental Effect Statement process will be required due to dredging in proximity to seagrasses and Ramsar wetlands. However, it may be possible to undertake limited works without triggering this extensive process. This matter requires clarification in discussion with the relevant State departments.

### Economic due diligence

The economic analysis undertaken for this project takes into account a range of factors and influences, and broadly establishes:

- A - The key drivers, issues, and opportunities, which need to inform this project.
- B - That the option of developing a marina to the east of the existing port area is not economically justifiable in comparison to a marina beside Long Jetty. This assessment takes into account preliminary cost estimates of marina construction elements.
- C - That the benefit cost ratio of developing a marina is acceptable for continuing with this project.

However, the analysis is not comprehensive for a project of this nature, and a business case or more detailed economic impact assessment is strongly recommended prior to commencing works.

### Dry berths

It is estimated that a 50-space dry berthing facility should be provided to support the marina and provide a lower cost alternative to wet berths. The following options are available:

- A - Subject to discussions with land owners, a dry berthing facility could be provided at the Seapack site, or in the rear section of the adjoining site to the east. These parcels of land contain large areas that are proximal to the proposed marina, enabling convenient access to the boat ramp. Other sections of either of these sites could be used for other commercial development, subject to an assessment of the relevant planning considerations.
- B - The Port area contains two options for new dry berthing facilities:
  - There are spaces to the east of the Gippsland Ports compound which can be utilised for a dry-berth facility. It is possible to utilise part of the area that is currently utilised only for net stretching and similar operations, leaving sufficient room for the ongoing operations. However, this site is located a considerable distance from the proposed boat ramp, and may be less attractive than potential sites closer to the ramp. Additionally, it should be noted that if a site is to be selected away from the proposed ramp, it is not advantageous it to be located on a waterfront area that can serve a more public-orientated function.
  - Dry berthing facilities could be provided on the western side of the Gippsland Ports compound, subject to the facilities being operated by Gippsland Ports. This option is based on the exiting boat ramp and is entirely contingent on the management of the asset being transferred to Gippsland Ports. Although the ramp is presently a source of inappropriate user conflicts, these would not occur if the dry berthing facilities were to be maintained by Gippsland Ports, subject to the authority's willingness.

In both cases, power lines may limit the size of yachts (due to mast height), or power lines may need to be modified/moved.

- C - The existing dry berth facility between Welshpool and Port Welshpool could be expanded. While this site does not enjoy the benefits of sites which are closer to the water, it nonetheless offers an acceptable alternative, as maritime enthusiasts can retrieve their vessels on route to the marina. One key disadvantage of this option is that it does not contribute monies towards marina maintenance. Another key disadvantage is that mast-up yacht storage is very difficult in this location due to the distance from the boat ramp.

### Coast Guard

As previously mentioned, the current Coast Guard buildings and berthing/launch facilities are sub-standard. It will be important to either upgrade these in the existing location (where recreational conflict will be reduced), or to construct new facilities within the new marina (where a high degree of shelter will be provided, but recreational uses will be co-located).

### Parking

On-street parking shown on the Precinct Plan is likely to be excessive for initial demand. It is intended that additional parking be provided in proportion to need over time.

Parking should be provided in conjunction with landscaping so as not to become a dominant feature of the street-scape. This can be achieved, for example, using landscaped kerb outstands at appropriate frequencies and in conjunction with garden beds that border open space areas.

Boat Trailer Parking - It is not necessary for all boat trailer parking to be sealed. An analysis of annual usage patterns may inform the number of sealed parking spaces that need to be provided, with overflow space for peak periods. Grassed/unsealed areas are also likely to be appropriate for the mast-up parking of yachts, both during and outside of peak seasons.

### Recreational vehicles

Caravan parks and camping facilities continue to be popular within the Gippsland Region and within Australia in general. The current facilities are located north of Lewis Street in town, and at the western edge of the settlement. These facilities do not have a visual connection with the water, and there is an opportunity for a small-scale facility being provided within the port area, which enjoys this connection. The opportunity will arise as parking needs will reduce due to the relocation of the public boat ramp and the leisure focus of the new marina area.

There are several options for the scale of facility that can be provided and how this can be managed. The facility could be limited to a 24-hour stop with dump facilities, or could be a more formal visitor caravan park that is either managed by Council or leased to a private operator. In either case, it is intended that the facilities make the most of co-location with the Ferry Terminal community hub and the potential Maritime Museum re-location. Further, it is envisaged that these be located north of the Ferry Terminal Building, rather than on the waterfront, in order to prioritise public access to the waterfront.



### Sea level rise

This project involves both 'hard' and 'soft' responses to the potential impacts from projected sea level rise.

In terms of hard responses, it is firstly noted that the existing port facility is an important asset, which is planned to be maintained into the future. Secondly, it is noted that the demand for recreational usage is ongoing, and there is a gap in the regional market for an appropriate scale facility that matches the growth in boating popularity. Accordingly, the scale of public investment within the study area will be driven by regional considerations, rather than local considerations. That is, within the context of Port Welshpool's regional function and potential, it is considered appropriate to provide facilities to cater for demand that will continue despite long term climate change impacts. Having regard for these matters, the marina (Area 1) primarily features a hard response, and enhancements within the port (Area 3) build on the exiting commitment to maintain the assets in this location.

In terms of soft responses, the Precinct Plan notes the pattern of westward sand movement and deposition within the beach area. This pattern is expected to continue into the future and it is expected that the beach (Area 2) will be able to be maintained into the future. Beach replenishment may be needed in the long term due to storm surge impacts, but this is not expected to be an inordinate issue for the Precinct. These factors have been taken into account in the recommendations to build the character of Area 2 centred on the beach and the abutting walking paths between Areas 1 and 3. Additionally, new coastal landscaping is proposed in Areas 2 and 3 to provide soft responses that stabilise sand, as well as add to the amenity of the Precinct.

Note, the above responses have relevance to the study area, and not Port Welshpool as a whole. Responses within the town will need to be determined separately by the various levels of government, and the community.

From an implementation perspective, it should be noted within further work and funding bids that the recommendations of this Precinct Plan have been designed to ensure the study area has merits in its own right, without limiting township level responses over the long term.

### Staging

Staging of the physical enhancements within the precinct should be responsive to opportunity and changing demand characteristics over time. This has been a guiding factor in how the Precinct Plan has been prepared. Broadly, public works should be staged in the following manner:

#### - Stage 1a: Boat ramp + breakwaters + land reclamation

As an early outcome, the safety of the existing port area can be improved by relocating the boat ramp. The relocation alone would not trigger major approval requirements. However, the connection that the proposed boat ramp has with dredging, land reclamation, and marina construction may necessitate the essential components of these features to be constructed simultaneously.

A level of formal boat trailer parking should be provided, with a large overflow area that can be upgraded in future. An opportunity for joint-finding and partnership may arise from the relocation of public boat ramp access to Area 1 and the expansion of the Gippsland Ports' compound.

A decision should be made in connection with whether the Coast Guard buildings and berth should be upgraded or relocated to the marina area.

A level of beach establishment/nourishment should occur in this stage (within Area 2), using any excess spoils that are not otherwise utilised for creating the marina waterfront spaces within Area 1.

Private sector partnership should be sought within this stage, with the purpose of strengthening the business case for Council, also contributing to the business case for government funding.

A level of public car parking should be provided in accordance with the concept drawings contained in this Precinct Plan, noting that expansion of parking areas can occur over time.

As major outcomes, this stage will involve safety improvements to the existing port area, as well as major tourism improvements in connection with a new boat ramp and its surrounding landscape setting.

#### - Stage 1b: Early enhancements

High quality landscaping improvements should be delivered during this stage, especially at the entry into town and within the Area 1 entry that is most visible upon arrival. The play space and barbecue areas should be prioritised to cater for visitors and encourage them to linger within the area for an extended period of time.

There may be an opportunity for cost sharing between Council and Gippsland Ports, as the marina development will greatly embellish the forecourt of the Long Jetty redevelopment, which is being managed by Gippsland Ports.

The water-sports space / structure should be considered in this stage due to its ability to be established at a low cost and with little effort.

#### - Stage 2: New opportunities + ongoing enhancements

This Stage will generally involve works that would not have been possible without the works described in Stage 1, as well as further landscape and amenity enhancements to enrich the works previously delivered.

Within Area 3, there will be an opportunity to expand the Gippsland Ports compound and potentially provide control of the existing boat ramp to Gippsland Ports when the need for unsupervised public access is eliminated.

With parking being relocated to Area 1, a new RV and camping site can be installed within this stage, which will combine with the creation of a more community and visitor focussed area leading up to the Ferry Terminal community hub.

Decisions regarding the location, timing, and custodianship of new dry berthing facilities should be made within this stage.

Waterfront enhancements (involving the installation of well-placed landscaping and structures) should be undertaken to create a public focussed environment in front of and surrounding the Ferry Terminal building.

Parking for boat trailers and cars should be expanded proportionate to the scale and frequency of demand.

#### - Stage 3: Finishing touches

The Maritime Museum can be relocated beside the Ferry Terminal building (or as an extension of this building) to improve the connection if the museum with the water, and add activity and interest at the waterfront.

Ongoing landscaping enhancements should be undertaken within Areas 1 to 3. Parking should be expanded proportionate to demand.

Note, the above staging has been described in very broad terms to provide Council an overview of likely timing and guidance for major strategies, while also ensuring there is flexibility in design responses. The detailed strategies previously specified in this document are important in their own right, and are intended to be implemented within the 'big picture' strategies described in connection with staging. It should also be noted that the staging may need to be varied in response to funding opportunities and market interest (such as for the café/chandlery or RV park).