



Kempsey Shire Council

Local Community Plan 2009

Hat Head



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The Vision

A healthy community is a form of living democracy: people working together to address what matters to them.

- Stephen B. Fawcett, et. al

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council initiated a local action planning program to engage and work cooperatively with local communities to identify priorities and actions for improvement.

The Local Community Plans aim to make a difference through developing a relationship between communities and Council, solve problems through creative thinking and identify actions to bring about improvements. The foundation of the action plans are the visions and aspirations of the people who live in the Macleay Valley.

The Community Plans commit Council to work with their local communities to identify, promote and enhance the distinctive character of their local areas.

Finally, the Plans will aim to guide the development of partnerships between local communities, community organisations, and Kempsey Shire Council.

Kempsey Shire Community Strategic Planning Process

The Community Strategic Plan, developed in 2007, set out the long term vision for the whole of Kempsey Shire. The Plan is structured around key focus areas, and encompasses all of Council's actions and responsibilities. The key focus areas are:

- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Social, cultural and community relations
- Infrastructure
- Relationships
- Effectiveness, Efficiency and Accountability

Kempsey Council is now taking its Strategic Plan to the local level through the development of Local Community Plans. These plans have been developed for nine distinctive catchment areas throughout the Macleay Valley. These are Bellbrook, Crescent Head, Frederickton & Collombatti, Smithtown, Gladstone, Hat Head, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Willawarrin.

To access other Local Community Plans, go to the Kempsey Shire Council website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

The local action planning process for all of these catchment areas follows a similar path where the following questions are collectively discussed and responded to:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- Are we getting there?

Community Involvement

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council set out to engage with local communities to identify the hopes, ideals and needs of the local residents that live in Hat Head.

The consultation included a community workshop and online survey with the local community. Many issues and suggestions were raised during the consultations, and resulted in the formation of common visions and identified actions to meet the needs of the future Hat Head community.

Council will respond to the community needs in a number of ways:

- Directly on planning matters and policy direction
- Directly as a service provider
- Collaboratively through partnerships with the community
- Indirectly as an advocate for the community

Community suggestions that have been incorporated into the Local Community Plans will be the subject of further and ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Council and the community. Council will hold community workshops in the future to review and monitor the outcomes and success of the Local Community Plans.

Get Involved

Kempsey Council looks forward to your involvement in the implementation of these Local Community Plans. Contributions or suggestions should be directed to Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3200.

Hat Head in Focus

Hat Head Today

- It has a large influx of holiday makers in school holidays which are the main source of income for businesses.
- Hat Head is largely a fishing town
- There are few demographic trends as the community is very mixed and dynamic.
- There are environment constraints for growth of village due to being surrounded by National Park.
- There is limited community activism due to low social capital
- There are few vocational opportunities or activities
- There is a problem of under age drinking due to the limited activities for youth other than surfing.

History

Hat Head is surrounded by national park, and is famous for its great surfing and fishing. The town has a relaxed feel. The population triples in holiday period times, with Christmas Holidays being the main income stream for the village.

Population

The population of Hat Head/Kinchela is small with only 298 residents in 2006, increasing by more than 8% since 2001. The increasing population is a result of migration, mostly of people aged 65 and over from other parts of NSW, resulting in a Hat Head population older and ageing and growing faster than Kempsey Shire.

This ageing population means there is increasing pressure on the economically active population to support dependent segments of the population. In Hat Head in 2006 there were 58.5 dependents (those aged over 65 years, and under 15 years) per 100 members of the population between 15 and 65 years old, slightly less than for Kempsey.

Hat Head has a higher elderly dependency ratio, reflecting the ageing population and a lower youth dependency ratio following a significant decline in persons aged between 0 – 15 years old.

Education

The level of education of the population in Hat Head varies considerably from Kempsey Shire. Of the overall population, the proportion who have completed school to year 10, 11 or 12 is comparable, however a higher proportion of those under 35 years old in Hat Head have completed schooling above year 10 (63% compared to only 40% for Kempsey Shire).

Economy and Employment

The 2001 and 2006 census indicated the population of Hat Head is employed in increasingly diverse industries, and whilst the participation in primary industries, retail, wholesale trade, manufacturing, health and community services may be declining, government, education, hospitality, property and construction employment is increasing.

Income and Affordability

Average family incomes are slightly higher in Hat Head than Kempsey Shire; however average household incomes are slightly less. This may be a result of an increase in lone households, which increased by 16.7% between the 2001 and 2006 census periods.

Housing loan repayments in Hat Head are considerably higher and as a result housing stress is apparent. Weekly rental costs are less in Hat Head than in Kempsey Shire.

Services

Being a small beach town, Hat Head has no government services, and limited local retails including two mixed businesses, a caravan park and bowling club.

In 2006, 9.3% of households in Hat Head had no vehicle, whilst more than two thirds travelled to work by car as a driver or passenger. However 14.6% worked from home, almost double the proportion of Kempsey Shire resident workers.

In 2006, with a larger proportion of the population over 75 years of age, Hat Head recorded an incidence of need for assistance in daily activities of 8.2% compared with only 6.4% for Kempsey Shire.

What do the community love about living in Hat Head?

- Local school.
- Laid back lifestyle.
- Natural environment, bush walking in the park, the beaches and creek.
- Community spirit.
- It is safe for our children.
- Sense of isolation and the lack of urbanisation.
- It is under developed.
- The tourists help the community and continue to come back to the area because of its simplicity.
- The village atmosphere – you step back into the 1950s.

What are the challenges for Hat Head?

- Lack of facilities for children.
- Lack of exposure to a greater tourism market.
- The ecological impacts on the creek.
- Lack of facilities for tourists and access to walks etc.
- The lack of accountability and responsibility when something needs doing or fixing in the community.

What changes have been seen in Hat Head in the last few years?

- The modernisation and growth of the Caravan Park has meant that the area does not feel like community owned land anymore.

Community Visions for Hat Head

The community workshop and feedback session held in Hat Head drew out the common community visions for the future of the area. Below is an overview of the community visions, and the community suggestions for action.

Community Vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Community spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading existing play equipment and provision of new play equipment for teenagers with solid shade cover • Investigate the provision of leisure activities / facilities for youth • A body to coordinate activities, for example a playgroup • A market or festival • A men's shed • A community garden to grow vegetables • More ownership over the future of the village • Provide support for the Hat Head Residents and Ratepayers Group Meetings
Community ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage improvement to facilitate better public access to caravan park area and day visitor area • Define roles and responsibilities between Council and State Government departments regarding land management so that things can get fixed • Community owned village plan (including next generation needs as well – built environment) • Improved communication with Council Liaison Officer • More workshops where community involvement and participation is encouraged
Controlled development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the DCP with community input • That building height restrictions be implemented for Hat Head (information session)

Community Vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Service Provision and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of more garbage bins eg: near the footbridge and near access points behind front beach sand dunes • Investigate water coming close to going on Gap Beach Road at high tide • Undertake an upgrade of Straight Street • Provision of 'No Camping' and 'No Fire' signage along Gap Beach Road • Provision of car parking bays along Gap Beach Road
Natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the possibilities to control blackwater with a management plan • Implementation of Korogora Creek Management Plan and provide feedback to community on its implementation • Re-plant the Banksias and Paperbarks along Main Street to replace those that are ageing or damaged by the floods • Undertake periodical maintenance of existing trees along Straight Street • Natural heritage walk along Gap Road side of the creek from Hat Head Road to the footbridge • Investigations be made into making safe use of the entrance to Korogora Creek by boat users and swimmers • That signage be placed at the boat ramp advising general vehicles access to the beach is restricted as an avenue to reduce erosion • Undertake an investigation into the impact of the proposed Aquatic Reserve will have on Hat Head • Improvement to path – Conners Walk • Preparation of a management plan to address Climate Change and impact on sand dune system
Medical Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a visiting medical services room during holiday times
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More exposure of the village via the media, Council website and increased signage • Creation of a website promoting activities at Hat Head • Better synergy with Council to promote Hat Head • That security be provided for the Caravan Park during holiday periods

The Plan

The Plan has been developed from the outcomes of the community consultation undertaken during 2009. The Plan highlights specific actions to be implemented in order for community visions to be reached. The timeframe for the plan is 2009 – 2012. Priority ratings were allocated according to the community's view on how urgently actions needed to be addressed. The priority ratings that have been given to actions are as follows:

- Low Priority - action commenced within 4 years
- Medium Priority – action commenced within 2 years
- High Priority – action commenced with 1 year

The Council role will vary from action to action. The Council role will be one of the following:

- Direct involvement through the provision of services and/or infrastructure
- A collaboration role by teaming with the community and/or relevant industry organisations
- An advocacy role by speaking on the behalf of the community to relevant groups and bodies.

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Community spirit	Upgrade existing play equipment and provision of new play equipment for teenagers with solid shade cover	Low	Direct Involvement	Background Information: A children's play ground and solid shade cover has been erected in the Hat Head Caravan Park. This structure only caters for children and not teenagers as per the request Recommendation: Council to determine priority and funding
	Investigate the provision of leisure activities / facilities for youth	Low	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community.	Council to determine priority and funding
	A body to coordinate activities, for example a playgroup	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	A market or festival	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	A men's shed	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	A community garden to grow vegetables	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	More ownership over the future of the village	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Provide support for the Hat Head Residents and Ratepayer Group Meetings	High	Collaboration with the community	Ongoing: Community Engagement regularly provides support to the Hat Head Residents and Ratepayers Group meetings as required
Controlled development	Update DCP with community input	High	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	That building height restrictions be	High	Direct Involvement / Education session	Completed: Hat Head currently has a building height

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	implemented for Hat Head			limit at 2 storeys

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Community ownership	Signage improvement to facilitate better public access to caravan park area and day visitor area	Low	Direct Involvement	Commenced: A small budget has been allocated to address signage. Signs to be ordered after community engagement undertaken to determine preferred location
	Define roles and responsibilities between Council and State Government departments regarding land management so that things can get fixed	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Community owned village plan (including next generation needs as well – built environment)	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Improved communication with Council Liaison Officer	High	Direct Involvement	Completed: Community Engagement sessions held in the community will assist in meeting this need
	More workshops where community involvement and participation is encouraged	Low	Direct Involvement	Commenced: Community Engagement sessions will be held in each community to address this need

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Service Provision and Infrastructure	Provision of more garbage bins eg: near the footbridge and near access points behind front beach sand dunes	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Investigate water coming close to going on Gap Beach Road at high tide	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Undertake an upgrade of Straight Street	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Provision of 'No Camping' and 'No Fire' signage along Gap Beach Road	High	Direct Involvement	Commenced: A small budget has been allocated to address signage. Signs to be ordered after community engagement undertaken to determine preferred location
	Provision of car parking bays along Gap Beach Road	Low	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Natural environment	Investigate the possibilities to control blackwater with a management plan	Medium	Collaboration with the community / Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Implementation of Korogora Creek Management Plan and provide feedback to community on its implementation	High	Direct Involvement	Commenced: Korogora Creek Management Plan is regularly being implemented. Progress on the implementation will be taken to the next community engagement session
	Re-plant the Banksias and Paperbarks along Main Street to replace those that are ageing or damaged by the floods	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Undertake periodical maintenance of existing trees along Straight Street	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Natural heritage walk / cycleway along Gap Road side of the creek from Hat Head Road to the footbridge	Medium	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	That investigations be made into making safe use of the entrance to Korogora Creek by boat users and swimmers	High	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	That signage be placed at the boat ramp advising general vehicle access to the beach is restricted as an avenue to reduce erosion	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Undertake an investigation into the impact of the proposed Aquatic Reserve will have on Hat Head	Low	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Improvement to path – Conners Walk	Medium	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Preparation of a management plan to address Climate Change and impact on sand dune system	High	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
Medical Service Provision	Provision of a visiting medical services room during holiday times	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
Tourism	More exposure of the village via the media, Council website and increased signage	Low	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Creation of a website promoting activities at Hat Head	High	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Better synergy with Council to promote Hat Head	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	That security be provided for the Caravan Park during holiday periods	Medium	Advocacy	Commenced: 4 Shore Holiday Parks provides security at the caravan park during holiday periods