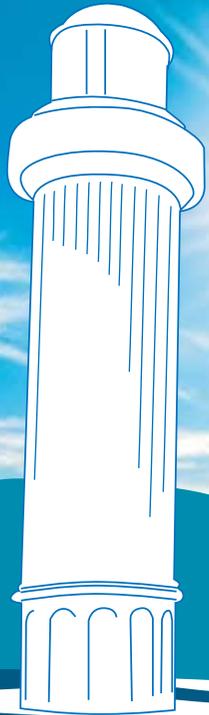


→ SUMMARY 12/2007



## → THE BLUE MILE VISION

a master plan to maximise Wollongong's advantages  
as a city by the sea



## → REVITALISING WOLLONGONG - THE BLUE MILE MASTER PLAN

### → SUMMARY OF THE FULL REPORT ADOPTED BY COUNCIL 19 NOVEMBER 2007

The Revitalising Wollongong City Centre Plan (2006) sets a 25 year strategic framework for the city centre to grow into a prosperous, vibrant and attractive regional city. The plan presents an exciting vision for the city centre:

*“As a regional city for the Illawarra, Wollongong will be a vibrant centre for jobs, key regional services, cultural activity, entertainment and tourism. Jobs will focus on high growth industries that build the city’s strengths in business services, health, education, retail, tourism and cultural activities.”*

The city centre foreshore is highlighted as a critical component of that vision and the plan identifies redevelopment of the city foreshore as one of eight civic improvement projects that present major opportunities to achieve the vision for the growth, revitalisation and development of the city centre.

*“The foreshore will be a significant destination where locals and tourists celebrate the beautiful natural environment and the heritage port. Pedestrian promenades, cycleways, foreshore parks, outdoor cafes and entertainment facilities will be developed to increase foreshore use and visitation.”*

The city centre strategy was endorsed by Wollongong City Council in November 2006, and includes a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP), Development Control Plan (DCP), and Civic Improvement Plan (CIP) which provide the necessary planning context for the development of *The Blue Mile Master Plan*.

*The Blue Mile Master Plan* proposes a range of city foreshore improvements to deliver on this promise and to fully realise the potential of the iconic urban beach and foreshore as a major people oriented place and the focus for public activities. The aim is to significantly improve public infrastructure and recreation and tourism experiences in the foreshore area stretching from the Wollongong Golf Course in the south to Fairy Creek in the north. A significant program of works is targeted over the next five years in order to stimulate and support the city’s revitalisation.

The master plan has been branded ‘*The Blue Mile*’ - Blue for the broad expanse of ocean and sky and Mile both as a reference to the rich cultural heritage and the physical distance between Crown Street and North Beach, and to depict the unique stretch of coastline with the ocean, sandy beaches, picturesque harbour, dramatic headland and recreational parklands edging the city centre. The master plan addresses public facilities, beaches and open space, parks and playgrounds, recreation facilities, footpaths and cycleways, cafes and restaurants, tourism and other commercial opportunities, pedestrian and traffic movement and car parking issues. *The Blue Mile Master Plan* will allow Wollongong to capitalise on its magnificent setting – as a city by the sea.

Major foreshore upgrades have already been undertaken in the Wollongong City Beach area following the earlier development of the new surf club building, function centre, restaurant and cafe. In particular, the Wollongong City Beach promenade works were completed in 2005, and significant upgrade works at Quilkey Place and Andrew Lysaght Rest Park were undertaken during 2006 and 2007.

Other improvement works in the Brighton Lawn area, incorporating the replacement of the failing sea wall, are in the design phase with construction planned for the autumn/winter 2008. Priority progress of this project has been necessary to address sea wall safety and amenity issues and has been informed by the overall master planning exercise.

In addition, proposed pavement upgrades around Diggies Restaurant at North Beach were recently completed and form the first stage of the planned upgrade to this important precinct.



# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → THE FORESHORE'S IMPORTANCE TO WOLLONGONG AND THE REGION

The city foreshore precinct is increasingly under pressure from changing lifestyles and escalating patterns of use. These include increases in traffic volume, visitation by locals and tourists alike, employment in and around the city centre and population density within and surrounding the precinct. Demand has outgrown the ability of existing infrastructure to provide the leisure and recreational amenities expected of a vibrant regional city.

The embellishment of the city foreshore area will have many social, economic and environmental benefits for Wollongong, its community and the wider region.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The city centre plan reports that there are currently about 2500 jobs in the waterfront and North Wollongong area. Furthermore it anticipates that 10000 new jobs will result in the city centre from the revitalisation over the next 25 years. The foreshore area has enormous potential to attract greater numbers of locals and visitors, particularly if it is revitalised, and to deliver a large proportion of the anticipated job growth, especially in tourism and hospitality services.

### **TOURISM**

The tourism industry will play a key role in the economic growth of Wollongong as a regional city. Improvements in the public infrastructure in the foreshore area and the subsequent expansion in commercial recreation and leisure opportunities will be a major catalyst for tourism growth.

#### **Southern Gateway Centre**

The new Southern Gateway Centre at Bulli Tops will make an important contribution to tourism growth by capturing more visitors out of the all important Sydney market and directing them into Wollongong and throughout the Illawarra.

#### **Grand Pacific Drive**

The promotion of the Grand Pacific Drive, the scenic coastal drive from Loftus at the entry to the Royal National Park, over the Sea Cliff Bridge between Coalcliff and Clifton, to Wollongong and into Shellharbour, Kiama, the Southern Highlands and the Shoalhaven, will increase visitation to the Wollongong city foreshore area, hence creating greater demand for supportive infrastructure. *The Blue Mile Master Plan* provides a framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure to support the development of the Grand Pacific Drive as a premier drive touring route and destination of choice for tourists.

### **INVESTMENT AND THE INNOVATION CAMPUS**

The University of Wollongong Innovation Campus directly north of the study area presents a major opportunity for Wollongong's future with plans to establish around 135000m<sup>2</sup> floor space comprising of lecture theatres, cafes, research facilities and businesses in this precinct. The campus has the potential to attract a new generation of skills, research talent and technology businesses into Wollongong. Proposed improvements to the foreshore area will play a key role in making the precinct attractive to business investors and the new generation of residents, technicians and researchers that are expected to emerge as a result of the Innovation Campus and improve linkages with the University of Wollongong and the CBD. In addition, the development of the campus will increase demand for dining and recreational amenities in the foreshore precinct, with the campus contributing to increased concentration of people working, studying and living nearby.

### **RECREATION AND LEISURE**

The city foreshore is extensively used for leisure, recreation and fitness by locals living nearby, people working in the city centre and the general Wollongong local government area community. With the city centre plan providing for increased density for employment and living opportunities (10000 new jobs and 6000 new residents) the use of the city foreshore area for dining, recreation and leisure opportunities will expand. Higher density living in the city centre will create strong demand for accessible open space and recreation areas that can accommodate intensive and frequent use and provide a range of leisure and recreation activities both day and night.

## → THE BLUE MILE STRATEGY

### VISION STATEMENT

*The Blue Mile Master Plan has been guided by the vision statement: the Blue Mile will become a high quality, popular and beautiful open space area that links the city centre to its magnificent foreshore, and provides a substantially enhanced amenity for residents and visitors.*

### OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives articulate the guiding vision above.

- Establish high quality open space
- Improve pedestrian/cycle access to and along the foreshore
- Provide high quality facilities of distinctive local design that respond to and enhance the unique natural environment
- Provide a range of facilities for families, visitors and local residents
- Ensure design proposals maximise the safety of visitors
- Improve vehicular access and parking opportunities
- Integrate public art into design proposals

### INPUTS INTO THE MASTER PLAN

*The Blue Mile Master Plan has been developed with a wide range of data from background research and supporting studies. A summary of these findings is included in the full report.*

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In early 2005, Wollongong City Council undertook an initial community engagement and intelligence-gathering exercise in order to:

- canvas a broad cross section of the community,
- obtain a profile of issues, views and comments, and
- gain an understanding of the background to issues associated with the city foreshore area.

Community engagement was considered an essential input into the planning of improvements to the foreshore because it could establish community needs and views, but also empower people to participate actively in the development of this special community space. Over 2000 individuals and groups participated in a range of engagement methods including: individual consultations, information hotline, suggestion boxes, focus groups, dedicated email address, community kiosk and telephone and intercept (free range) survey.

From this engagement process a number of key recommendations were made:

Amenity: streetscapes be improved, integrated building design be provided, heritage features be retained and commercial opportunities identified.

Access: footways and viewing areas be wider, cyclists and pedestrians be better separated and the footways and signage be of a high quality.

Culture: more outdoor entertainment facilities, increased opportunity for alfresco dining and a celebration of Indigenous and European heritage via an interpretive trail along the foreshore.

Traffic: the ongoing issue of traffic congestion needs to be addressed, as does lack of parking, noise, speed and the impact of 'car enthusiasts'.

Safety: poor lighting and the dominance of anti-social groups was identified as areas in need of attention.

### ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

As part of the master planning process, specialist transport consultants were engaged to prepare an 'Access and Movement' strategy for the foreshore area.

The overall goal of the strategy is to increase the amenity of the foreshore area and to provide attractive safe and efficient access to transport modes. This strategy (detailed in the full report) not only considers traffic management, but also integrates all transport modes including pedestrian, cyclist, public transport and car parking.



# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → THE BLUE MILE STRATEGY

### PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The *Blue Mile Master Plan* process has led to the development of a City Foreshore Plan of Management (POM) which was exhibited for public comment concurrently with the master plan. The POM is necessary under legislation to allow for commercial activities such as lease and licence improvements and to allow for private sector investment. An example of this is the North Beach Surf Club. The POM incorporates the key proposals contained within the master plan.

#### Areas to be upgraded

- Foreshore shared way across all zones
- Lang Park
- Wollongong City Beach
- Wollongong Foreshore Park
- Flagstaff Hill
- Brighton Lawn
- Osborne Park
- Battery Park
- North Beach
- Stuart Park

#### Facilities to be redeveloped

- Continental Baths
- North Beach Bathers Pavilion

#### New facilities

- North Beach Surf Club building north of existing building
- North Beach open space with acknowledgement to history of North Beach precinct especially the old Surf Club
- Underground car park in Lang Park and a North Beach multi level car park with tourist retail space on ground level to provide a long term parking solution for the Wollongong city foreshore
- Visitor Information Centre with cafe and public amenities at Flagstaff Hill
- Possible new commercial facility (cafe/dining/tourism activity) at Belmore Basin/Flagstaff Hill entry





## → THE BLUE MILE MASTER PLAN

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### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Taking account of the wealth of analysis and research input and applying accepted landscape architectural and urban design principles, *The Blue Mile Master Plan* has been formulated in line with the following overarching design concepts:

- Express the urban character of the city centre in the foreshore precinct with refined high quality materials of a long service life that will enhance the linkage of the city with its coastline, and compliment and protect the city's magnificent natural setting
- Recognise and enhance the major movement corridors for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles applying the requirements of equal access
- Provide a series of destinations along these movement corridors at intervals to reward, surprise, please, excite, stimulate, replenish and satisfy visitors to the city foreshore
- Provide a high quality, continuous pedestrian/cycle route
- Upgrade traffic and parking infrastructure
- Develop two major gateways at the northern and southern arrival points of the city foreshore featuring major public art installations
- Clearly define and embellish paths of travel between the city and the heart of the city foreshore – the Wollongong Harbour with Flagstaff Hill as the backdrop
- Ensure all design proposals are based on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Draw upon the rich heritage of the foreshore area as inspiration for key projects within the master plan.

## → THE BLUE MILE MASTER PLAN PRECINCTS

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### BLUE MILE MASTER PLAN PRECINCTS

*The Blue Mile Master Plan* encompasses the city foreshore from the golf course in the south to Stuart Park and Fairy Creek in the north. Distinct precincts exist within the overall plan, as follows:

1. Entertainment Precinct
2. City Beach/Lang Park
3. Flagstaff Hill
4. Harbour Precinct
5. Cliff Road Precinct
6. North Beach
7. Stuart Park

### NOTE REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

The design proposals that follow for each precinct have been developed to express the principles of the master plan and will be subject to relevant statutory requirements regarding consultation, heritage and design during the detailed design phase of each project within the precinct.



# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → 1 ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

One of the prime visitor drawcards to the city foreshore is the grouping of major entertainment facilities on the original site of the Wollongong Showground - the Wollongong Entertainment Centre (WEC) and the WIN Stadium. Importantly this precinct also includes Wollongong's first Catholic cemetery, and its designation as a 'Rest Park' by act of state government.

Work has been completed to create the important southern 'missing link' in the foreshore pedestrian/cycle shared way, and the establishment of a suitably upgraded southern gateway to the foreshore area. The Quilkey Place reserve has been redesigned and reconstructed as a formal car park, and the Andrew Lysaght Rest Park has been created on the site of the Catholic cemetery adjacent to the Wollongong Entertainment Centre.

The terminus of Crown Street at the beach offers an unparalleled opportunity to physically link the CBD street axis with the sea as part of the long term plans for the southern edge of Lang Park.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

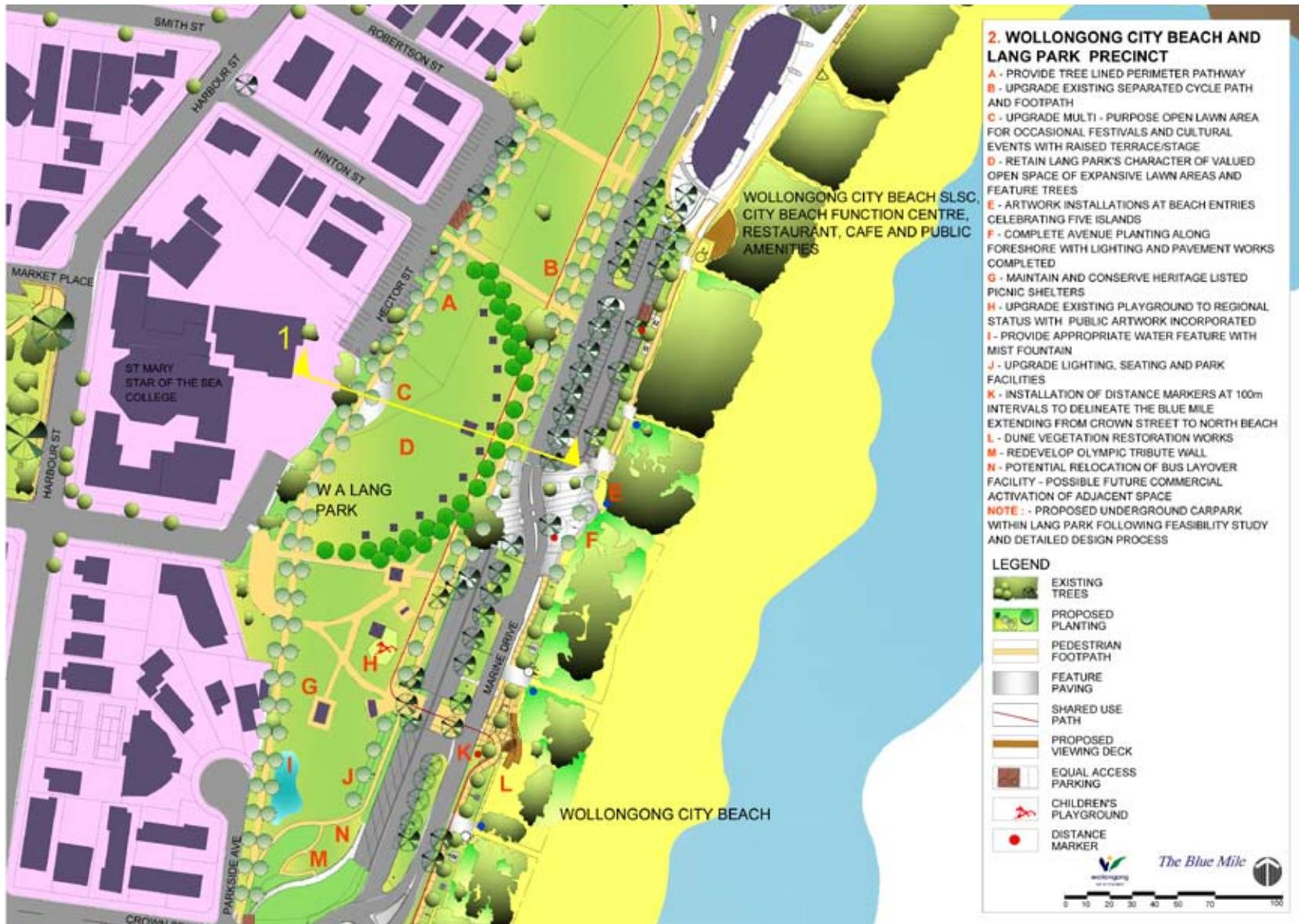
## → 2 WOLLONGONG CITY BEACH/LANG PARK

The Wollongong City Beach Precinct contains significant features from a historical, recreational, institutional, and commercial point of view. With the Wollongong Museum and Market Square, the open grasslands of Lang Park and Wollongong City Beach foreshore, St Mary Star of the Sea College and Wollongong City Beach Surf Club, this precinct is a focus for visitors and is regularly used for large scale events.

The area south of the new City Beach Surf Club and function centre has been upgraded recently with high quality shared ways, furniture, lighting, tree planting, a viewing platform, and artwork, forming a suitably urban and refined character. Lang Park is proposed to be developed incorporating additional perimeter and east-west pathways on the alignment of the adjacent streets, avenue tree planting, upgraded shelters, and a regional scale playground. A proposal for an underground carpark will also be investigated through a feasibility study that retains the high quality of the resultant park area, and heritage and visual impact as primary guiding principles.

In aiming to achieve the best and highest use of the public open space in the precinct, public transport arrangements will be reviewed with potential for relocation of the current bus layover facility and some commercial activation of the area.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → 3 FLAGSTAFF HILL

The Flagstaff Hill Precinct includes the iconic and significant headland within the master plan study area. This dramatic rocky landform provides both a picturesque focal point when viewed from the city, and a superb location for viewing the harbour, north and south coastlines, the escarpment, city, and Port Kembla. Currently the headland is dominated by the road network and has no facilities for families and poor access for pedestrians or cyclists. Typically on a Sunday this magnificent open space asset is used by only a narrow range of visitors taking advantage of the road access. One of the primary aims of the master plan is to widen the range of visitors by increasing the facilities on offer. To this end the following works are proposed:

- Perimeter pathway and viewing platforms incorporating an interpretive trail
  - Improved cycle access
  - Flagstaff memorial upgrade
  - Paved plaza around lighthouse incorporating and enhancing heritage items
  - Themed regional playground
  - Improved lighting
  - Footpaths and shared way along Endeavour Drive to improve pedestrian access, appearance and safety
  - Bus and other vehicle drop-off and pick-up points
  - Creation of Flagstaff Visitor Centre designed with equal access provision, toilets and parents room, cafe and visitor information provision. Building design to be sympathetic with the important landscape quality and rich history of the peninsula.
- The Flagstaff Hill Precinct forms part of the area now subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between Wollongong City Council and the Department of Lands to appropriately enhance the Heritage Port area.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → 4 HARBOUR PRECINCT

The Harbour Precinct, rich in items of historical significance, animated by recreational and commercial boating activities, and possessing a warm sheltered north east aspect, draws significant numbers of visitors to the foreshore area.

This precinct encompasses land owned by the Crown but under Council's management, and land under the control of the Department of Lands. Improvement proposals in this precinct will be developed in close consultation with the state government. The Department of Lands announced in early 2007 its intention to call for Expressions of Interest from the private sector to partner in the redevelopment of the heritage harbour and to provide for enhanced marine, commercial, recreation and tourism use. A Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed between Council and the State Government to further progress this development.

In principle, the design proposals reflect the existing and on going significance and popularity of the precinct by upgrading facilities, increasing walking and cycling areas, and presenting opportunities for community events. To that end, the following works are proposed:

- Provision of a connected series of promenades and viewing platforms
- Historically interpretive signage and artwork
- Major upgrade to pedestrian and cycle circulation both to and through the precinct
- Upgrade to playground as an expression of local history or local/maritime theme
- Improvement of traffic facilities to encourage slower vehicle movements and safer pedestrian routes
- New sea wall adjacent to Brighton Lawn providing better beach access and more seating
- Possible expansion of commercial opportunities to provide for further dining, cafe, recreation and leisure options
- Protection of existing midden sites and provision of interpretative material.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

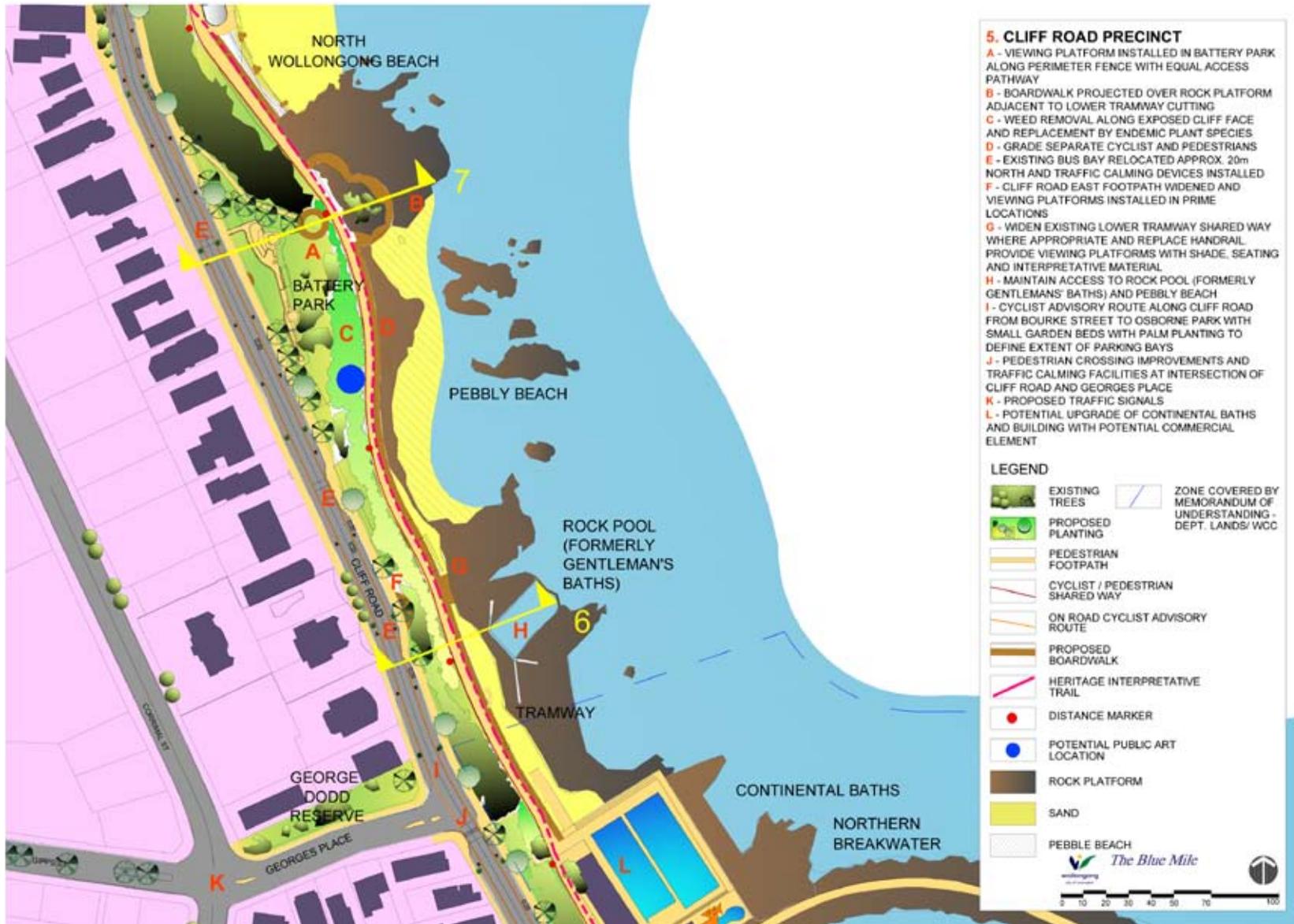
## → 5 CLIFF ROAD PRECINCT

This precinct is significant from a number of perspectives. It provides a vital pedestrian and cycle connection between the major drawcards of North Beach and Belmore Basin and a link to Wollongong's early pioneering achievements. It encompasses another significant heritage site – Battery Park, which is uniquely picturesque in its own right.

The design proposals seek to enhance these features by providing more adequate space for circulation of pedestrians and cyclists, reduce traffic and pedestrian conflicts, provide improved historical interpretation, and take advantage of the superb views from both the upper and lower levels of the cliff face. To this end, the following works are proposed:

- Widening of both the upper Cliff Road footway and lower shared way with the addition of promenades and viewing areas
- Separation of pedestrian and cyclist traffic on both the upper and lower levels
- Cliff stabilisation works as required
- Improved lighting throughout the precinct
- Improvements to the Battery Park facilities
- Installation of historically interpretive signage and artwork at appropriate places
- Installation of traffic calming devices on Cliff Road that will also improve the streetscape of this important road
- Install bus bay facilities in appropriate locations
- Possible redevelopment of the Continental Baths including commercial activities
- Provision of cycle advisory route along Cliff Road in both directions.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → 6 NORTH BEACH

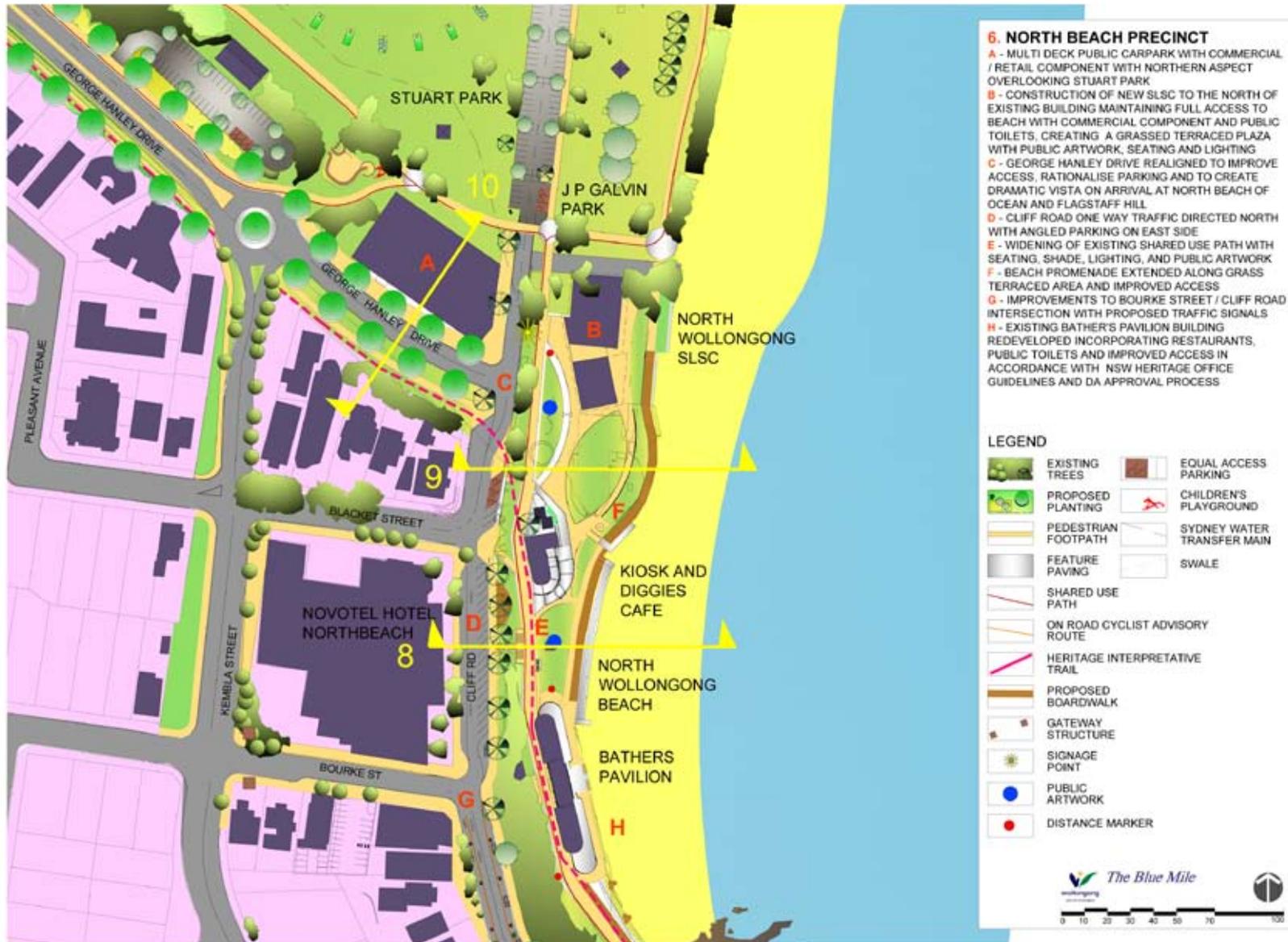
North Beach can be considered the most cosmopolitan of Wollongong's beaches with an established popularity, existing high quality commercial facilities, significant heritage buildings, and a relatively protected beautiful beach with a superb outlook.

Two of the three buildings of significance in the precinct are at various stages of redevelopment with the old kiosk now a successful restaurant and cafe, and the Bathers Pavilion with various detailed design proposals for high quality dining. The North Beach Surf Club has undergone a structural investigation, revealing serious problems. Council and the club have been investigating various redevelopment proposals.

The following works are proposed:

- Demolition of the existing upper crib lock wall and relocation of wall in order to increase available recreational space and reduce pedestrian/cyclist conflicts
- Expansion of open recreational space directly alongside the beach through the relocation of the surf club northwards
- Replacement of existing Surf Life Saving Club which would otherwise require extensive and ongoing, costly repairs
- Installation of historically interpretive signage and artwork at appropriate locations
- Improved access from road and grassed area to beach by providing stairways, improved ramps, and a terraced sea wall with both standard size and seating steps
- Pedestrian promenade along the eastern edge of the grassed area in conjunction with a new sea wall while retaining appropriate access to the beach for rescue equipment and club activities
- Improved parking opportunities in conjunction with Traffic Management Plan and the Plan of Management
- Installation of bus drop-off and pick-up points in the North Beach/Stuart Park area
- Installation of multi-deck carpark with commercial/retail component, on site of existing carpark







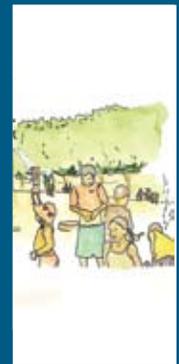
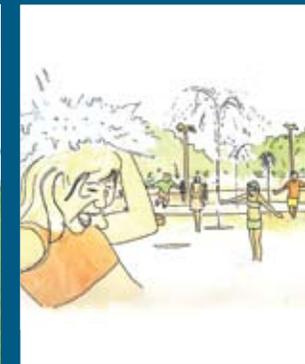
# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → 7 STUART PARK

In terms of scale, Stuart Park is the most significant open space area in the city foreshore area. Located adjacent to the highly popular attraction of North Beach, and the natural areas of Puckeys Estate and Fairy Creek, Stuart Park provides a significant open area for recreation, and is an extremely valuable recreation asset.

The master plan proposals aim to enhance this significance through the provision of some major recreation facilities, creating a more legible structure to the park, improving circulation of pedestrians and cyclists, and increasing parking opportunities. To this end the following works are proposed:

- Establishment of a path network including a perimeter pathway, axial paths, and cycleway additions for children and adults
- Creation of significant tree avenues
- Creation of perimeter landscape works and artwork around the old cricket ground celebrating the colour and excitement of skydiving
- Increasing the parking provision
- Creation of a series of small lakes along the major drainage line in order to provide visual and recreational interest, habitat, to improve stormwater water quality and potential water harvesting for irrigation purposes
- Creation of a major water-play fountain or similar adjacent to the lagoon and beach
- Provision of youth space/playground at southern end of park catering for older children
- Additional facilities for the existing, popular playground including shade structures and seating
- Provision of park facilities and shade tree planting along the western edge of park
- Restoration works for existing swamp oak forest and additional planting.







# → THE BLUE MILE VISION - SUMMARY

## → PROPOSED STAGING OF THE PLAN

The implementation of *The Blue Mile Master Plan* will be staged over five years. Works have already commenced with the refurbishment of the Wollongong City Beach area, Quilkey Place and Andrew Lysaght Rest Park over the past three years. These improvements have done much to build a suitably refined and urban character in this southern area of the city foreshore.

The proposal is now to embark on an ambitious program of upgrade works to transform the remainder of the city foreshore area over the next five years.

## → FUNDING FORESHORE IMPROVEMENTS

*The Blue Mile Master Plan* incorporates an estimated \$44 million worth of public recreation and tourism amenity and car parking improvements, and a further \$4 million in road works and traffic facilities. The Wollongong City Council *Corporate Plan 2007-11* incorporates an in principle commitment to proceed with the implementation of *The Blue Mile Master Plan* over the five year period 2007-08 to 2011-12. It includes in its expenditure forecast allocations to accommodate this capital project and its associated recurrent costs for depreciation and cost of capital.

However, funds for this master plan implementation will be sought from multiple sources including both federal and state government grant funding, development levies from city centre and city wide development, and private sector contributions from public private partnerships established to deliver commercial components of the plan.

As one of the special civic improvements identified in the *Revitalising Wollongong City Centre Plan*, the foreshore improvement project is targeted to benefit from an estimated \$11 million in anticipated Section 94A contributions levies (being 2% of the cost of development) for the commercial core of the Wollongong city centre.

Works to replace the Brighton Lawn seawall and enhance the surrounding Belmore Basin parklands are well progressed in design with the commencement of works scheduled to start in the first half of 2008.

Furthermore, the Heritage Port Development is identified in the revitalisation plan as a project for support through the Section 94EE Special Contributions Levy (1% of the cost of developments in the city core) to be collected by the NSW Government. It is anticipated that improvements to public infrastructure around the harbour will be funded from the special contributions levy and public private partnerships established by the state government for the redevelopment of the harbour.



## → CONCLUSION

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Wollongong is Australia's ninth largest city, and boasts both natural and built features that provide a unique and magnificent setting in comparison to cities of similar size. Its proximity to the nation's largest metropolitan area, balanced with its environmental appeal and relaxed, coastal lifestyle, has made the city a 'sleeping giant' in terms of the future.

The adoption of the Revitalising Wollongong - City Centre Strategy as a Local Environment Plan, and the undertaking of planning and development for some 50 000 new residents in the West Dapto precinct, offer untold potential opportunities for investment, employment growth and augmentation of the city's burgeoning share of the tourism market. These achievements will also help fortify Wollongong's key economic platforms in retail, services, education and small to medium industries as the city moves further from its heavy industrial and mining heritage.

In order to complement these advantages, it is important infrastructure and facilities in focal public domains such as *The Blue Mile* keep pace. While Wollongong residents are proud of the natural and heritage aspects of the city's foreshore, from previous community consultation there is a universal view that things could be even better.

This desire of the community is well supported by numerous existing examples of how the improvement of prime public domain in other cities has had a substantial positive impact on the social and economic life of the local community.

*The Blue Mile*, therefore, is a vision with potential to deliver enormous benefits to Wollongong and the wider region. Through this vision, the community, Government, private business and investors all have the opportunity to contribute to a project which will leave a lasting impression, maximising the benefits Wollongong has as a modern, progressive city between an unparalleled green backdrop, the majesty of golden beaches, and a clean, azure sea.

