

Challenges facing the urban green places?

The Central Coast is currently home to 325,000 people, which is expected to increase to 415,000 by 2036, with the growth being met by increased demand for housing and employment (NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2016). This will result in housing intensification in existing areas, such as the construction of medium density housing in existing suburbs, along with the development of greenfield housing sites, in the area covered by the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan. Industrial areas of the Somersby Plateau and North Wyong will also continue to be developed. The projected level of urban intensification and expansion will require careful planning for the development, maintenance and expansion of urban green spaces. The Gosford CBD will be subject to the extensive development of residential flat blocks and other medium to high density buildings.

Both greenfield and urban infill development convert existing rural or larger lot residential areas to a more intensive landuse, including townhouse development. These types of developments often require extensive cut and fill excavation, which means existing remnant trees cannot be retained without compromising the tree protection zone or tree structural root zone. Removal of urban canopy cover increase the Urban Heat Island effect and as such, require strategic management of appropriate vegetation to reduce these effects.

Other common threats to the long-term survival of urban green vegetation include:

- An ageing urban forest: as many of the trees of the Central Coast are remnant trees from the native vegetation that formerly occurred on the site. These trees are often mature or over-mature, thus towards the end of their Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE).
- The impacts from insect attack and emerging diseases on residual tree populations. Urban trees may be stressed from insect attack, such as an overabundance

of Psyllids that can cause severe dieback in Eucalypts (Hall et al. 2015). Pests and diseases can cause trees that are part of the urban forest to die or become severely stressed, which may require removal or significant pruning.

- The impacts of warming and heatwaves on tree death. Heatwaves are known to potentially result in tree death, especially if the tree is already stressed from drought (Choat et al. 2018).
- The impact on storms and floods on the urban forest. This includes trees failing due to wind throw, branch shear caused by strong winds. It is likely that storms will become more severe in the future as a result of climate change which will require consideration of which species are more resistant to storm events.
- Required clearance between trees and overhead services which require regular pruning. Pruning may reduce the structural integrity of trees and reduce their overall appearance. Ausgrid have been expanding the use of Aerial Bundled Cables for overhead services on the Central Coast which will reduce the level of required pruning in the future.
- The NSW Government's 10/50 Bushfire Code of Practice. This Code, on certain lands, permits the removal of canopy trees within 10 metres of approved dwellings, on bushfire prone land, unless their retention is required as part of a Plan of Management or development application Condition of Consent.
- Council's tree Development Control Plan (DCP) allowing the removal of any tree that occurs within 3 metres of an approved dwelling.
- The lack of appropriate replacement of trees removed for the above reasons, which may over time cause a decrease in the extent of the urban forest.



Purpose & Scope

The key challenges facing the urban green places across the Central Coast region are due to rapid urbanisation, planning controls that do not adequately incorporate urban greening as part of new development and inadequate support for the community in implementing urban greening on private land. In general, there is a lack of clear direction to implement the greening vision, highlighting the urgency for this Strategy.

The Strategy also fills the current gap in former Councils direction to ensure that urban greening is tenure blind, in expanding support to private individuals to assist with implementing the Greening Vision.

Scope

The strategy is developed with consideration for all existing and future strategies and plans currently in development by Council. The strategy also informs future planning controls, technical guidelines, programs and relevant project delivery (figure 11)

Purpose

The Strategy aims to provide strategic directions to:

1. Facilitate the on-ground delivery of the greening vision for the region through increased reference to urban greening within planning controls, technical guidelines and review of internal Council processes.
2. Ensure that the community values for green spaces and places is retained whilst building community capacity to support the greening vision for the region.
3. Mitigate and adapt to the changing climate and ensure that the ecological values of these green spaces are retained and enhanced.
4. Improve the urban amenity that enhance the liveability, create vibrancy and support economic opportunities across the region.



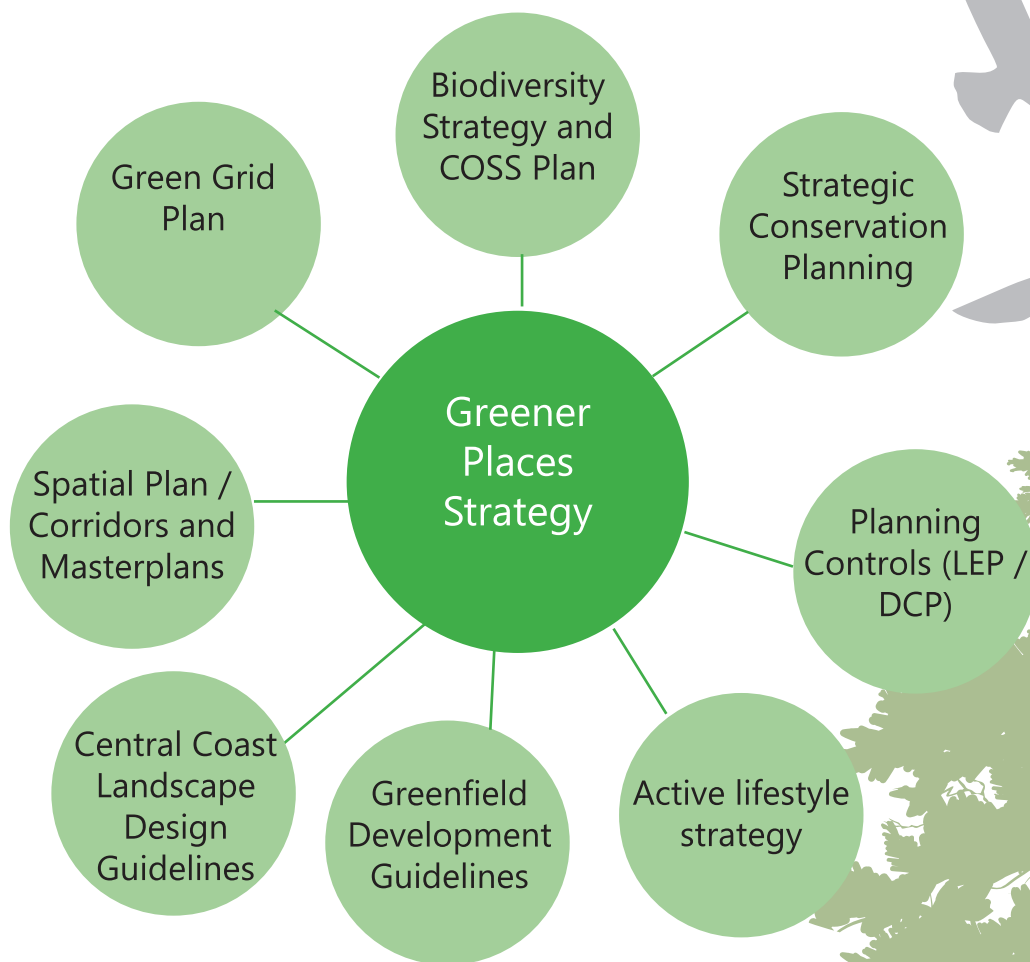





Figure 11: Integration from the Greener Places Strategy to existing and future Council strategic planning documents and operational plans.

Planning framework

A range of legislative instruments, policies and strategies referred to as guiding documents, relate directly to the Greener Places Strategy. A detailed summary of these is included in Appendix 1.

International treaties and non-binding agreements					
Agenda 21 – the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development 1992 A framework for the conservation and management of the Earth’s resources, including how Government can implement these actions locally.			UN Convention on Biodiversity 1992 Parties to consider the implementation of ecological sustainable development.		
Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030					
Aimed at restoring fragments landscapes and aquatic systems and provide ecological corridors to improve long term ecological resilience and reducing the impact of urban development on natural areas.					
New South Wales State Government Legislative direction					
NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979	Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016	Local Government Act 1993	Roads Act 1993	Rural Fires Act 1997	Local Land Services Act 2013
Central Coastal Regional Plan 2036					
Actions to protect and enhance the existing amenity of the region, namely, open space and scenic amenity. Specific actions:					
Action 8.1 Protect the Central Coast Scenic Amenity by planning for development that respects the distinct qualities of different places					
Action 18.4 Enhance the amenity and attractiveness of existing places					
Action 18.5 Implement strategies to invest in open space, sporting and recreational infrastructure					
Central Coast Council’s Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028					
Supports the protection of trees and vegetation, addressing climate change and ensuring ecological sustainable development (E1 F1 F2 F4 L3)					
<div><div> CHERISHED AND PROTECTED NATURAL BEAUTY</div><div> BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</div><div> ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE</div></div>					
Climate Change Policy 2019	Greening Wyong Strategy	Central Coast Sustainability Strategy	Central Coast Biodiversity Strategy	Local Strategic Planning Statement	Tree & Vegetation Management Development Control Plan (DCP)



Greening vision framework for Central Coast

Vision

Improving regional liveability by maintaining and enhancing tree canopy cover and green space across the Central Coast urban areas.

The framework

The framework provides an overarching pathway integrating strategic and operational planning of the greening vision and on-ground delivery of the greening projects. The flow chart on page 34 outlines this integration, including documents that will be prepared to accompany this strategy. This includes integration with other strategic planning documents, such as the Central Coast Regional Plan and how urban greening is to be integrated with future public works, such as those completed as part of private development. The frameworks also set a clear pathway and defines the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the vision.

The framework provides pathways for improved greening outcomes from both Council projects and from private development. This includes the relevant guiding documents, the interaction with relevant Council business units, the establishment of project steering groups and the identification and establishment of a project implementation team once the project is at the construction and/ or implementation phase. For greening projects associated with private development, this includes the detail required in landscape plans, and how these are integrated into the Development Application process.



