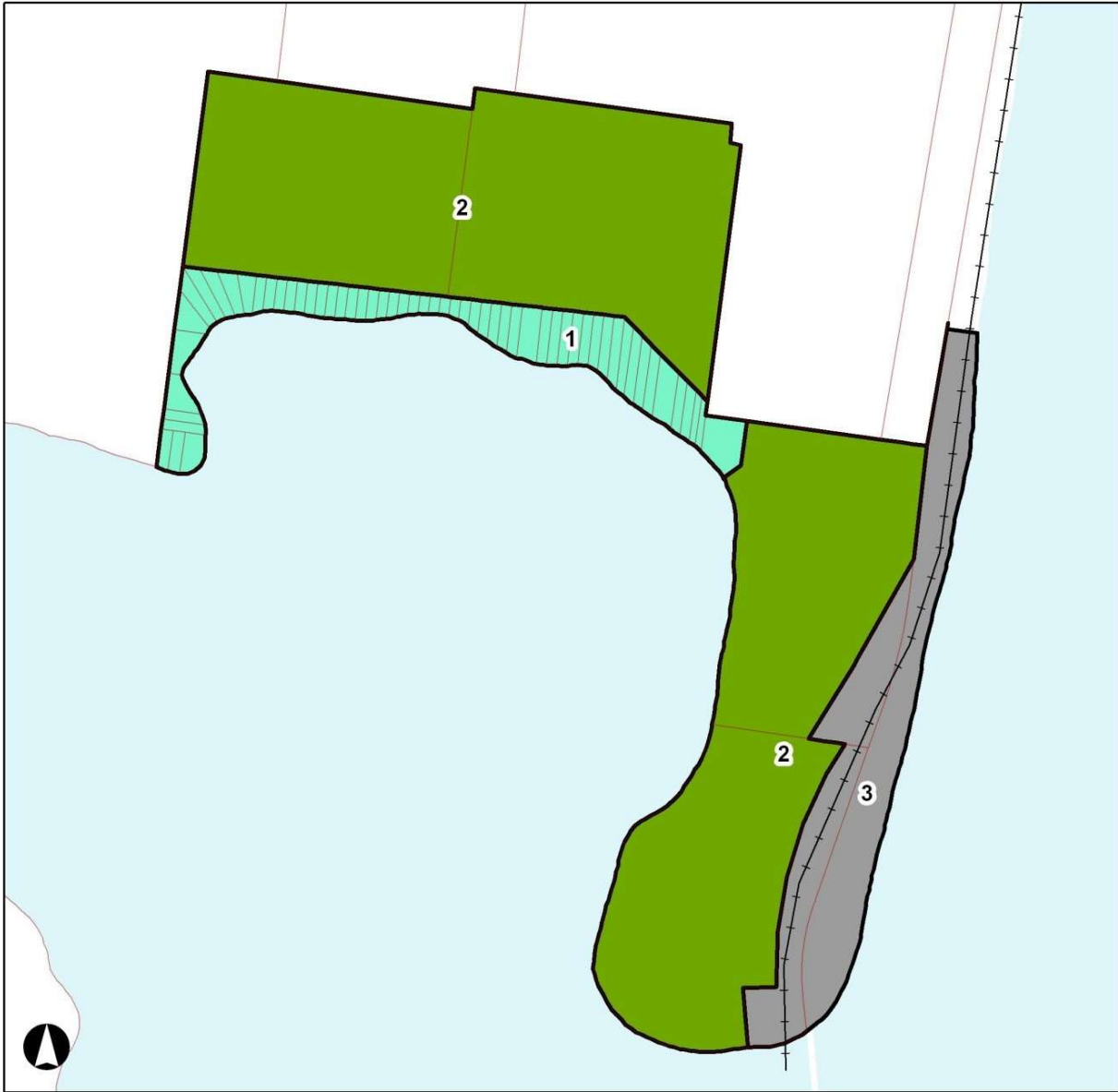


# Cogra Bay



- 1: Cogra Bay Rivershores
- 2: Scenic Conservation
- 3: Transit Corridor

## Cogra Bay 1: Cogra Bay Rivershores - Existing

## **Existing Character**

These residential foreshores accommodate dwellings that are nestled below a tall bushland canopy. Together with bushland that is located in the National Park reserves to the north, vegetation on private properties contributes to a scenically-prominent River backdrop.

Accessible only by water, this settlement has a variety of pedestrian tracks and boardwalks that cross private lands from waterfront jetties and public wharfs. In addition to the bushland character, significant natural features in this settlement include sandy beaches, small waterfalls and rock shelves.

Located upon medium-sized allotments, dwellings typically are sited on gentler slopes or terraces close to the foreshore, with a few elevated pole-framed buildings on steeper slopes behind the waterfront. Most properties retain tall bushland remnants that provide distinctive backdrops to both dwellings and the River. Elevated private properties that adjoin the National Park conserve near-natural vegetation and prominent rock outcrops.

Dwellings vary from early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages that are modestly-scaled timber framed buildings of a single storey, to modern medium-sized timber-framed houses of one and two storeys. The clusters of surviving traditional cottages and week-enders retain historically-distinctive links with the original river settlement, and although the condition of these buildings varies, most retain their original architectural form and lightweight cladding.

Siting of dwellings varies, and together with modest scale of buildings, provides for the conservation of tall bushland remnants that are scenically-distinctive. Private gardens retain the natural hillside profile, and there is no boundary fencing within this settlement. Foreshores near the sandy beach include a number of private timber jetties, some of which appear to be seriously dilapidated.

## **Cogra Bay 1: Cogra Bay Rivershores - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

This should remain a leafy, secluded residential settlement where new building works do not dominate the natural or scenic qualities of this prominent River backdrop, and where amenity of the existing environmental setting is enhanced.

In this bushfire prone area, hazard must not be increased by inappropriate new plantings or structures. Minimise the extent of cleared asset protection zones by fire-resistant siting, design and construction for all new structures plus effective management of gardens. The ideal compromise between desired scenic quality and hazard-reduction would limit clearing to thinning of the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees. Screen or shield all verandahs, windows, roofs and suspended floors to exclude sparks and flying embers.

Conserve and enhance the existing scenic qualities of each property by retaining natural slopes, rock faces plus continuity of the bushland canopy. Concentrate new buildings and works within existing clearings away from low-lying foreshores. Ensure that future garden plantings do not include exotic trees plus identified noxious or environmental weeds, and remove any existing weed infestations together with any foreshore debris.

Ensure that building works would not compromise existing natural or scenic qualities. Avoid disturbing natural landforms by using low-impact framed construction with suspended floors rather than masonry structures that require extensive excavation or terracing. Also avoid extensive garden terraces or tall retaining walls, and conceal wastewater treatment systems. Limit foreshore works to the refurbishment of existing timber-piered jetties, and reconstruction of seawalls with natural sandstone blocks. Ensure that any wastewater discharges would not compromise the scenic quality of hillside or waterfront bushland, encourage the growth of weeds, or reduce water quality within the River.

From the River, avoid the appearance of continuous walls of development. Maintain the established irregular pattern of buildings that are scattered along foreshores and across hillsides. Setbacks to side boundaries and the riverfront should be similar to existing dwellings upon each property as well as nearby.

Minimise the scale and bulk of new buildings. Use strongly-articulated forms that appear to sit beneath the canopy, and stepping floor-levels that follow natural slopes. For large buildings, employ irregular floorplans such as pavilions that are capped by individual roofs and separated by landscaped courtyards. Disguise building scale by incorporating gently-pitched roofs with wide shady eaves, verandahs and extensive windows, plus a variety of light-weight cladding

rather than expanses of plain masonry.

Maintain pedestrian access throughout this settlement by a continuous network of pathways that include foreshore terraces or tracks with gradients and steps designed for safety as well as to prevent hillside erosion. Plant the boundaries of each property with hedges or shrubs rather than using fences that are opaque. Screen all balconies and decks to protect the privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

## **Cogra Bay 2: Scenic Conservation - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

This natural ridgetop is part of the National Park reserve.

Contributing to natural backdrops that are visible from the River and surrounding river settlements, this area is scenically- and ecologically-significant. It provides a landscape barrier to the westwards expansion of urban development within the Central Coast region.

This area also conserves aboriginal cultural artefacts and values.

## **Cogra Bay 2: Scenic Conservation - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These areas should predominantly remain as conservation or water reserves, together with a scattering of privately-owned lands that accommodate very low-impact residential development. Reserves should remain cornerstones of Gosford City's environmental identity, preserving natural and scenic features that are important elements of Aboriginal heritage, as well as scattered remains of the early colonial settlement.

Conserve the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of natural plant communities within reserves by preventing development, land-management or activities that would be intensive or intrusive. Maintain natural slopes, rock outcrops, watercourses and stream banks, as well as all existing bushland including mangroves and marshes near foreshores. Avoid further clearing by confining new works to existing clearings, and away from scenically-prominent foreshores, hillsides or road frontages, as well as away from watercourses and low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. Where clearing cannot be avoided, locate works to minimise natural and scenic impacts. Use low-impact framed construction with suspended floors rather than masonry structures that would require extensive additional cut-and-fill, particularly on visually-prominent slopes or next to bushland. Apply best-practice ecological management techniques to remove noxious and environmental weeds, as well as for bushfire hazard reduction works that strike a balance between environmental quality and public safety. Conserve Aboriginal artefacts and cultural sites, as well as structural remains of early European settlement in this region.

Achieve bushfire asset protection zones within existing clearings. Use fire-resistant design and construction techniques for all new structures as well as effective land management to reduce bushfire hazard. Screen all verandahs, windows and suspended floors to exclude bushfire embers and sparks.

Maintain natural and scenic qualities of surrounding bushland. Ensure that structures are small-scale or widely-separated to avoid the appearance of continuous walls of development or visually-dense clusters of buildings. Avoid tall opaque fences and retaining walls, as well as broad paved areas that would be scenically-intrusive. Conceal wastewater treatment systems and ensure that any discharges would not compromise the composition or scenic quality of bushland, encourage weed growth, or affect water quality within any stream.

Ensure that new buildings would not visually-dominate any scenically-prominent backdrop to the River or a major tourist route. Minimise scale and bulk by using strongly-articulated forms, such as stepped floor-levels that follow natural slopes, and irregular floorplans, such as linked pavilions that are capped by individual roofs and separated by landscaped courtyards. Roofs should be simple forms without elaborate articulation, with wide eaves plus gentle pitches to minimise height and scale of each building. Use extensive windows and shady verandahs, as well as a variety of exterior finishes and cladding, rather than expanses of plain masonry or metal sheeting.

## **Cogra Bay 3: Transit Corridor - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

This national railway corridor passes through conservation reserves close to a small river settlement.

Supported on engineered terraces and embankments, this corridor has been cleared of original vegetation, but often supports substantial concentrations of noxious or environmental weeds in proximity to national parklands.

The railway provides a vantage point from which to appreciate the surrounding landscape settings of national parks and the River.

### **Cogra Bay 3: Transit Corridor - Desired**

#### **Desired Character**

This should remain a primary regional and state transit link, where future infrastructure works protect the natural scenic qualities of prominent backdrops to the River and to Gosford City's tourist and commuter routes, as well as incorporating improved standards of scenic-and-urban design quality.

Protect natural and scenic features of surrounding bushland and associated value to Aboriginal culture. Contour any required cuttings and embankments so that they would complement natural landforms and revegetate cleared areas in order to recreate indigenous plant communities. Avoid introduced plant species that would alter the existing natural landscape character, and remove all noxious or environmental weeds.

Complement the natural and scenic qualities of surrounding bushland and emphasise landscape features that identify each locale. Design and construction of new engineered structures should minimise environmental impacts as well as protecting Aboriginal heritage. Major works, such as bridges, cuttings and soundwalls, should introduce signature elements that identify each landscape setting rather than relying upon proprietary or generic designs.

Rehabilitate disturbed areas upon completion of engineered works by re-contouring landforms to complement the form and character of surrounding natural landscapes. Stabilise watercourses and stream banks to prevent excessive erosion, and design containment ponds to prevent any discharges that might compromise water quality within the surrounding catchment. Revegetate all areas that have been disturbed, and restore natural plant communities along frontages to the transit ways.

