

DECEMBER 2013

For exhibition with Draft Masterplan



GRAND
PACIFIC WALK

VISION REPORT

a proposed
shared pathway
connecting our coast
from the Royal National Park
to Lake Illawarra



www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/grandpacificwalk

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THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK VISION REPORT

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The coastal route from Wollongong to southern Sydney is one of the most scenic in the world. Recently, the magnificent quality of this route has been highlighted by the launch of the 'Grand Pacific Drive' (GPD) and promoted both locally and internationally. The focus of the GPD has been travel by car, with the delights of that mode of travel, particularly on the sweeping bends of the Seacliff Bridge, accentuated in advertising and information about the route.

In drawing the community's attention to the route and that travel mode, the stark contrast of infrastructure provision for vehicles in comparison to that provided for pedestrians and cyclists has also been brought to the fore, particularly between Stanwell Park and Coalcliff.

Building on the momentum of the GPD, Council endorsed the creation of the Grand Pacific Walk (GPW) in 2012, following the GPD route from the Royal National Park through Wollongong CBD, and on to Lake Illawarra.

SCOPE

The coastline of the Wollongong LGA creates a linear north-south corridor comprised of a series of villages, small to medium commercial areas, and the Wollongong CBD. The vision of the GPW project is to create a safe route for both pedestrians and cyclists for the entire 60km length, taking advantage of the numerous spectacular outlooks and areas of high scenic quality.

In addition, facilities are proposed to be provided at regular intervals including bicycle parking, car parking, rest areas, viewing areas, water and guidance to local attractions and cafes. The nominated route will form a pedestrian and cyclist spine that will ultimately link the coastal villages and towns, the Wollongong CBD, and the inter-suburban bicycle routes of the Wollongong Bike Plan.

BENEFITS OF THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK

The currently available infrastructure is variable from non-existent or narrow access ways adjacent to the road, to the high quality facilities provided in Wollongong City's Blue Mile which include full width shareways, seating, shelter, water and food outlets, and beach facilities.

Developing the GPW has the potential to deliver benefits in health and wellbeing for the community, environmental benefits through the provision of an alternative transport mode, and improvements in facilities for both the local community and visitors

Once complete, the GPW will benefit these communities by:

- Improving connections between communities
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles
- Creating tourism and economic benefits
- Providing alternative transport routes
- Reducing the environmental and health impacts of motorised transport
- Improving the environmental condition of sections of the coastal zone.

The development of the Grand Pacific Walk project will also allow the coordination and realisation of state and regional cycle / pedestrian route planning aspirations. It will allow key stakeholders to make informed decisions in relation to route confirmation, necessary supporting infrastructure, approvals, and budget allocations. Importantly it will provide a realistic, costed concept plan that can be used repeatedly to make the proposal clear to stakeholders, excite interest, and allow the pursuit of funding opportunities.

PROJECT APPROACH

The GPW project is being developed in two parallel actions:

1. THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK MASTERPLAN –

Royal National Park to Lake Illawarra

The masterplan includes the development of the following:

- an overview masterplan that establishes a unified design approach
- typical design solutions for the provision of adequate width and separation from vehicles
- unique graphic style and documentation for community consultation, signage, and communication with government authorities
- the definition of necessary upgrade works along the route such as seating, viewing areas and way-finding signage.

2. THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK STAGE ONE IMPLEMENTATION–

Station Street Stanwell Park to Paterson Road Coalcliff.

This section of the GPW is considered a high priority by Council due to the steep and sometimes unstable land, narrow roads and a lack of provisions for pedestrians and cyclists. As detailed later in this report, design development is proceeding with both an overall costed concept plan for the entire segment, and detailed design for the Stoney Creek and Coalcliff Station area.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Grand Pacific Walk links into the community and Council's goals as part of the Wollongong 2022: Community Strategic Plan. It helps to achieve the goals of creating a 'healthy community in a liveable city', and having 'sustainable, affordable and accessible transport'. The project also addresses Council's Delivery Program 2012-17 goal to 'improve the connectivity of the Local Government Area through the upgrade of our network of footpaths and cycleways'.

STAKEHOLDERS

The primary external stakeholder in this project is NSW Roads & Maritime Service (RMS) as the approval authority and landowner. The project is of great interest to the local community however, and Council has adopted a Communication Strategy to keep the broader public updated during the development of both the GPW Masterplan and the Stage One design. This communication has been of particular importance in the Coalcliff area due to the physical constraints of the road reserve and its proximity to dwellings.

Other external stakeholders include:

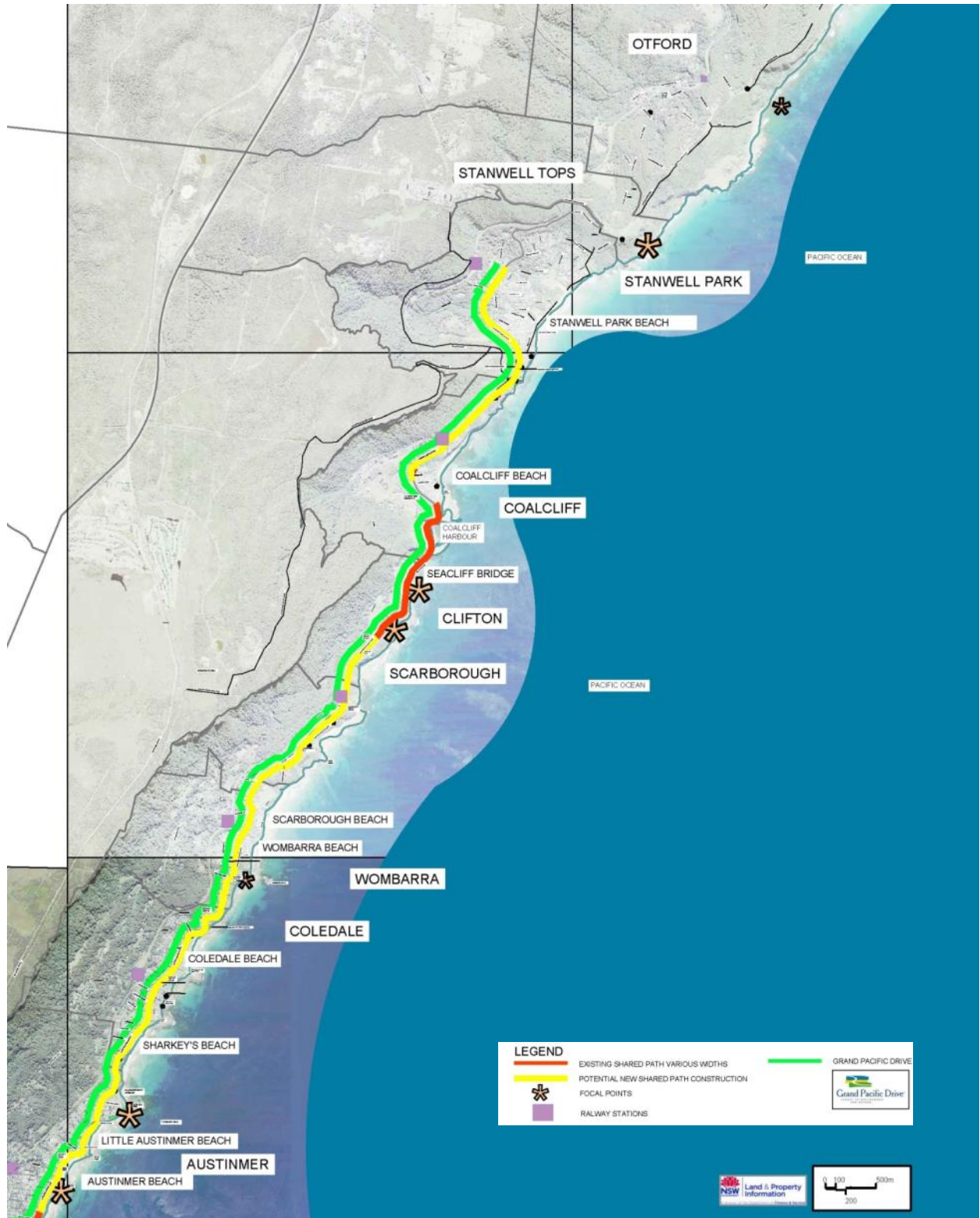
- Aboriginal Reference Group
- WCC Access Committee
- Healthy Cities Illawarra
- Illawarra Bicycles User Group (iBUG)
- Illawarra Forum
- Local bus companies, City Rail and NSW State Transport
- Federal, state, and local politicians
- Local primary and high schools; preschools
- Neighbourhood and Community centres
- Neighbourhood Forums
- Parents and Citizens Association
- State organisations e.g. Bicycle NSW, Cycling NSW
- Tourism Wollongong
- National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Internal stakeholders include WCC Project Delivery, Infrastructure Strategy and Planning, Engagement, and Property and Recreation.

The following pages outline the overall route of the Grand Pacific Walk from the Royal National Park to Lake Illawarra, details of site investigations, and an explanation of the different design components of the draft Masterplan. This is followed by the Stage One planning documents.

THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK ROUTE

Northern Section – Royal National Park to Thirroul



The Grand Pacific Walk northern section is one of the more spectacular parts of our coastline. The steep slopes of the escarpment adjoin the narrow coastal strip, creating panoramic views of the land and sea. This is the most challenging section of this project. The route follows the rugged landscape of the southern Royal National Park, south through the popular Bald Hill lookout, down the coast to the Sea Cliff Bridge, and on to Austinmer.

Current provisions for pedestrians and cyclists are very limited in this section. Between the National Park and Coalcliff, the topography and scarcity of level land is a significant constraint. The portion of this section from Stanwell Park to Coalcliff will form Stage One of the GPW implementation plan, as detailed later in this report.



Otford lookout



Lady Wakehurst Drive Otford



Sea Cliff Bridge Coalcliff



Imperial Hotel Clifton



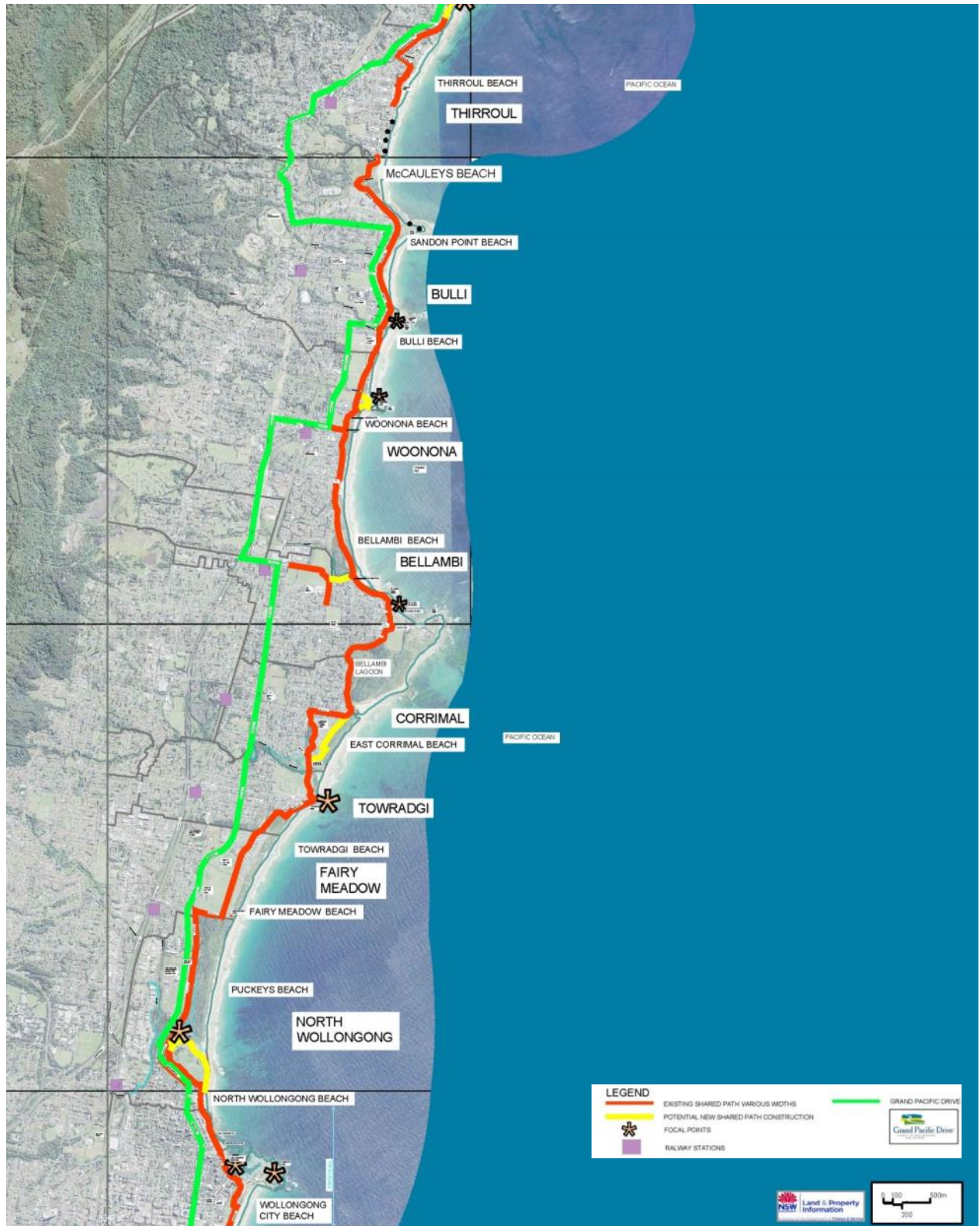
Coledale north of camping reserve



Kennedy's Hill Austinmer

THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK ROUTE

Central Section – Thirroul to Wollongong



In the Grand Pacific Walk Central section the coastal plain gradually widens as the steep slopes of the escarpment angle towards the west, still providing a spectacular backdrop to the sweeping views of the coastline. Beaches, cafes, and two stand-out regional playgrounds (Thirroul and Towradgi) are some of the attractions along this leg of the shared pathway, which will link up with existing widened footways and paths. As much of the shareway already exists in this section, the GPW project will focus on improvements to facilities, replacement of aging infrastructure, signage, and safety improvements.

Further south the GPW links up with the popular 'Blue Mile' shareway with its first class facilities, North and City Beaches, and the newly refurbished North Beach Bathers Pavilion.



Thirroul Beach Reserve playground



Hamilton Road Thirroul



Hewitts Creek bridge Thirroul



Near Waniora Point Bulli



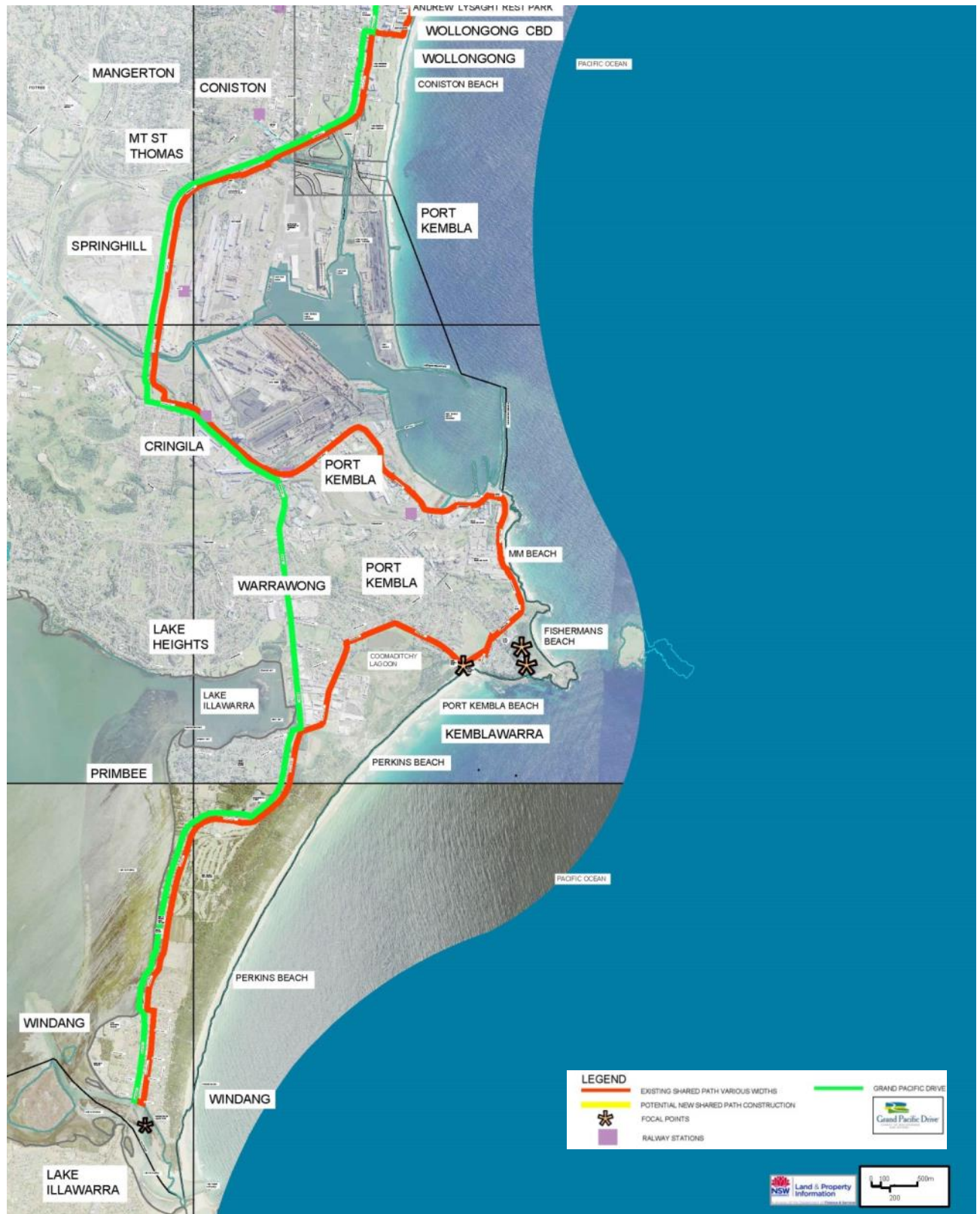
Bellambi Pool Reserve



Squires Way North Wollongong

THE GRAND PACIFIC WALK ROUTE

Southern Section – Wollongong to Lake Illawarra



The Grand Pacific Walk Southern section is one of contrasts. The route leaves the CBD and the Blue Mile behind, passes the WIN Entertainment Centre and Stadium, and leads to the remarkable industrial landscape of Port Kembla. The port itself provides a sweeping view to the north, before following the existing shareway south past the rocky shoreline of MM Beach, Hill 60, and the spectacular crescent of sand at Port Kembla beach.

The route then leads out of the commercial zone of Warrawong, and with glimpses of Lake Illawarra and the mountains to the west, down to the beaches, bridge, and the lake proper at Windang.



North Beach



Brighton Lawn



Spring Hill Road Spring Hill (near Port Kembla)



Five Islands Road Port Kembla

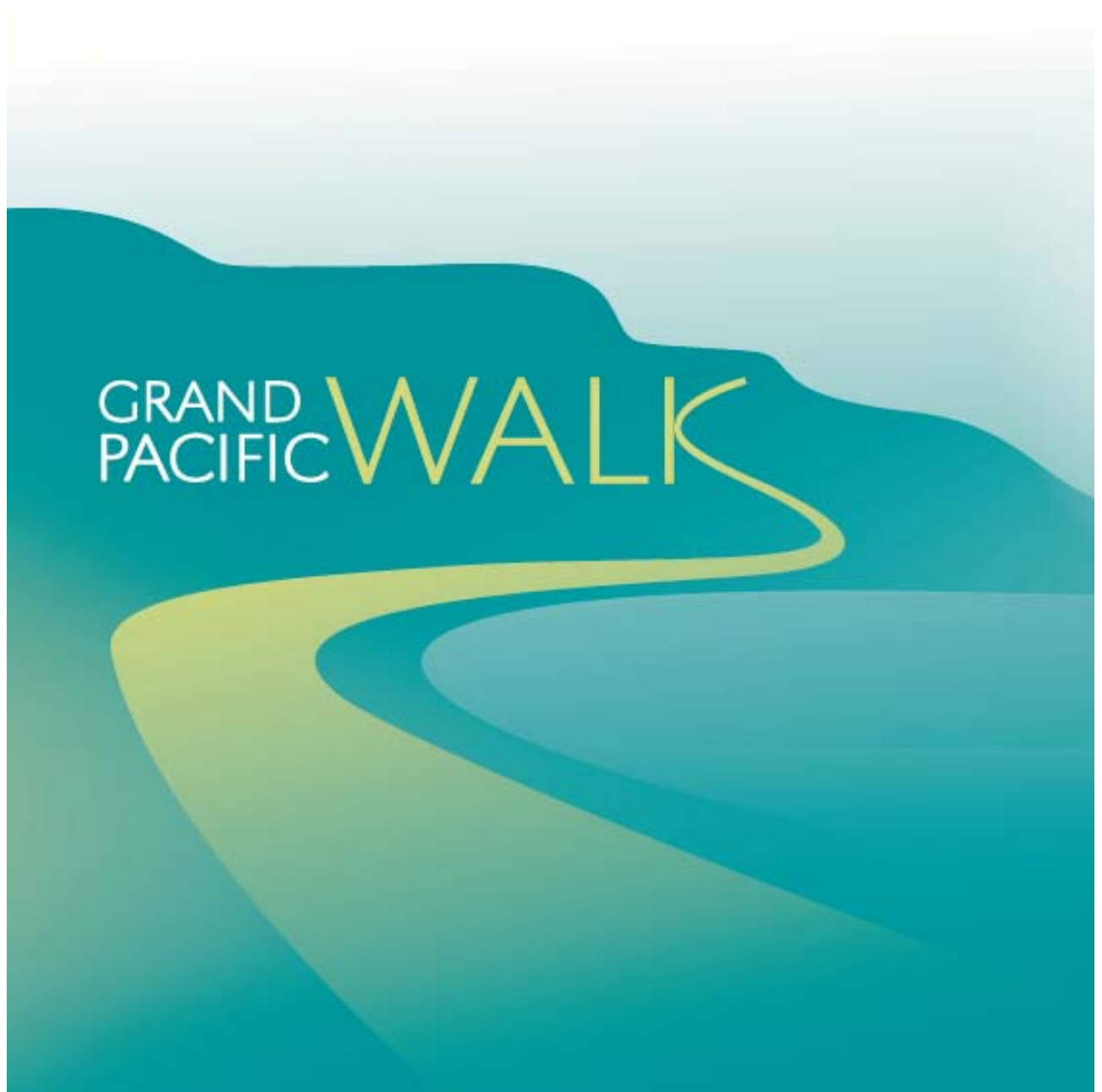


Port Kembla Beach



Windang near Windang Tourist Park

ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE



ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE

SITE ANALYSIS



Extract from Sheet 5 of the GPW Site Analysis

The Grand Pacific Walk route was investigated on the ground with site visits by car, walking, and cycling the entire route. This was combined with desktop data collection, and community and stakeholder input. The results have been collated into an 18 sheet analysis plan set and formed the basis of all design proposals in the draft Masterplan.

Existing conditions, issues, and features noted on the analysis set included:

- Adequacy of existing walk and shareways
- Gaps in the network
- Viewing areas and focal points
- Toilets and carparks
- End of trip facilities
- Playgrounds
- Food outlets.

The Site Analysis documentation is detailed on 18 plans showing the entire route from the Royal National Park to Lake Illawarra. These plans are compiled in **Attachment A** of the Grand Pacific Walk Draft Masterplan documentation.

ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Development of the Grand Pacific Walk Masterplan and Stage One Engagement Strategy commenced in January 2013 with a focus group and workshop to engage with key external stakeholders. The formal exhibition period for the draft GPW Masterplan and Stage One was from 18 February to 18 March 2013. Six community kiosks were held to discuss the proposals and collect community feedback. A community feedback form was also developed for community members to make suggestions to be included in the planning process and to highlight any issues or concerns.

During the exhibition period, over 250 community members were engaged and 88 submissions were received. Of those submissions, 47 respondents used Council's feedback form or were in the form of open submissions (letters or emails) and 41 submissions were received as on-line feedback forms. In total four group submissions were received. The general consensus, from conversation with the community and from written feedback, was that the community fully supported the share path proposed in Stage One.

A number of recurring themes were identified during the engagement process, such as:

- Signage needed to emphasise local history, directions, landmarks, flora and fauna
- Easy access to amenities, bubblers, seating, shade and parking
- Separation of pedestrians and cyclists where possible to allow both to enjoy the path
- Safety with respect to guard rails, lighting, and separation from vehicles
- Consider property owners regarding driveways, access, and parking
- Promote local businesses and encourage local economic development
- Attract tourists and visitors
- Provide safe access to villages and schools by foot and on bicycles
- Concern that the project will not be completed and / or will be poorly maintained
- High expectations for a short time frame.

The Engagement Strategy is planned to continue with the exhibition of the draft Masterplan and Stage One implementation plans in the form of update meetings, media releases, community events, and dissemination of information on the Grand Pacific Walk web page on council's website.

Refer to **Attachment B – GPW Background Reports** for the full report.

ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

Council commissioned AECOM Australia Pty Ltd to carry out pedestrian and bicycle count surveys at 30 key locations on the existing and future shared pathway network between the Royal National Park and Lake Illawarra. A demand analysis assessment was also requested for the Stage One section of the route.



As there was no existing rigorous survey data on Council's records for our shared pathway network, it was considered vital for future GPW planning that both a snapshot of usage be gathered, and an analysis of potential demand for the northern area, including Stage One, assuming the gaps in the network were filled. The data collected was also used in the preparation of the latest Wollongong Bike Plan.

Existing Demand

Surveys were carried out over two days on Saturday 18 May (10am to 2pm) and Wednesday 22 May 2013 (6am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm).

Pedestrians were the highest absolute number of users (9,025) with three sites recording well over 1,000 persons – City Beach viewing area, Nicholson Park Woonona, and North Wollongong Surfclub carpark. 6,495 cyclists were recorded in the corridor with the top two sites being Nicholson Park Woonona and Squires Way adjacent to Stuart Park.

Demand Analysis Stage One Section

Relevant Australian and international literature was reviewed to complement the demand analysis. The report predicts an over 50% increase in use over 20 years north of Sea Cliff Bridge, and over 90% increase between Austinmer and Sea Cliff Bridge if the shareway links were constructed.

Refer to **Attachment B – GPW Background Reports** for the full report.

ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE

STAGE ONE SAFETY AUDIT

The Stage One segment of the GPW is between Stoney Creek Coalcliff and Station Street in Stanwell Park. The design for this part of the GPW route is being developed, and costing for works in this area are predicted to be relatively high due to the physical challenges inherent in this part of the route.



In order to ensure that all safety issues are considered in this northern part of the GPW, including the Stage One segment, Council commissioned Bitzios Consulting to undertake an Existing Road Safety Audit from Austinmer to Otford. The road safety audit was undertaken in accordance with the procedures set out in the Austroads – Road Safety Audit (2009) Manual.

In all, 43 items were identified, mapped and ranked in accordance with the Austroads risk assessment matrix, with a suggested treatment proposed in each instance. The key safety issues included:

- Road alignment and sight distance hazards
- Uneven and narrow footways
- Non-existent footways
- Roadside hazards
- Non-standard gutter and drainage grates.

This report provided confirmation of the need to address this part of the GPW as a priority. As the safety issues recorded were on RMS controlled road, the report has been forwarded to them for consideration.

Refer to **Attachment B – GPW Background Reports** for the full report.

ROUTE INVESTIGATION PHASE

ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In order to assess the potential economic impact of the construction of the Grand Pacific Walk and its associated facilities, Council commissioned the University of Wollongong's Centre for Small Business and Regional Research to model the likely economic benefits in an Economic Impact Assessment.

Benefits were calculated for the initial construction phase, and the ongoing operational (or usage) phase. The construction phase was assumed to be a cumulative period of two years (although likely to be much longer with interruptions). The forecast of ongoing economic impacts is based on an assumption that the GPW would provide an opportunity to convert 'passive drive-by tourism' associated with the Grand Pacific Drive into tangible tourist expenditure in the local economy that would have both direct and flow-on effects.

The results of the report's analysis estimate that the GPW would produce a combined benefit to the local economy of up to \$45.3M over the construction phase. Including direct, indirect, and induced effects, the report forecasts approximately 113 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs sustained during construction, and between 16 and 162 jobs sustained during a typical year of operation.

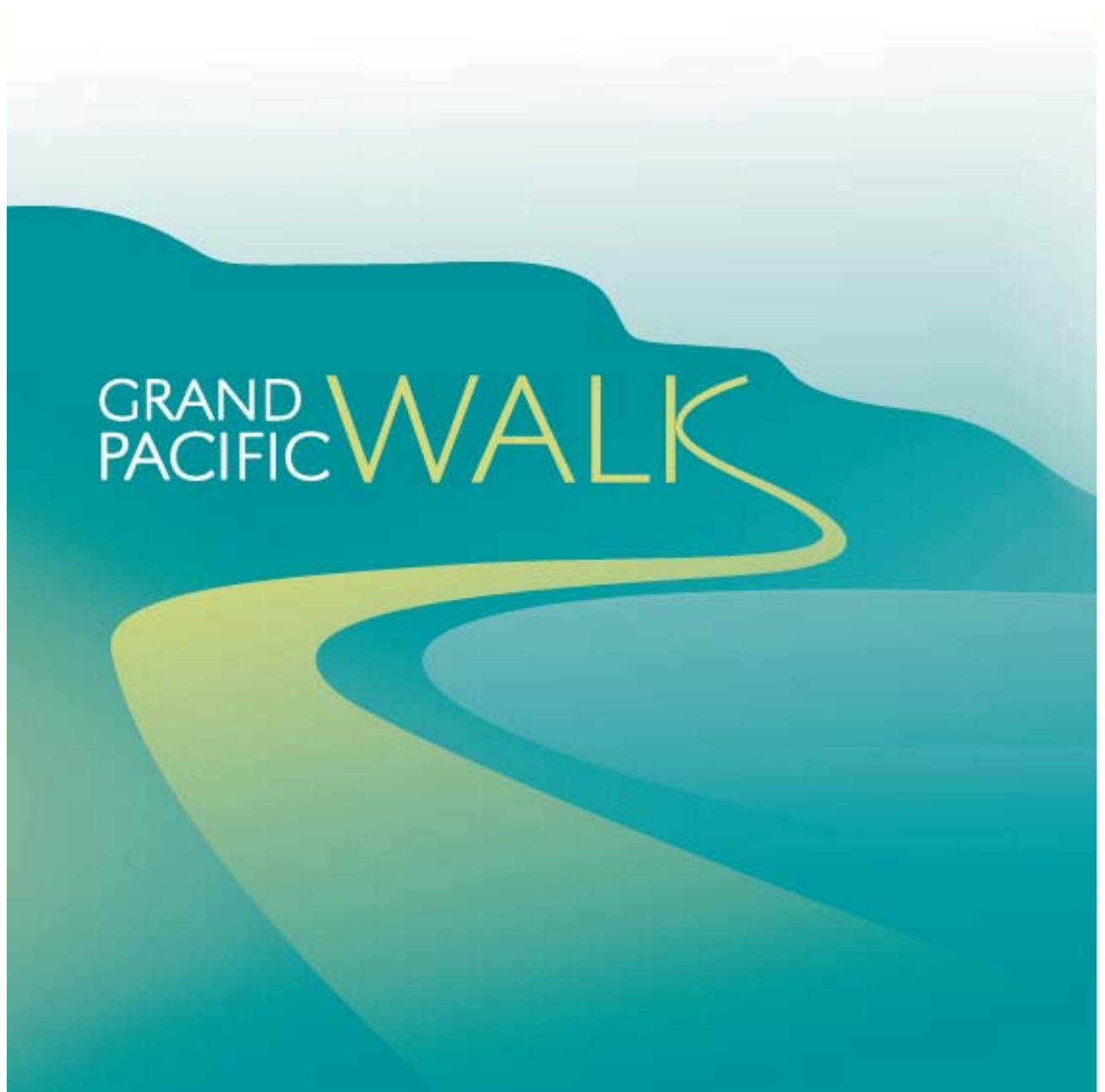
The considered range of tourism expenditure scenarios suggested annual increases of between \$2.8M and \$28.3M in gross output across the economy. There were also significant indirect economic development benefits that would accrue to the region from the development of a world class piece of recreation and tourism infrastructure, potentially further enhancing the image of Wollongong as a place to visit and live.

The report signals a clear potential for the GPW to have significant one-off and on-going economic benefits. These benefits are dependant however, on several factors, including the final amount of funding, timing, and level of infrastructure provided, and the ability of the GPW to attract visitors from outside the local area.

The report recommends that a detailed Tourism Opportunity Study be included in Council's masterplanning activities to best leverage the significant potential for tourism growth the GPW would provide.

Refer to **Attachment B – GPW Background Reports** for the full report.

DRAFT MASTERPLAN



GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

COMPONENTS

The Grand Pacific Walk Draft Masterplan has been developed based on the above investigation phase (Extract shown at right). Opportunities for improvements to the journey and destinations arose during this phase, and the draft Masterplan addresses these issues with a series of proposals, which include:

- Construction of the shareway where none exists and the connection of missing links.
- Widening of the existing shareway / pathway where inadequate width has been provided.
- Enhancement of viewing areas and facilities along the route at appropriate locations.
- Integration of wayfinding signage.
- Enhanced connections to the Wollongong Bike Network.
- Formalisation and / or creation of carparks adjacent to the GPW route.
- Creation of opportunities for *placemaking* to recognise the unique character of local precincts.



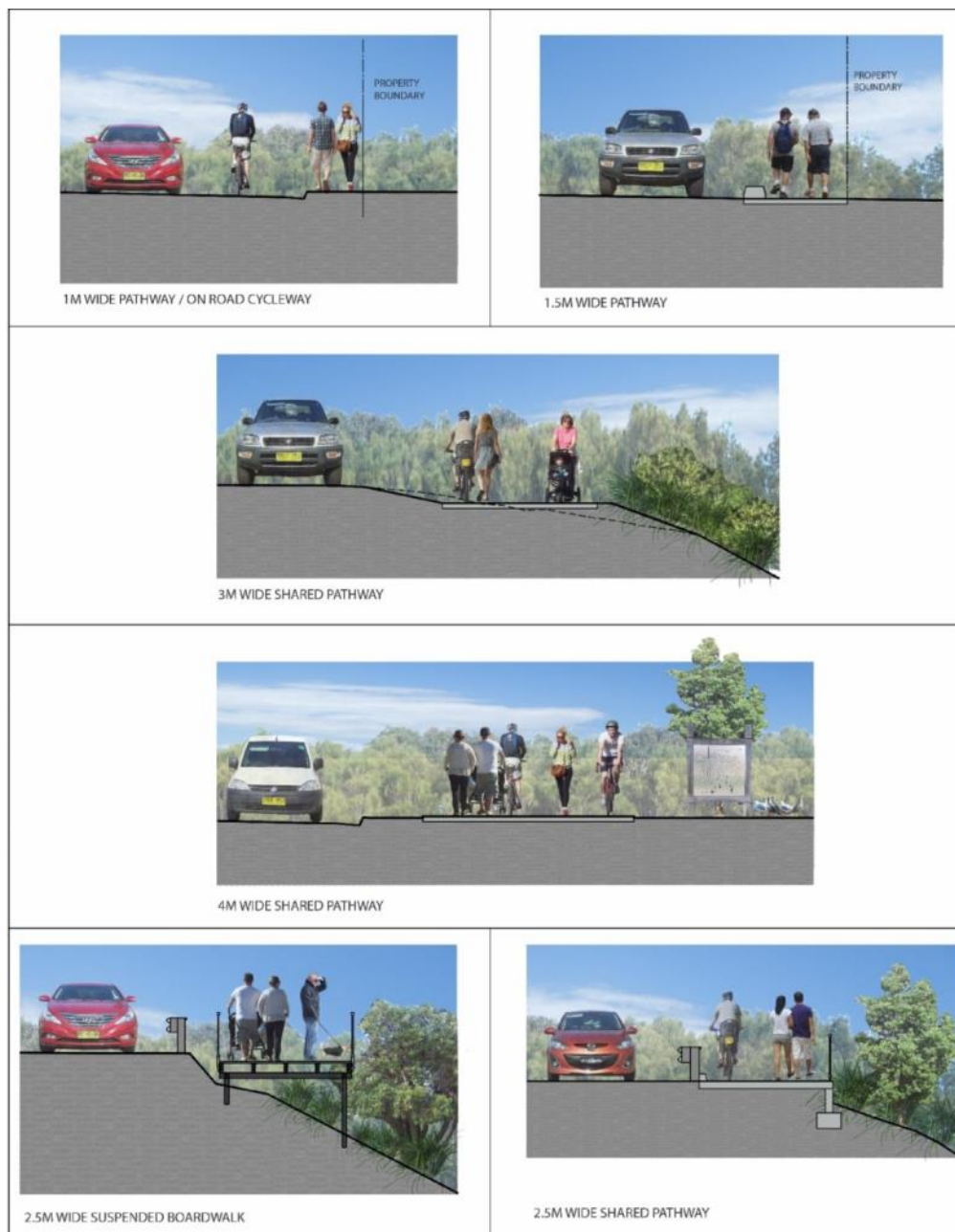
The Draft Masterplan comprises 18 sheets covering the 60km of the route, as well as graphic representations of proposed design solutions and facilities enhancement. Considering the 60km length of the route, one of the aims of the masterplan is to establish a distinctive set of robust and attractive standard designs and signage that will orient the visitor. The following pages provide more detail regarding these masterplan components.

Refer to **Attachment C – GPW Draft Masterplan** for the full set of plans.

GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

TYPICAL SHAREPATH ARRANGEMENTS

The 60kms of the Grand Pacific Walk incorporates a substantial amount of existing shareway network, however, in providing the ‘missing links’, a number of design solutions will be necessary. The page below from the draft masterplan outlines 6 different indicative design solutions that will be considered for the shareway depending on the specific nature of the location.

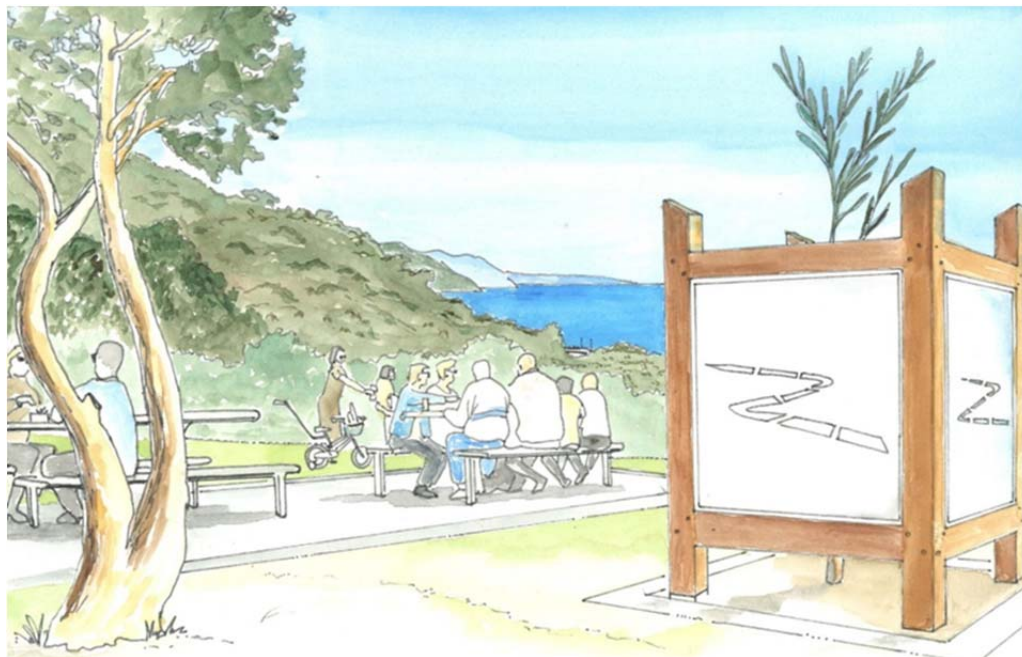
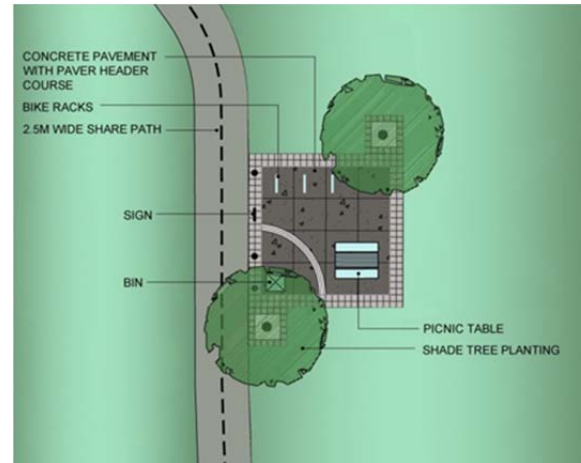


GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

PICNIC CLUSTERS

The Grand Pacific Walk route traverses some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in the country. Linking up the villages and towns of this coastal strip is an important objective of the project, however, our analysis also revealed the need for enhancement of available facilities to encourage GPW users to stop along the way and enjoy the view, or just have a rest.

The draft masterplan includes a proposal for a standard arrangement of facilities – the Picnic Cluster (typical plan shown at right, and perspective view below). This arrangement includes furniture, a garbage bin, bike rack, tree planting, signage, distinctive paving, and an opportunity for the integration of suitable artwork in the paving or tree-guard. These clusters can be enlarged or made smaller depending on location and usage, and can also provide drinking water where a water service is available.



GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

PLACEMAKING

The GPW project links a series of coastal locations, each with their own history and character. From the steep cliffs, forests and beaches of the north, to the industrial landscape of the steelworks, and the broad sweep of Lake Illawarra. The draft Masterplan proposes to create opportunities for the integration of both signage and artwork at each of the picnic cluster and viewing area locations where appropriate.



Local history and stories could be presented in various forms, drawing viewers' attention to the special nature of the particular place. There are many examples of placemaking of this sort in our local area, such as artwork, words, and historical images that have been integrated into paving, furniture, and as stand-alone pieces. This placemaking will become a long term part of the project, progressed as funding or grants become available.



The examples shown here are from Flagstaff Hill and Osborne Park Wollongong, and Mike Dwyer Reserve, Coledale.



GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

FURNITURE AND MATERIALS

The draft Masterplan incorporates a range of furniture and materials that will make facilities at the resting points along the route consistent in appearance. The proposed range will ensure that furniture and materials used along the route are robust, attractive, and suitable for the coastal environment.



BOLLARDS



TABLE SEAT



PICNIC TABLE SETTING



BIKE RACKS



FEATURE PAVING



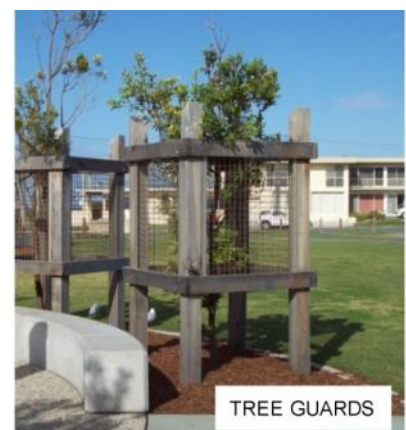
FENCE



PARK SEATS



TREE GUARDS



TREE GUARDS

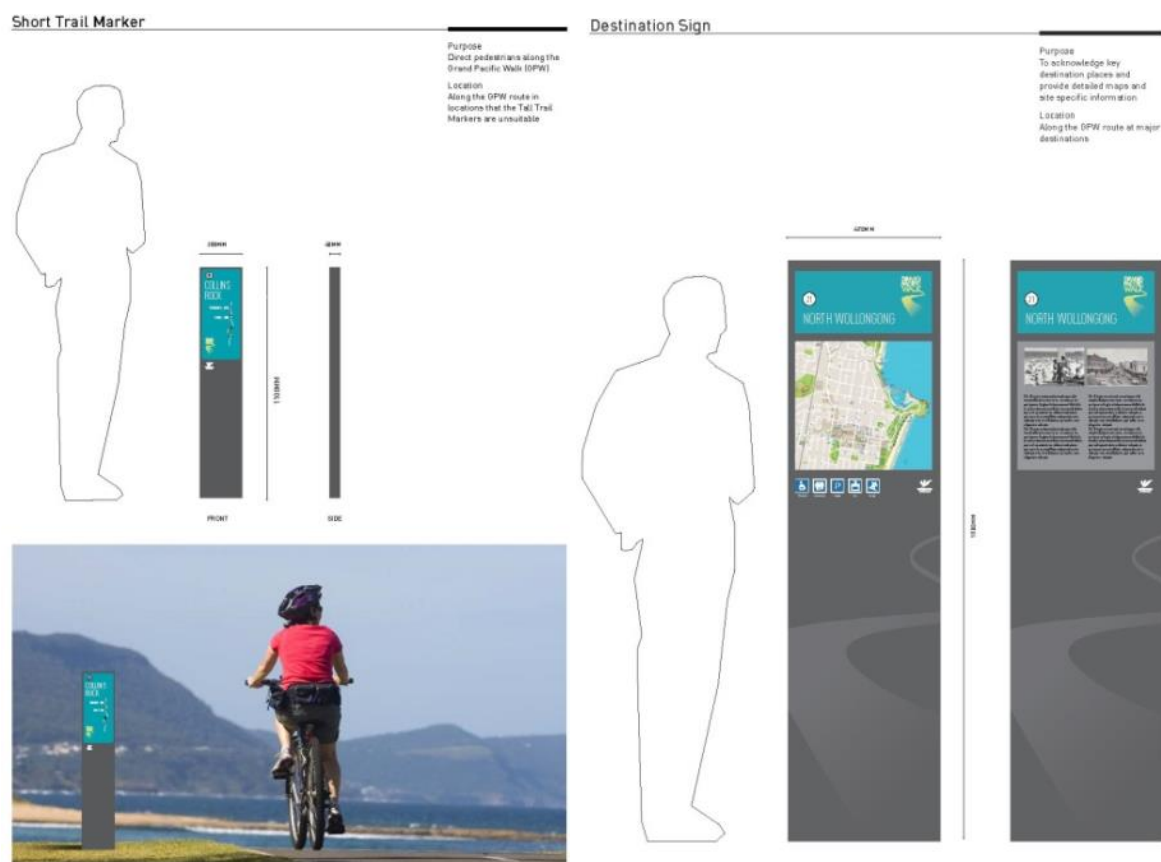
GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

SIGNAGE STRATEGY

An important part of the project is not only to provide safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists, but also to provide them with necessary way-finding signage along the route. The GPW Signage Strategy is intended to provide this information in a consistent format and appearance.

Directional maps, distance markers, and site specific information will be incorporated into a 'family' of different types of signs depending on the requirements of each site. Consistent colours, font sizes, and construction materials will help to guide people along the walk. It is expected that the Tall Trail Markers will be the most common type of sign, used at regular intervals, largely to define the route and provide distances travelled.

Below are two extracts from the GPW signage strategy. The full document can be reviewed in **Attachment B – GPW Background Reports**.

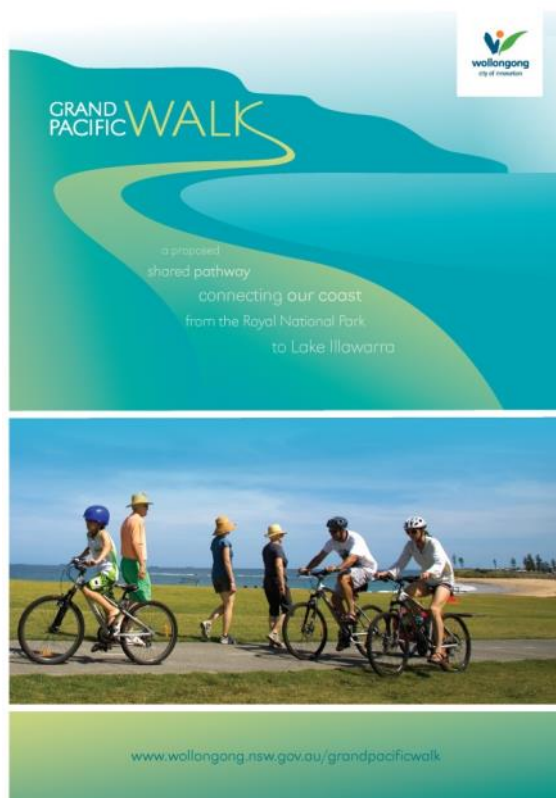


GRAND PACIFIC WALK DRAFT MASTERPLAN

MARKETING MATERIAL

The Grand Pacific Walk will be a long term project that will provide benefit to the community for many years. In order to facilitate updates and communication about the project, and to provide high quality documents to address funding opportunities, a set of promotional material, maps, and logos has been produced.

Below are several examples of this material, the project web page, logo, and two extracts from the project brochure.



STAGE ONE IMPLEMENTATION



Lawrence Hargrave Drive
Stanwell Park



GRAND
PACIFIC WALK

GRAND PACIFIC WALK STAGE ONE

Since the project's inception, the highest priority for Council has been to focus on the part of the route from the Sea Cliff Bridge to Station Street in Stanwell Park. North of Paterson Road, the route has significant topographical challenges, narrow roads, and virtually no safe space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Council's approach has been to firstly develop a costed concept plan for the whole route, then develop more detailed designs for the Stoney Creek Bridge location and at Coalcliff Station. Extracts of these plans are detailed below, and the entire set of plans can be found in **Attachment D – the GPW Vision Stage One Implementation** set.



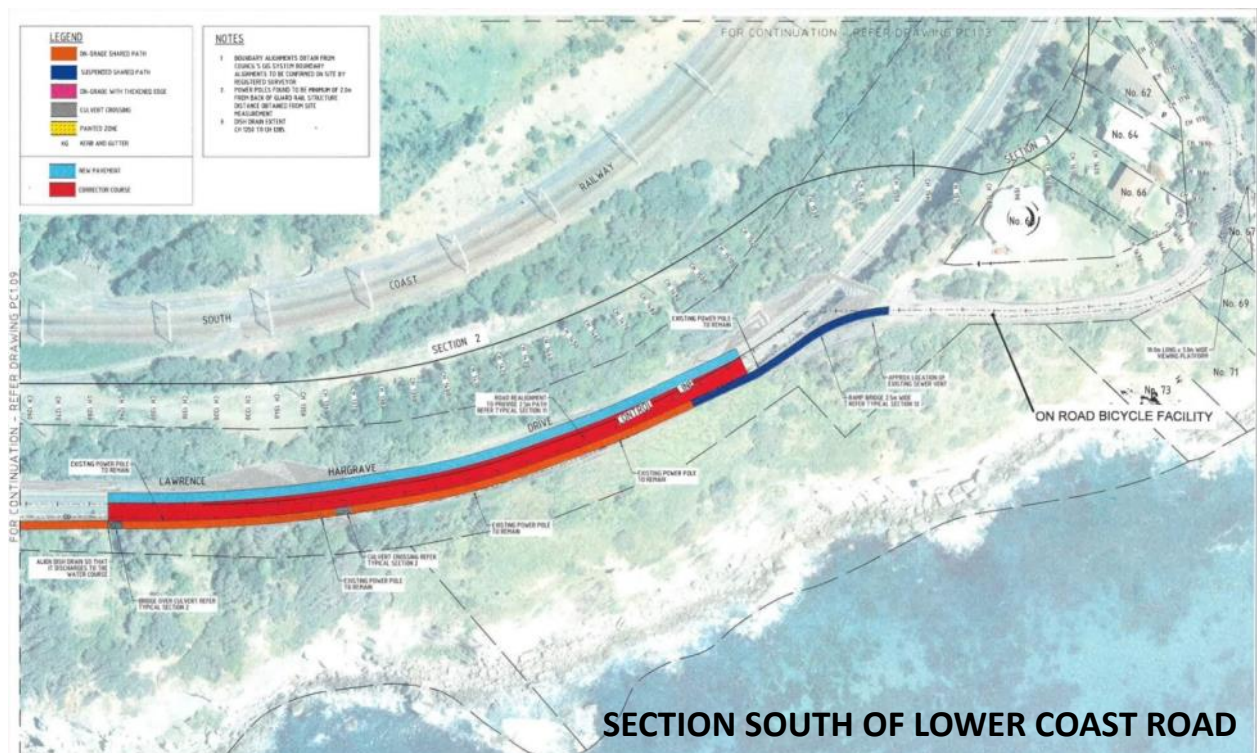
GPW Vision - Project Report V3.0

STAGE ONE COSTED CONCEPT PLAN

A detailed costed concept plan has been completed from Stoney Creek Bridge Coalcliff to Station Street in Stanwell Park showing a new shareway alignment on the eastern side of Lawrence Hargrave Drive. This includes sections of on-ground shareway, elevated portions, on-street linemarking, and a new connection from the southern end of Lower Coast Road to Lawrence Hargrave Drive.



The two photographs on this page show typical sections of road along this segment, with virtually no space for pedestrians or cyclists. The plan below is an extract from the Stage One costed concept plan, just south of Lower Coast Road.



STONEY CREEK COALCLIFF, SHAREWAY BRIDGE

Through the development of the Masterplan and the related consultation, the need for a shareway bridge next to the existing road bridge at this location was identified. Tender documentation has been completed and the construction of the bridge is programmed to commence in the first half of 2014.

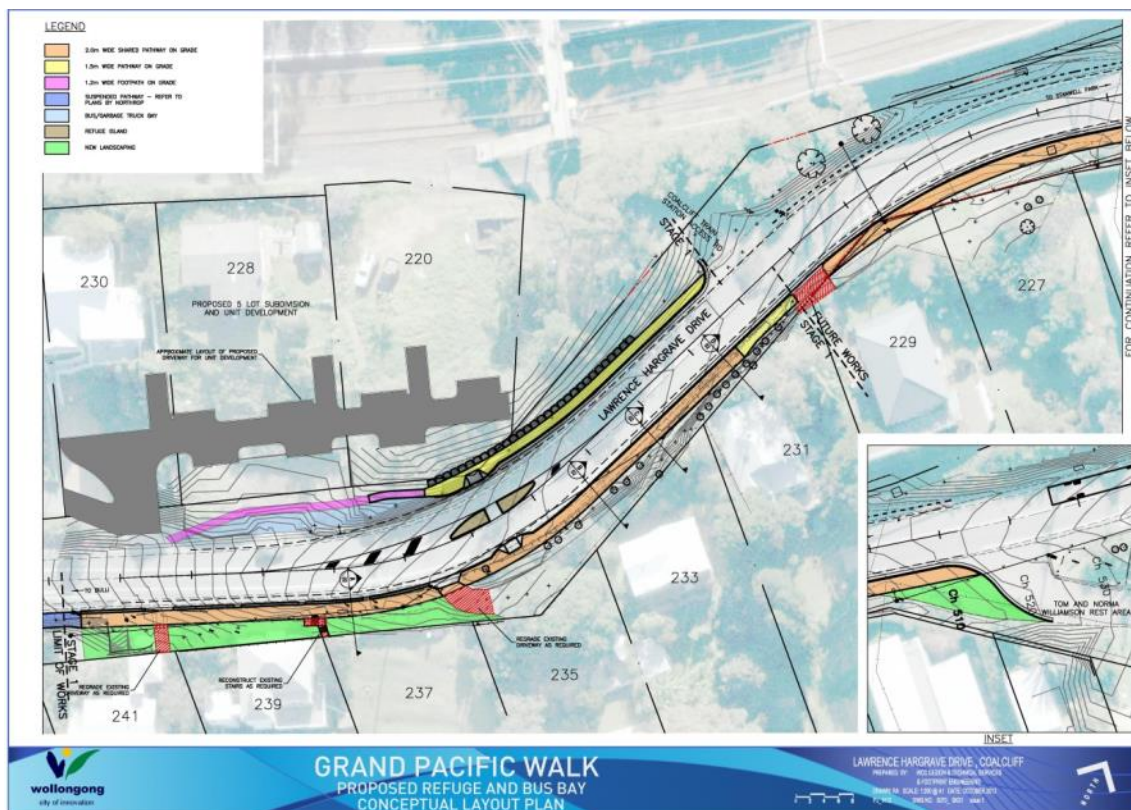
The two images below show the existing bridge on Lawrence Hargrave Drive, and what the proposed shareway bridge addition may look like.



COALCLIFF STATION PRECINCT UPGRADE

Providing safe access for pedestrians and cyclists in the area of Coalcliff Station is particularly challenging due to the constraints of the topography and width of the road reserve. The need for safer pedestrian crossing facilities, a new bus bay, and adequate width for the GPW shareway alignment on the east side of Lawrence Hargrave Drive became clear during the consultation phase. A concept solution has been developed and is in the final stages of design development. NSW Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) has been an enthusiastic funding partner in this proposal and the project is programmed to proceed in the current financial year with their assistance.

The adjacent stages of the route northward to Stanwell Park are planned for design and construction as sufficient budgets are available.



GRAND PACIFIC WALK – LOOKING AHEAD

The Grand Pacific Walk is a long-term project that Council, with the community, will be working towards in stages over the coming years.

To stay up to date on the progress of the GPW, visit our website at www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/grandpacificwalk or call us on (02) 4227 7111.



Phone 02 4227 7111 **Email** grandpacificwalk@wollongong.nsw.gov.au **Web** www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/grandpacificwalk

This project is linked to goals outlined in Wollongong 2022.