

Glamorgan Spring
Bay Council
Swansea Structure Plan

Draft for consultation | May 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

ERA Planning and Environment acknowledges palawa as the Traditional Owners of lutruwita (Tasmania).

They are the original custodians of our land, sky and waters. We respect their unique ability to care for country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour and pay our respect to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom has and will ensure the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded.

Always was, always will be.

ERA Planning Pty Ltd trading as ERA Planning and Environment

Cover image credit: Samuel Shelley

ABN 67 141 991 004

This document may only be used for the purposes for which it was commissioned and in accordance with the Terms of Engagement for the commission. Unauthorised use of this document in any form whatsoever is prohibited.



Contents

2	Acknowledgement of Country	25	Section 5: Strategic context
5	How to get involved	25	Drivers of change
		25	A changing and unpredictable climate
		26	A homogenous housing profile
		26	Major developments
		27	An increasingly ageing population
		27	Exponential tourism growth
		28	Opportunities and challenges
		31	Section 6: The Swansea structure plan
		31	What is the plan?
		31	Planning principles
		32	Land use directions
		36	Supporting actions
		40	Next steps and implementation
6	Section 1: Introduction		
6	About the project		
6	The process		
8	What is a structure plan?		
9	Policy context		
11	Section 2: About Swansea		
12	Population profile		
13	Swansea study area		
14	Section 3: Community engagement		
14	Engagement methods		
15	Engagement results		
15	Key themes		
17	Section 4: Planning for the future of Swansea		
17	Housing and accommodation		
17	Supply and demand		
18	Industry and employment		
18	Commercial and industrial land		
18	Tourism		
20	Infrastructure and connectivity		
20	Water and sewer		
21	Transport		
22	Social infrastructure and services		
22	Health and emergency services		
22	Education and recreation		
22	Environment and landscape		

The Bend Vineyard, Swansea
Source: Jasper Da Seymour

How to get involved

We are looking forward to engaging with the community on the draft Swansea Structure Plan. There are lots of ways that you can become involved and provide valuable feedback!

Community workshop

The project team will be holding a facilitated community workshop on Sunday 2nd June 2024 at the Swansea Town Hall, located at 12 Franklin Street, Swansea. The workshop will run from 9:30am to 11:30am.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Online survey

We also have an online survey to provide your feedback. The survey is anonymous and should take approximately 10 minutes.

[Click here to take the survey](#)

Contact details

If you can't attend the community workshop or would like to provide feedback via phone or email, then you can also contact the project team on (03) 6165 0443 or engagement@eraplanning.com.au

We look forward to hearing from you about this exciting project guiding Swansea's future!



SCAN HERE!

For more information about the project, scan the QR code with your mobile phone camera.

Section 1: Introduction

About the project

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council has engaged ERA Planning and Environment (ERA) to review and update existing structure plans for the main settlements in the local government area.

Structure plans for Bicheno, Swansea, Coles Bay and Triabunna/Orford were prepared between 2014 and 2016 to provide planning and development direction for the next 10 years. A review is now required to ensure the plans respond to contemporary circumstances. For example, the existing structure plans were prepared on the basis of a predicted population loss of around 7% of the population by 2042. Today, projections indicate the population is expected to increase by 11% by 2042.

Glamorgan Spring Bay is not only seeing population growth but also demographic change. With an ongoing increase in average age, and decrease in residents per household, the types of housing and services provided in the future will need to respond to support a thriving community. At the same time, the importance of the area to the Tasmanian visitor economy and its popularity as a holiday home location have increased. During the summer period there are noticeable seasonal population pressures being experienced in the Glamorgan Spring Bay area with some town services struggling to meet demand.

A separate structure plan is being prepared for each of the main townships. Each structure plan aims to:

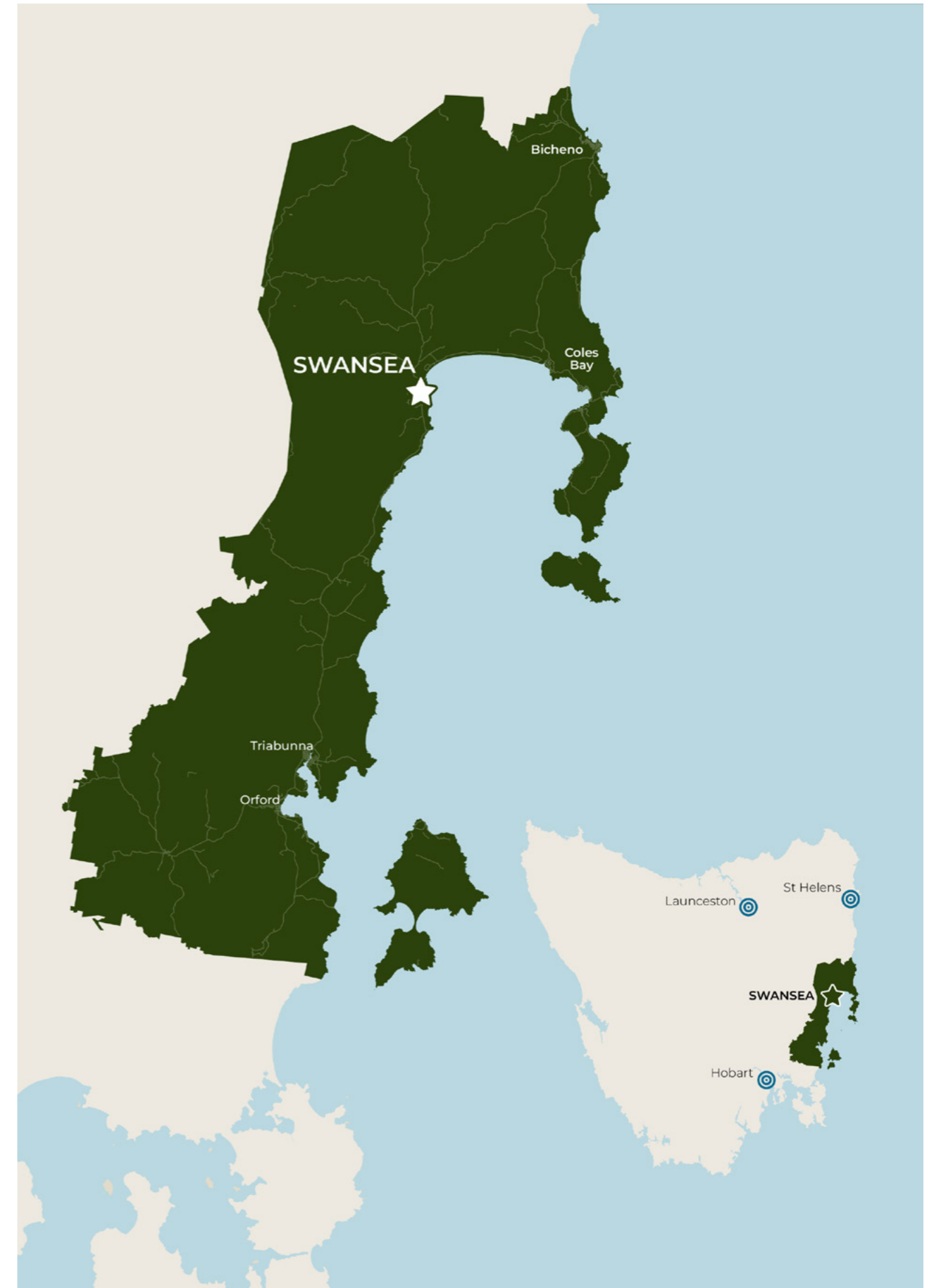
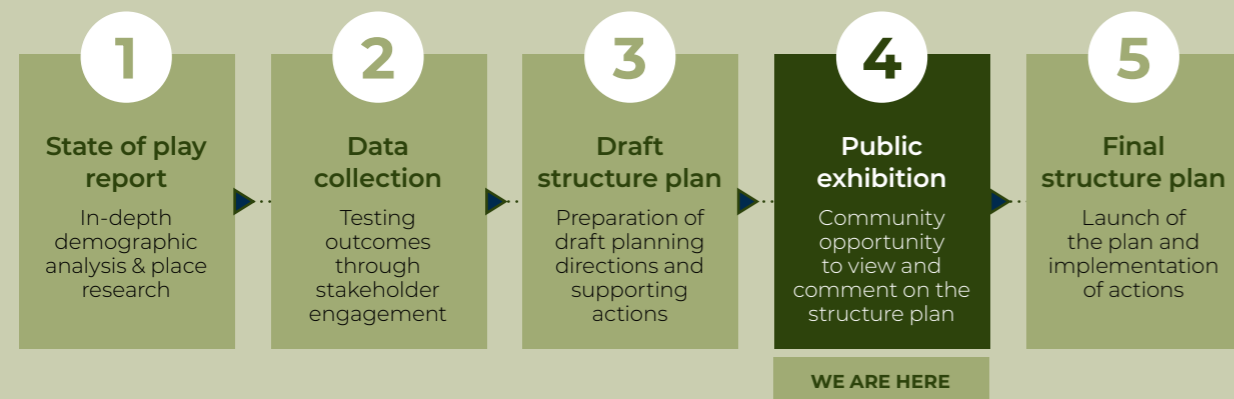
- Establish a planning framework to guide sustainable growth and economic resilience.
- Deliver growth in a way that reflects community values, enhances the qualities of the township, and creates affordable and diverse housing opportunities.
- Guide the development of a high-quality, accessible open space network that connects the community to their natural surroundings and each other.
- Create a prosperous and vibrant town centre that supports the local community and attracts greater visitation.
- Protect environmental assets and agricultural land that support key industries.

This structure plan presents a strategic planning framework to guide growth and change in Swansea over the next 10 years to 2034. It is an important tool in guiding efficient and sustainable development of the township and its surrounds and is built upon an in-depth analysis of Swansea today, including its character, strengths and challenges.

This draft plan is intended to be used to inform and facilitate further community engagement following the first round engagement on the state of play report in late 2023. It will then be updated to reflect the feedback received to ensure it provides an informed guide for how to plan for the future of Swansea.

The process

The project methodology follows five key stages:





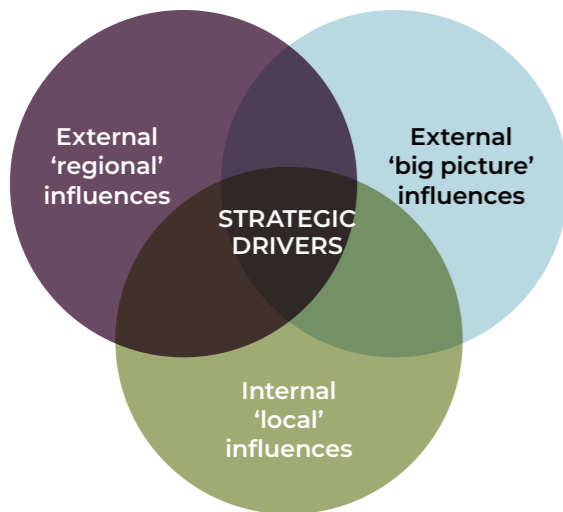
Spikey Bridge, Swansea
Source: Tourism Tasmania & Rob Burnett

What is a structure plan?

A structure plan is a strategic document used by local government to guide the planning, land use and development of a local area. It can be used to guide the application of the planning scheme through zoning, overlays and specific provisions.

A structure plan provides a tangible framework to identify priorities for the provision of growth opportunities and land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes as well as areas required to be preserved due to natural values, land hazards or other reasons.

A structure plan is used to apply higher order planning policies, such as State Policies or the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy, at a municipal and/or township scale. The scope of a structure plan can also include urban design outcomes specific to the area, supporting the desired future character.



The planning environment strategic drivers

A structure plan needs to be based on robust data and assumptions to realistically set goals for the future, having regard to potential future scenarios so that Council can effectively respond to changes that may occur. Therefore, a structure plan considers population trends, community needs, local planning context, economic drivers, development trends, and land use demand and supply.

A structure plan is not a population or economic strategy but rather seeks to manage predicted growth and change in an area, having regard to an analysis of the planning environment.

The planning environment comprises three broad components:

- **The macro, external 'big picture' environment**, which comprises the broader economic, social, technological, environmental, legislative and policy factors that influence what the structure plan needs to consider and respond to. Council has no influence over these external factors, and they include the policy settings in the Tasmanian planning system, climate change considerations, and state and federal economic and social policies.
- **The micro, external 'regional picture' environment**, which comprises the external factors that Council has capacity to influence or shape. These will include community perspectives, population projections, and regional industry and economic drivers.
- **The internal 'local' environment**, which comprises local, specific factors like land characteristics, infrastructure capacity and Council's strategic plan.

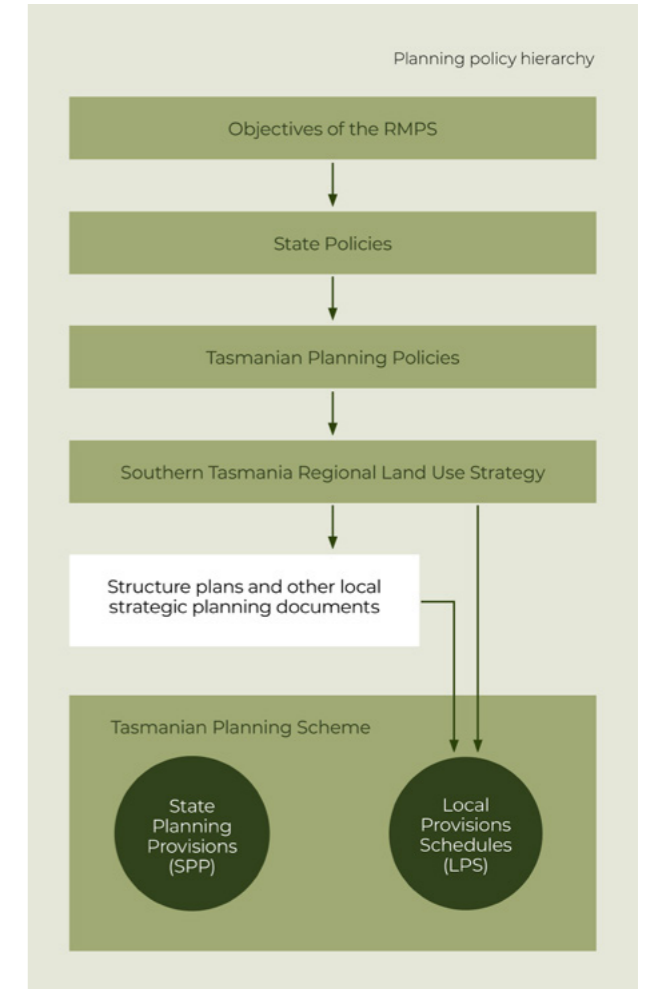
These elements of the planning environment are explored in summary in sections 4 and 5 and in more detail in the separately available state of play report.

Policy context

Land use and development in Tasmania is undertaken within the framework of a planning system known as the Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS). The RMPS comprises a suite of legislation, supported by a network of planning schemes, policies and strategies. The RMPS provides a legislative framework for decision-making to ensure the sustainable use and development of Tasmania's natural and physical resources.

Key elements in the system which have been considered when developing this structure plan include:

- **State Policies** – which are made under the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* and articulate the State's position on significant matters relating to the sustainable development of land. All decisions under the RMPS are required to be consistent with relevant State Policies. The principles and requirements of the *State Coastal Policy 1996* and the *State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land 2009* have been particularly relevant to this structure plan.
- **Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs)** – which provide strategic direction on land use planning matters relevant to decisions under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*. Draft TPPs have been prepared and are currently being reviewed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The Draft TPPs have been broadly considered in this structure plan.
- **The Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS)** – which establishes the medium- to long-term strategic direction for Southern Tasmania. The STRLUS assigns settlement strategies to towns in Southern Tasmania to prioritise growth. Under the STRLUS, Swansea is currently considered a township with a moderate growth strategy and is assigned a consolidation growth scenario that primarily focuses on infill development. The STRLUS is currently under review and this structure plan will inform that process.



Policy framework for Glamorgan Spring Bay

Structure plans are not one of the statutory instruments in the Tasmanian planning system. However, they have a key role in articulating and implementing state-level policies and the regional land use strategies at the local level; they also inform the zoning of land through the relevant Local Provisions Schedule under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. The State Planning Office has prepared structure plan guidelines which have been considered when developing this document.

Swansea Aerial
Source: Rachael Bowes



Section 2: About Swansea

Swansea is a coastal town located on Paredarmerne pungenna country, on Tasmania's East Coast. It is one of the main townships located in Glamorgan Spring Bay, along with Coles Bay, Bicheno, Orford and Triabunna, and it had a long history of Aboriginal occupation prior to colonisation.

A historical Aboriginal walk (Loontitetermairrelehoiner Track) has been developed around Waterloo Point, providing education and insights into the Aboriginal culture of the area. Other potential Aboriginal features have been identified around Swansea, and future development must respond to and respect these places.

Swansea follows a generally linear settlement pattern shaped by the prevailing road network and the coastline, providing waterfront access throughout its length, and creating visual and physical links to the water. The landscape surrounding Swansea is characterised by Great Oyster Bay to the east, offering views to Freycinet National Park. To the north, west and south, the township is bordered by agricultural land used for viticulture and grazing. Smaller communities near Swansea include Dolphin Sands to the north-east, a low-density residential area spanning Nine Mile Beach, and Cranbrook, a rural settlement to the north of Swansea servicing local agriculture.

The town centre features a range of commercial, residential and community uses, primarily located along Franklin Street, creating a somewhat fragmented town layout that lacks a clear commercial core. Although the junction of Franklin Street and Victoria Street naturally serves as a focal point, it is currently restricted due to traffic associated with the Tasman Highway passing through the town and by built form that does little to appropriately anchor key corner sites.

Swansea's strengths lie in its distinctive landscape character, comfortable living environment and natural beauty. All of these contribute to Swansea's liveability, to the wellbeing of its residents and to its visitor attraction. There are some key heritage buildings in and around the township which provide a visual connection to its history. As the region continues to grow, there are opportunities to further enhance liveability by connecting all ages of the community through the development of walking paths, visitor experiences, strengthening the commercial core, further investment in social infrastructure and support for local business.

Swansea's strengths lie in its distinctive landscape character, comfortable living environment and natural beauty.

All of these contribute to Swansea's liveability, to the wellbeing of its residents and to its visitor attraction.

Future planning is focused on driving social wellbeing for an ageing population, creating a more connected and active town centre, supporting better access to the waterfront and delivering improved community facilities.

Population profile

- Swansea's population grew by around 14% between the 2016 and 2021 Census.
- Swansea had a median age of 62 at the 2021 Census, compared to 39 for Greater Hobart and 57 for the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council area.
- Over two-thirds of households in Swansea are occupied by couples without children, and just under half of working-age residents participate in the workforce.
- These factors indicate that Swansea is home to many retired or semi-retired residents – a trend that impacts financial statistics for the area, with median weekly incomes sitting well below state and national averages.
- Swansea will be home to approximately 190 additional permanent residents by 2046, meaning more dwellings and services will be required to cater to a growing population.
- Housing and services will also need to be responsive to the needs of an older population.



14%
population
increase
between
2016-2021

62
median
age



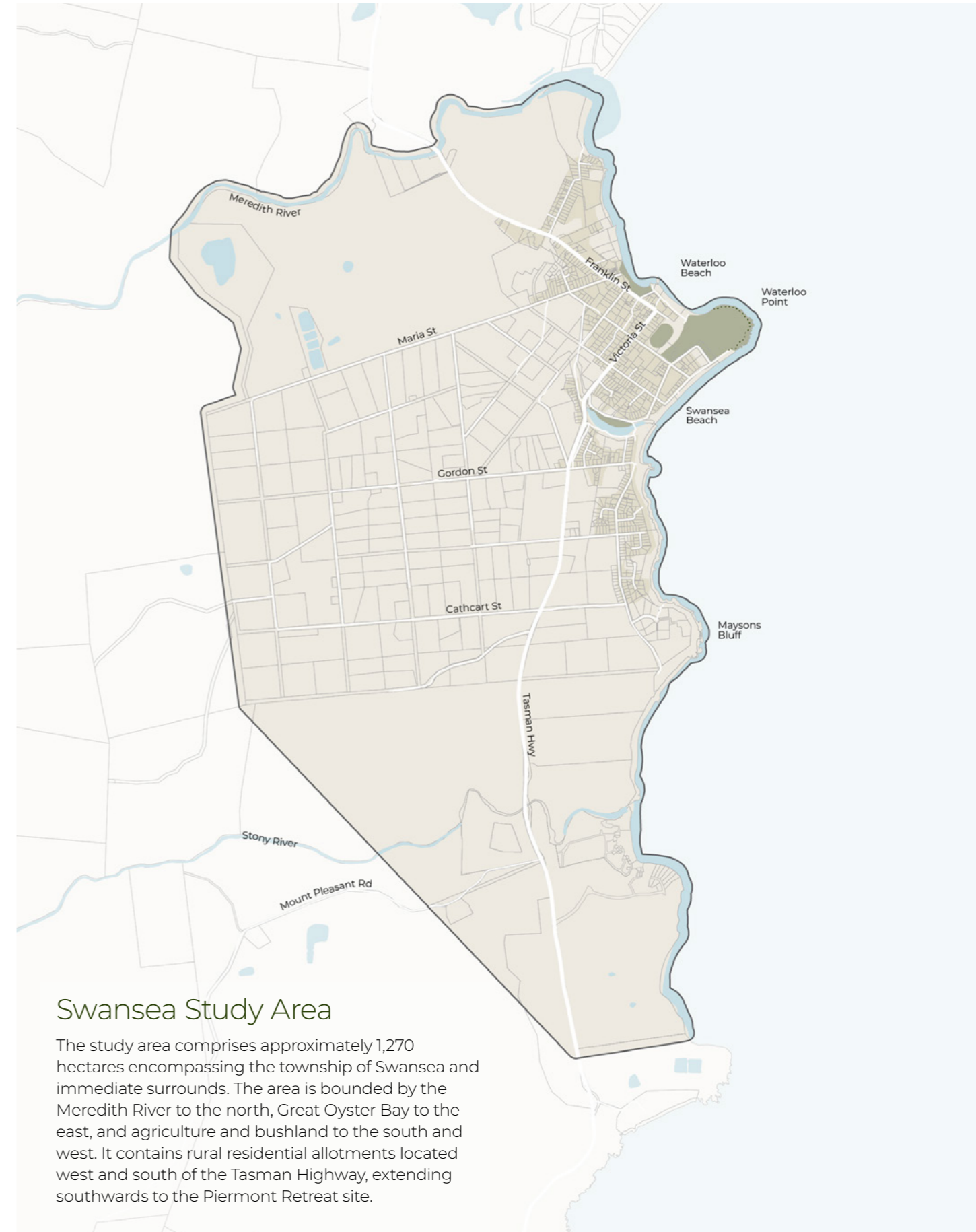
\$929
median
household
weekly income

Compared with Council average

**More homes for
older, smaller
households
are needed**



Swansea Foreshore playground
Source: Connie Steers



Swansea Study Area

The study area comprises approximately 1,270 hectares encompassing the township of Swansea and immediate surrounds. The area is bounded by the Meredith River to the north, Great Oyster Bay to the east, and agriculture and bushland to the south and west. It contains rural residential allotments located west and south of the Tasman Highway, extending southwards to the Piermont Retreat site.

Section 3: Community engagement

What makes Glamorgan Spring Bay a great place to live, work and visit?

That's what we asked the community in November 2023. More than 250 people told us what they value about the area, and what they feel is important to a bright future for Glamorgan Spring Bay.

The data collected has helped shape this structure plan and guided its directions and actions to ensure they best benefit the local community.

The process included a number of face-to-face and online engagement methods to reach a broad audience. They included:

- **Notifications:** 177 email notifications were sent to key stakeholders to notify them of the engagement process.
- **Posters:** A number of posters were placed around the LGA to advertise the online survey and drop-in sessions.

- **Social media:** Nine posts were published via Council's Facebook page during the consultation period.
- **Online survey:** 139 responses were received via the online survey.
- **Drop-in sessions:** Five drop-in sessions were held at Orford, Triabunna, Swansea, Coles Bay and Bicheno. Over 100 people attended the five sessions.
- **Meetings:** One-on-one key stakeholder meetings were held with eight local organisations, business owners and landholders.
- **Briefings:** Two in-person briefing presentations were made to local Councillors.

Engagement methods

The process included a number of face-to-face and online engagement methods to reach a broad audience. They included:



Key themes

The results of the engagement provided us with five themes that are important to the people of Glamorgan Spring Bay and have been used to guide the contents of this structure plan, including how we plan for the future of the township (Section 4).

These themes also guide how we consider Swansea's strengths and weaknesses, and look ahead to potential opportunities and challenges (Section 5).

Housing and accommodation

This theme relates to housing provision, diversity and affordability, as well as home ownership and rental availability. It also considers visitor accommodation and short-term holiday rentals.

Industry and employment

This theme considers existing and emerging industries, and future job opportunities. It also relates to commercial and retail offerings.

Infrastructure and connectivity

This theme relates to utility infrastructure provision and maintenance and infrastructure planning for growth. It also considers transport connections (private, public and active transport modes).

Social infrastructure and services

This theme considers healthcare and community services, education and arts opportunities, and recreation and sporting facilities.

Environment and landscape

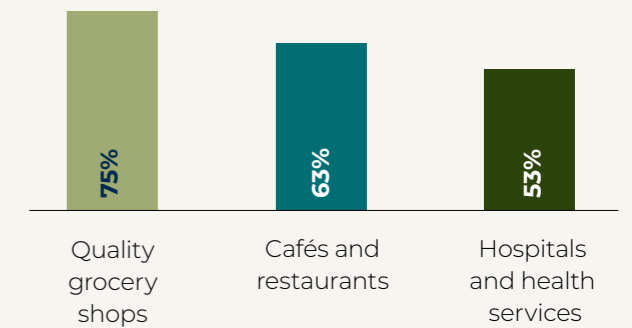
This theme relates to climate change resilience and the protection of environmental values. It also considers landscape and connection to place.

Survey results

A summary of results from the online survey is provided below. These responses are municipality-wide, rather than specific to a single township.

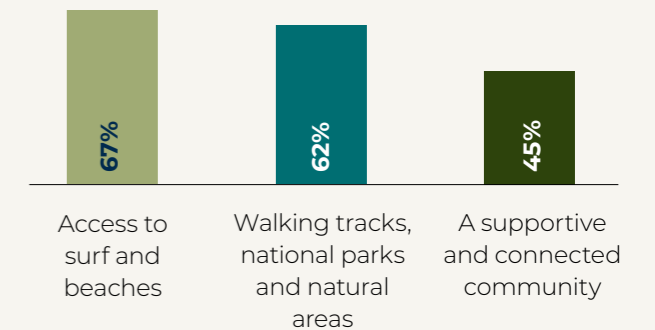
Important facilities and services

What are the most important facilities and services that you currently use in Glamorgan Spring Bay?



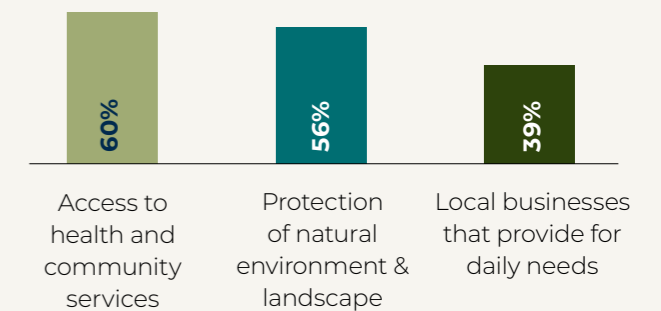
What do you value?

What do you value the most about living in or visiting the Glamorgan Spring Bay area?



Shaping a positive future

What will shape a positive future in the Glamorgan Spring Bay area?





Wild Hives Honey
Source: Jasper Da Seymour

Section 4: Planning for the future of Swansea

Housing and accommodation

A growing, yet ageing, population, smaller household sizes, and demand for greater housing choice have broad implications for how Swansea will look and function into the future. More broadly, a desire for regional and rural lifestyle opportunities, the coastal setting's holiday appeal, and an increasing ability to work from home will see permanent housing and visitor accommodation demand across Tasmania's East Coast continue to grow.

Swansea's population is predicted to increase from approximately 848 people today to around 1,000 people by 2046¹. The number of overnight visitors to the area is also expected to increase significantly. On census night in August 2021, around 37% of dwellings in Swansea were unoccupied, indicating a high rate of seasonal or intermittent residents who own a second home used as a holiday home or leased via online short-term rental platforms including Stayz and Airbnb.

Supply and demand

There have been around 730 dwellings approved across Glamorgan Spring Bay since 2012, including around 80 dwellings in the General Residential zone in Swansea. While the number of dwellings approved in Swansea decreased in recent years, subdivision approvals are facilitating new residential land with additional potential yield in locations across the town.

Estimates of housing demand in Swansea to 2046 are based on population projections for permanent residents and the need to provide for seasonal visitation and worker accommodation. Housing

supply is based on the availability of vacant land in zones appropriate for residential development, relevant land or environmental constraints, and the minimum lot size permitted in each zone.

Projecting population growth is not an exact science. Accordingly, this structure plan has relied upon population data provided by REMPLAN¹ and the ABS. These provide a population forecast range, noting they do not consider additional employment-generating activities such as increased tourism visitation which may attract new residents to the area. Nor do they consider external factors such as state or federal economic and development drivers which may mean that towns such as Swansea attract a higher growth rate than expected. Based on population projections, it is predicted that an additional 232-284 dwellings will be required in Swansea to cater for additional residents and seasonal and visitor demand by 2046.

Best practice strategic planning generally suggests that a rolling 5-to-10-year supply of zoned residential land should be maintained, with strategic documents such as this structure plan ensuring that up to 15 years growth is identified.

The current supply of suitably zoned and serviced residential land indicates that Swansea has a theoretical oversupply, given that even a conservative yield from existing zoned land would exceed the forecast demand through to 2046. It is, however, important to recognise that Swansea is a strongly ageing population. Therefore, it is critical that available land will be suitable to cater for the community's housing needs, including easily accessible housing for ageing residents and affordable housing for workers.

Vacant land and potential dwelling yield in Swansea

Zoning	Vacant area (ha)	Potential yield ²	Conservative yield ³	Dwelling demand to 2046 (REMPAN ¹)	Dwelling demand to 2046 (historical)
General Residential	42.76	831	305		
Rural Living	108.98	95	27		
Total	151.74	926	332	284	232

¹ REMPLAN was engaged by regional organisations, with funding from the State Planning Office, to undertake a housing market assessment, a whole of region residential land supply audit, and population and housing forecasts to understand the demand for residential housing. The population predictions prepared by REMPLAN for Glamorgan Spring Bay are based on estimated residential population (ERP) from the ABS.

² Based on minimum lot size permitted in zone, where the area developable is at a rate of 87.5% to account for access and land development constraints.

³ Based on average lot size, where the area developable is at a rate of 50% to account for access and land development constraints.

Industry and employment

As Swansea grows and residential land is further developed, business and employment opportunities are needed to support the working population and increase the viability and vibrancy of the town centre. Through the community engagement process, the need to ensure the long-term viability of local industries and the establishment of new opportunities was identified as important to the local community, particularly in respect to attracting a younger demographic through strong employment and career opportunities.

Swansea has multiple commercial and residential developments currently being considered. Future commercial and retail development in the right location will provide residents with more options for leisure activities in the town while also attracting visitors. Improving the commercial and retail offerings is also likely to attract new residents to purchase land in the area.

Commercial and industrial land

Swansea provides retail and commercial services, primarily in the town centre area on Franklin and Victoria streets. This includes Mitre 10 hardware, IGA supermarket, professional services, and a small number of cafés and restaurants. New hospitality venues including The Branch Wine Bar, Cakes & Honey café, and The Waterloo restaurant complement long-established venues providing locals and visitors with a range of options. It is also noted that seasonal visitation patterns experienced on the East Coast result in business opening periods often being tailored to tourism activity rather than meeting the needs of the permanent population.

Swansea currently has 7,645 m² of vacant commercial and retail land, all of which is zoned Local Business. The seasonality of Swansea's population (and broader East Coast visitation trends) impacts the feasibility of commercial and retail development to a greater degree than in areas with a more stable population. There are several retail and commercial developments planned in the area, including the redevelopment of the Morris Store and commercial and retail development on Franklin Street.

The small industrial area located on Maria Street contains limited industrial development and is in proximity to the existing waste transfer station and water treatment plant. Much of the land is prone to flooding and is unsuitable for many industrial activities. Potential industrial growth in Swansea will likely be small-scale service industries, serving residents and surrounding agricultural and marine ventures.

While industrial activity in the township is limited, three existing industrial businesses are situated near the town centre at 70 Franklin Street, 10 Maria Street, and 54 Tasman Highway. These present conflicts with the surrounding commercial and residential areas, detract from Swansea's visual appeal and create an unattractive entrance to the township.

Tourism

Tasmania had 1.26 million visitors in the year to December 2023. The East Coast region had 432,000 visitors, 58,000 of whom stayed overnight in Swansea. The average visitor spend for an overnight stay in Tasmania is \$297 per night. This represents a potential \$37 million in expenditure in Swansea over 123,000 visitor nights. Furthermore, in the year to December 2023, visitation to the East Coast region increased by 20% on 2019 levels (pre-COVID) and by a huge 70% since 2022. This trend has been seen across many regions of Tasmania and is likely a factor of the tourism market returning to, and exceeding, pre-COVID levels.

Tourism plays a key role in Swansea's economy, leveraging panoramic lookouts, stunning beaches and unique coastal landforms, and its position along the Great Eastern Drive touring route. Accommodation options for tourists range from caravan parks to motels, villas, and bed and breakfasts, most situated in comfortable walking distance to the town centre. However, some tourist facilities are ageing, and Swansea lacks a distinctive 'anchor' to attract visitation.



Caravan and camping sector

The Australian caravan and camping industry experienced a record year in 2022, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Tasmania is not immune to this strong performance, where the local caravan and motorhome market recorded 1.6 million visitor nights across 400,000 trips, covering both interstate visitors and Tasmanians holidaying within the state. During 2022, caravan and camping visitors to Tasmania spent an average of \$683 per trip and \$167 per night, with caravan parks recording a total of \$61 million in revenue – a 26% increase on 2021.

According to TT-Line, the new Spirit of Tasmania vessels are due to arrive in 2024-25. The new vessels will increase total passenger capacity from 1,400 to 1,800 and provide additional cabin and seating facilities. The new vessels provide for an approximately 60% increase in vehicle lanes that can accommodate caravans and motorhomes.

The East Coast is home to iconic visitor attractions that feature strongly on itineraries in this market, with the likes of Freycinet National Park and Maria Island deemed 'unmissable' to many caravan and motorhome travellers. In the summer months, this has resulted in capacity pressures in the region relating to accommodation, roads and key infrastructure. According to an audit of camping accommodation and infrastructure across Tasmania undertaken by ERA on behalf of Tourism Tasmania in 2022, the East Coast region also has the fewest commercial caravan parks in the state, and some have recently closed, even though areas like the East Coast are overcapacity in peak periods. Caravan and motorhome visitors are important for dispersing the benefits of the visitor economy to regional communities.



Kelvedon Beach
Source: Jasper Da Seymour



Fishing at Dolphin Sands
Source: Samuel Shelley

Infrastructure and connectivity

The planning, provision and management of infrastructure are essential considerations in land use planning, and important factors in supporting a liveable and accessible community. Infrastructure includes systems for drainage and disposal of sewage and stormwater; water storage, treatment and supply; waste management; energy generation, transmission and supply; communication and digital information; passenger and freight transport and transit; and associated control facilities.

Strategic land use planning and infrastructure planning must be coordinated and concurrent to ensure reliable services are available at appropriate capacity and function to meet the current needs of a community and can also meet future growth targets.

Water and sewer

Swansea water is sourced from the Meredith River and Swan River via Meredith dam off-stream storage. There are no current supply concerns and future growth can be accommodated. Swansea is serviced by a gravity network and sewage treatment plant with a capacity of 430 kL per day. Upgrades will be required to accommodate future growth.

The Maria Street sewage pump station is being upgraded to accommodate current and future loading requirements. A new sewage pump station is being constructed by a private developer to accommodate the Shaw Street loading, removing Shaw Street catchment from the Maria Street sewage pump station. Existing deficiencies in the sewerage system are being resolved via planned capital works and investigations into infiltration and inflow issues.

Transport

Road infrastructure is key to the effective management of this region. Several road studies and upgrades completed in recent years have resulted in a more strategic regional approach to investment that has a tourism focus on routes including the Great Eastern Drive.

The Tasman Highway is a key transport route owned by the State Government. Upgrades will be carried out by the Department of State Growth along approximately 14 km of the Tasman Highway including a section between the Pontypool junction and Rocky Hills south of Swansea. This work is being funded by state and federal government as part of a tourism initiative.

In addition to already funded projects, the State Government has committed to undertaking a corridor study on the entire Tasman Highway Road corridor, including the highway within the Glamorgan Spring Bay municipal area. This study will look at opportunities and constraints along the corridor and will seek to prioritise projects for future funding. The study will be out for public consultation in the second quarter of 2024.

The current road networks serve as the initial impression of the township. However, the entrances to Swansea from both the north and south via the Tasman Highway lack appeal due to neglected fencing, sparse roadside vegetation, and cluttered signage. To enhance the town's beauty and village atmosphere, these issues need urgent attention.

Limited public transport is provided via the Tasman Highway connecting Swansea with Bicheno, Coles Bay and Hobart. While the township's population size doesn't currently justify expanding the bus network, improving the frequency and reliability of the existing route is vital to serving the community.

Walking paths along the foreshore provide views of Swansea's coastline near the town centre. Additionally, Loontitetermairrelehoiner Track, which starts from Waterloo Point and runs along the perimeter of the golf course, offers panoramic vistas of Great Oyster Bay and Freycinet National Park.

Infrastructure provision in Swansea

The table below provides an overview of infrastructure provision in Swansea's settlement boundary.



✓ Water

Reticulated water services are provided in the settlement boundary.



✓ Sewer

Reticulated sewer services are provided in the settlement boundary.



✓ Stormwater

Reticulated stormwater services are provided in the settlement boundary.



✓ Electricity

Electricity services are provided in the settlement boundary.



✓ Internet

NBN services are provided in the settlement boundary.

Social infrastructure and services

Community and recreational facilities are essential to supporting the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of residents. Swansea is home to a range of community services and facilities, and it is likely that these will need to be well managed and maintained, and in some instances expanded, to cater to a growing and ageing population. This particularly applies to recreation and education facilities, public open spaces and health facilities.

Health and emergency services

May Shaw Swansea is a residential aged care facility providing residential and respite care in a 50-bed purpose-built facility. The services offering also extends to subacute and urgent care, independent living and home care services. The May Shaw facility provides a critical service to the local community along with Swansea's medical centre and community health centre.

As the population ages and grows, it will be important to ensure that suitable land is available close to services, for residential aged care development

As the population ages and grows, it will be important to ensure that suitable land is available close to services, for residential aged care development, for both high-care and independent living, as well as centralised spaces to support the delivery of home care services. Locating these facilities close to the central core of Swansea will help mitigate social isolation, while also contributing to the vitality and viability of the township.

Swansea has local police, ambulance, SES and fire services located within the township. The Freycinet Volunteer Marine Rescue is also located in Swansea, providing marine emergency response services. All these services provide critical support to the township and the broader municipality, with some relying heavily on a volunteer base which may face capacity and personnel challenges as the population ages.

Education and recreation

Swansea Primary School has a current enrolment of 69 students; the Swansea public library is co-located here. High school education requires students to travel to regional options in Triabunna and St Helens, or to major centres for boarding. Lady Gowrie Education and Care located on Arnol Street provides centre-based daycare services for infants. These services may require expansion to attract a younger, family demographic to the area.

Recreation facilities include the Swansea Bowls Club and Swansea Golf Club, located at Waterloo Point, and the adjoining recreation grounds. These facilities are considered underutilised and would benefit from upgrades that can better service the recreation needs of the region. Water-based recreation is supported by the Swansea jetty and boat ramp accessed via Jetty Road.

Environment and landscape

The community of Swansea places a high value on the local environment, with the beaches, bay and native bushland all contributing to why people love living in Swansea. The natural environment provides important habitat for native wildlife and is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. Nearby wetlands play a key role in supporting healthy waterways and marine industries.

Preserving the natural environment is key to ensuring the long-term productivity of Swansea's waterways and river. When planning for future land use, the protection of these valuable habitats is paramount. As development in a place intensifies, consideration needs to be given to the function and importance of natural areas, including the way in which native fauna access food sources, breeding sites and water.

The Swansea area includes significant natural features that attract both residents and visitors. The study area is bordered by Meredith River to the north, which flows into Great Oyster Bay. Saltwater Creek runs through the study area and provides a natural boundary for the town centre. Waterloo Point forms a central focus for the town centre and the connection to the coast.



Kelvedon Estate
Source: Jasper Da Seymour



East Coast Drive, Mayfield Bay
Source: Pete Harmsen

Section 5: Strategic context

Drivers of change

Following the completion of background research, the state of play report and initial community engagement, we have identified major trends that are influencing the strategic planning approach for Swansea.

A changing and unpredictable climate

The effects of climate change on coastal townships pose challenges for community resilience and strategic planning. Rising sea levels and greater frequency of extreme weather events like storms and floods increasingly threaten coastal infrastructure and properties. Future planning must prioritise strategies to adapt to these changes, such as implementing coastal defences, elevating buildings and creating resilient infrastructure.

Additionally, changes in temperature and rainfall patterns can impact agriculture, water resources and natural ecosystems, affecting the town's economy and biodiversity. Efforts should focus on promoting sustainable practices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing community resilience to climate-related risks.

By integrating climate adaptation and mitigation measures into the planning and development process, and in community building initiatives, Swansea can better prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change, ensuring a safer and more sustainable future for its residents.

A homogenous housing profile

There is limited housing diversity in Swansea, with detached dwellings accounting for 96% of total housing stock, two-thirds of which contain three or more bedrooms. While this housing form has historically been in greatest demand, it creates a homogenous housing profile that does not provide diversity of choice for the population and may exacerbate housing and rental affordability issues.

The local consequences, in Swansea, are twofold. First, as the population ages, the need for appropriately located housing, designed with the needs of older generations in mind, will be the highest housing priority for the township. It is critical to ensure that older residents can remain a part of their local community by having housing that supports independence and evolving care needs and is also close to important health and community services.

Second, a strong workforce is required to support an ageing population and the regional economy. Current property prices and rental availability rates in the region are limiting opportunities for health and community sector workers and young people to access secure, affordable housing. While not an issue isolated to Swansea, or even Tasmania, it is an important matter for future growth strategies to acknowledge and plan for.

Major developments

Swansea has multiple commercial and residential developments currently being considered, many of which are located in, or near to, the town centre. These developments have the potential to shape the future function and character of the town and should be considered with a strategic, forward-focused lens that prioritises strong economic and community-driven outcomes.

This development potential, if realised, will result in population uplift from new residential and strata title lots in the study area, facilitating future population growth in the town. To respond, the current commercial and retail offering in Swansea should be enhanced.

Future development in Swansea should also be designed to provide residents and visitors with more options for leisure activities in the town while also attracting visitors and providing modern accommodation to cater to overnight visitors.

An increasingly ageing population

The population demographics of Glamorgan Spring Bay are changing to an increasingly older population. Nearly 50% of the municipality's residents are aged over 60 years and Swansea had a median age of 62 at the 2021 census.

The ageing profile of Swansea impacts the types of services needed to support the community and will result in a growing demand for specialised healthcare services, retirement facilities and community support systems. A strategic approach is required to meet the needs of older residents as well as encourage younger people to live in Swansea to support community diversity.

Community engagement results highlight the desire for residents to have the opportunity to 'age in place' and maintain connections to the community and the services and facilities it provides. New use and development accommodating the ageing population will need to be well located in order to support these connections, facilitating accessibility for less mobile people as well as a lively township that provides opportunity for diverse social interactions.

An ageing population will also have impacts on the local economy. Retirees typically have different spending patterns and may contribute less to the workforce but generate demand for additional workers in health and community support services – workers that are typically paid less than the median income in Australia. This demographic profile also presents opportunities for businesses catering to senior needs, such as healthcare providers, recreational facilities and senior-friendly amenities.

Exponential tourism growth

The 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy commissioned by Tourism Tasmania suggests that Tasmania is set to welcome 1.6 million interstate visitors and 400,000 international visitors annually by 2030. This represents an average annual growth of 2.6% from 2025 to 2030, and an associated annual visitor spend of up to \$5.6 billion by 2030, more than double the value in 2019.

Tasmania is set to welcome 1.6 million interstate visitors and 400,000 international visitors annually by 2030

This helps the economy through direct contributions to local businesses and the provision of employment. It also impacts the character of Tasmanian towns, influencing the proportion of residents who are permanent, and requires ongoing services to meet demand through accommodation, food services and activities. In addition, tourism introduces a large number of people who are unfamiliar with the area and less able to respond in an emergency.






In other townships in the municipal area, such as Bicheno and Coles Bay, there is clear evidence of localised and seasonal pressures on services and infrastructure. For Swansea, the predicted tourism growth represents an opportunity to strengthen the township's commercial vitality and range of activities, providing that there is adequate provision of suitably located visitor accommodation that does not reduce housing supply. For example, existing local hotels/motels in Swansea have potential for expansion and or upgrade. Focusing tourism growth in Swansea may also assist in alleviating long-term pressures elsewhere.



Swansea town centre
Source: Henk Vrieselaar

Opportunities and challenges

After completing the initial stages of community engagement and undertaking the background analysis, the following strengths, weaknesses, future opportunities and potential threats of Swansea have been determined.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Future opportunities	Potential threats
Housing and accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong residential land supply to foster sustainable population growth. Well-situated key sites with strong redevelopment potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited housing diversity to cater to ageing population. Lack of housing affordability and rental availability, and large land parcels in limited ownership. Small-scale subdivision reliance on cul-de-sac development limits broader connectivity and permeability. Limited caravan and camping accommodation availability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a mixed-use town centre that provides access to facilities and services. Leverage proximity to tourist attractions to capture overnight visitation spend. Ensure master plans form part of approvals for new land releases to deliver housing diversity, permeability and design quality. Make more efficient use of well-connected, centrally located land to provide housing opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing affordability crisis impacting housing opportunities for young families and key workers. Securing suitable land to accommodate caravan and camping accommodation. Developer commitment to delivering improved design quality. Further development into natural areas and agricultural land impacting ecosystems and resulting in vegetation removal.
Industry and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing role as a semi-established hub providing subregional services and facilities. Emerging coastal high street character of Franklin Street and surrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly ageing population with limited future workforce capacity. Key sites hosting incongruent land uses. Inconsistent and spatially fragmented retail offering. Some commercial and retail frontages are undesirable and underutilised. Inconsistent signage and wayfinding presence in town centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free up key sites by shifting industrial uses and bulky goods stores to more suitable locations. Clarify the township's regional role in employment and industry opportunities. Leverage tourism growth; capture visitor spend. Enhance daytrip offering while positioning Swansea as an accommodation and service base. Establish clear township gateways to improve the attractiveness and sense of arrival to the town. Cater to caravan and motorhome sector and thereby increase economic viability of the township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear sprawl of commercial uses that lack critical mass for activation, particularly through pedestrian movement. Seasonal implications of tourism peaks and troughs on commercial and retail activity. Balancing pressures from both permanent and seasonal populations on town services.
Infrastructure and connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midway point on the East Coast visitor journey via the Great Eastern Drive. Beachfront connections along the Esplanade, Waterloo Beach and Jubilee Beach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car-centric town centre with poor pedestrian safety and permeability. Lack of cycling infrastructure. Lack of township wayfinding or resolved urban design presence. Poor road connectivity in Rural Living zoned land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve active connections to the beaches, Meredith River and between parks and open spaces. Establish infrastructure contributions to assist in strategic planning. Improve town centre parking and walkable connections to provide economic and access opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential growth exceeds infrastructure planning and provision. Ribbon development reduces the efficiency of land use and puts stress on infrastructure and transport.
Social infrastructure and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open spaces well situated to benefit from upgrades and amenity improvements. Strong community cohesion and existing resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient health services for an ageing population. Dated sporting and recreation facilities. Limited service provision requires regional travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract and nurture younger demographic. Provide community-led opportunities to contribute to developing a clear town identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing requirements for additional health services and community facilities. Land availability for service hubs. Diminishing volunteer base for community and emergency services.
Environment and landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to internationally recognised natural features including Freycinet National Park, Moulting Lagoon and Wineglass Bay. Panoramic views across Great Oyster Bay to Nine Mile Beach and the Freycinet Peninsula. Access to open space and water-based recreation and walking connections to the beach and bay. Prominent green headland with public-private access and usability. Established agricultural landscapes with prominent vegetated hills surrounding the township reflective of industry and heritage. The eastern coastline and rising topography to the west provide natural borders to the township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space linkages are fragmented and are not accessible to all mobility needs. Lack of streetscape appeal and consistency in public landscaping and street tree plantings. Ensuring bushfire risk is managed on a whole of town basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a defined township identity from its burgeoning coastal character. Use opportunities for marine transport to connect to other townships and attractions. Improve public vegetation profile to be more reflective of coastal setting. Improve vegetation links at town entrances and beachfronts. Protect and enhance views towards Great Oyster Bay and western hills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing bushfire hazards for a less mobile, ageing population; ensuring the community bushfire protection plan is kept up-to-date (current protection plan is from 2013). Susceptibility to climate impacts such as coastal erosion and inundation. Development near vegetated areas increases bushfire risk and threatens homes.



Fishing at Dolphin Sands
Source: Samuel Shelley

Section 6: The Swansea structure plan

What is the plan?

Swansea's focus for the future is identifying a sustainable and beneficial growth pattern to add value to the existing town, prioritising protection of waterfront connections and valuing its existing cultural and environmental context.

The structure plan provides a comprehensive framework for future development and investment in Swansea for the next 10 years. It provides a strategic lens for land use and planning decisions relevant to the area and will guide the long-term growth of the town. The structure plan comprises three key components:

1. A suite of place-based planning principles underpinned by the existing planning policy framework in Tasmania
2. Land use directions aimed at addressing the drivers of change
3. Supporting actions to provide a holistic framework for future growth.

Planning principles

The following planning principles have been established to guide the suite of land use directions and supporting actions in the Swansea structure plan.

Enhance town centre activation

Improve the vibrancy and attractiveness of the town centre as a coastal high street by creating a spatially focused, welcoming and walkable spine that caters to local needs and appeals to visitors.

Reinforce connections to natural assets

Improve visual and physical connections that leverage Swansea's beachside location and proximity to iconic assets to broaden the town's tourism appeal and attract overnight visitation and increase spend.

Strengthen local character and identity

Enhance the township's regional role and reflect its heritage and landscape in a clear and communicable identity that long-term residents are proud of and new residents are drawn to.

Prioritise community health and wellbeing

Position Swansea as a key location for regional health and aged care services with a focus on residential opportunities that facilitate ageing in place.

Delivery sustainable housing

Support residents of all ages, at all stages of life, and on a range of incomes to access safe and secure housing that meets their needs.

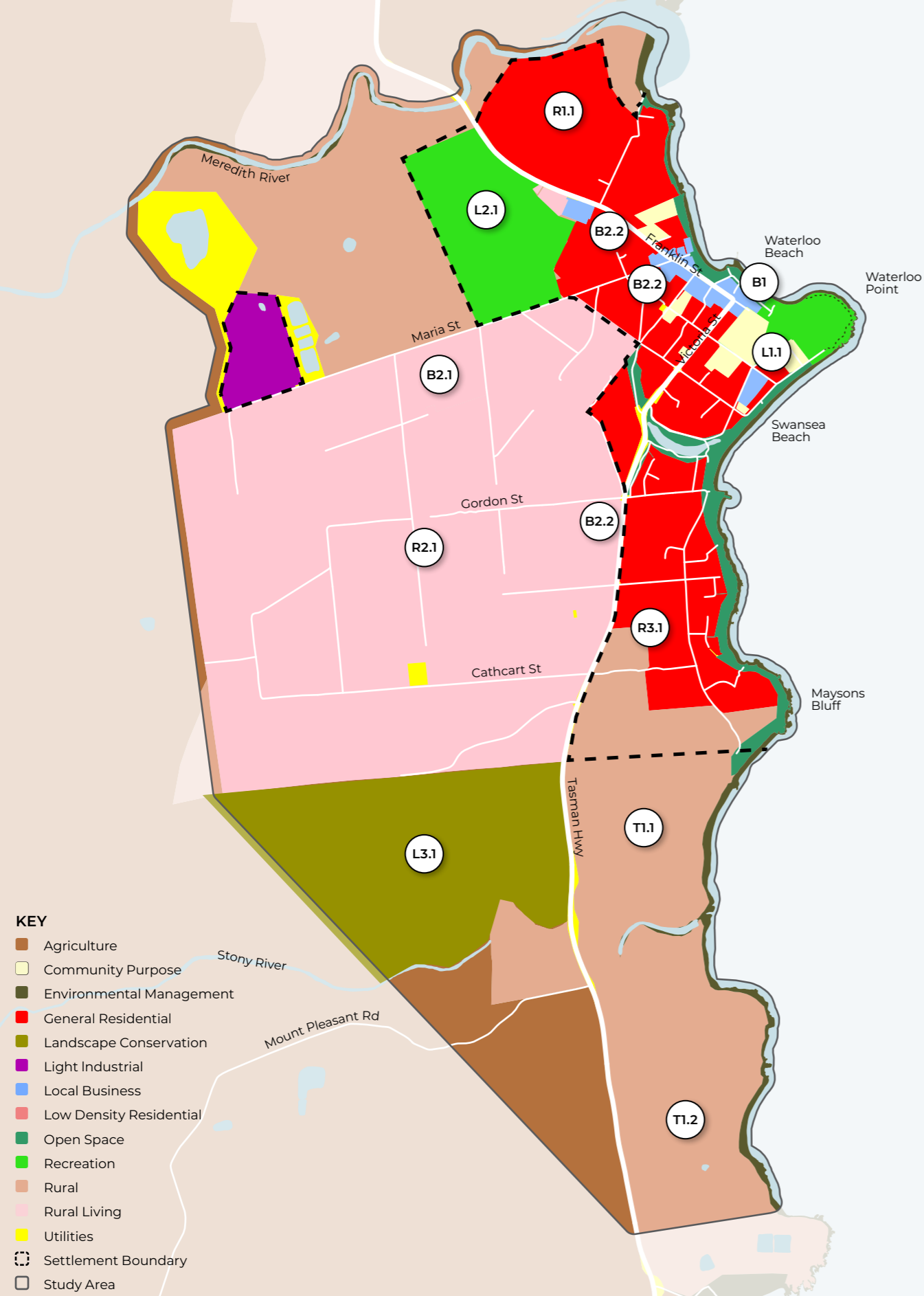
Land use directions

The structure plan is first and foremost a strategic land use document that identifies a clear settlement boundary to guide and manage sustainable growth and provides zoning recommendations based on detailed analysis and future community needs.

The following table outlines land use directions to achieve the planning principles above. The actions detail how each direction should be achieved. Locations mentioned are identified on the associated map.

Ref	Direction	Action
Residential		
R1	Identify sites suitable for residential uplift	<p>R1.1 Investigate the potential to rezone 13512B Tasman Highway (CT 163430/1) to General Residential to accommodate residential growth and provide opportunities for diverse housing.</p> <p>Future development must be subject to a master planning process to guide sustainable development, including yield, housing mix, lot layout, landscaping and design principles.</p>
R2	Encourage efficient infill of the rural living zone	<p>R2.1 There is insufficient pressure on land availability within the study area to necessitate a change to the Rural Living zone west of the Tasman Highway. However, infill is encouraged under the current zoning so an efficient use of land can be achieved.</p>
R3	Support the realisation of development potential	<p>R3.1 Council to liaise with landholders to identify opportunities to encourage future subdivision in areas zoned General Residential.</p>
Business and industry		
B1	Reinforce the commercial core	<p>B1.1 Encourage the development of active ground floor tenancies on Franklin Street with residential uses on upper floors that can access views.</p> <p>B1.2 Ensure commercial development in Franklin Street is located to increase activity and vibrancy and reinforce its coastal high street profile.</p> <p>B1.3 Commercial, retail and hospitality-based uses must contribute to the broader tourism appeal and emerging service profile of the township.</p>
B2	Consolidate industrial uses	<p>B2.1 Rezone the industrial land on Maria Street (between Tarleton and Burgess streets) to Rural Living Zone A.</p> <p>B2.2 Council to liaise with 10 Maria St, 70 Franklin St and 54 Tasman Hwy to encourage relocation and to identify opportunities in the short term for improvements to the site and the interface with the public realm, such as landscaping.</p>

Ref	Strategy	Action
Landscape and community		
L1	Create a community and health services precinct*	<p>L1.1 Investigate the potential to rezone the existing oval and facilities to Community Purpose to provide opportunities to expand community health services and aged care facilities. This location leverages its proximity to the town centre and existing May Shaw facility to support a walkable environment for residents and easy access for the broader community.</p> <p>The precinct should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a base for regional e-health and mobile health services, community meeting rooms, and a regional library link. Prioritise spaces with multipurpose flexibility to promote interaction and cohesion for all ages within the community, particularly those ageing in place. Provide opportunities for ageing in place with transitional seniors housing that ranges from independent living through to low care. Provide infill housing for residents to downsize/rightsize and to support key worker accommodation. In the long term, commence discussions to relocate the bowling club to enable stronger connections to the bay and additional public open space to complement future community facilities. <p>* This would follow a relocation of the existing oval and facilities at Waterloo Point (refer to L2).</p>
L2	Create a purpose-built community recreation hub*	<p>L2.1 Investigate the potential to rezone a portion of 13509 Tasman Highway, located to the north of the town centre (CT 170094/2) to Recreation to accommodate a community recreation hub appropriate to service the regional community.</p> <p>The hub should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide flexible-use sporting field(s), clubhouse facilities, and amenities. Integrate space to support caravan and camping visitors (self-contained) to address the regional shortfall in this accommodation type. Provide space to relocate the dump point currently located on the Esplanade. <p>* Refer also to L1 (above).</p>
L3	Protect landscape values	<p>L3.1 Investigate the potential to rezone large bushland areas currently zoned Agriculture (including CT 110038/1 and surrounds) to Landscape Conservation to protect natural and landscape values, and to enhance arrival from the south.</p>
Tourism		
T1	Enable tourist accommodation opportunities	<p>T1.1 Retain rural zoning to allow for landscape and heritage based tourism opportunities.</p> <p>T1.2 Existing Piermont tourism and community development scheme to retain a focus on tourism and holiday homes. The community development component is an anomaly in relation to such uses occurring at a distance from the urban growth boundary.</p>



Tasmanian precedents

The images and descriptions below show Tasmanian development precedents that relate to the proposed land use directions and supporting actions. They serve as a source of information and inspiration for future development.



Kingborough Community Hub Kingborough Council

The Community Hub is a flexible facility for future changing demands. There is a multipurpose community hall, meeting rooms, and covered town square, public amenities and storage. A café space has also been developed. The Hub is able to host a variety of community and cultural activities, events and exhibitions.



Wynyard Sporting Precinct Waratah-Wynyard Council

Waratah-Wynyard Council adopted the Wynyard Sporting Precinct Master Plan in 2022. The master plan proposed a new Wynyard Sporting Precinct, improved facilities and amenities for squash, basketball, netball, tennis, community garden and band rooms. Once complete it will provide variety and safety to multiple clubs, users and the general public.

Supporting actions

In developing this structure plan, a range of other recommendations have been identified which are necessary to the success of implementing the land use directions. These recommendations are also consistent with the planning principles above.

The following table outlines these recommendations. Under each one, specific actions detail how that recommendation should be achieved. Locations mentioned are identified on the associated map.

Ref	Recommendation	Action
Place branding		
S1	Create a clear township identity	<p>S1.1 Create a consistent township brand identity that leverages Swansea's coastal character and differentiates it from other townships in the municipality.*</p> <p>S1.2 Prepare a street tree master plan for the township and encourage frontage plantings in new residential developments to increase canopy cover and climate resilience.</p> <p><i>* This action will be listed for all townships as it is recommended this work be approached collectively to ensure township identities are not only unique, but also complementary at the municipal scale.</i></p>
S2	Enhance township arrival and wayfinding	<p>S2.1 Create a strong entrance to Swansea to greet visitors with a pleasing sense of arrival, and improve wayfinding through the town centre area.</p> <p>S2.2 Prepare a wayfinding and signage strategy for the township to improve navigation and connections.</p>
Open space		
S3	Enhance local parks and open spaces	<p>S3.1 Retain vegetated corridor between the Meredith River and northern end of Shaw Street.</p> <p>S3.2 Retain and upgrade the Swansea Foreshore playground area near Waterloo Beach to encourage families exploring the East Coast to stop and spend time, and enhance Swansea's daytrip appeal.</p> <p>S3.3 Enhance the foreshore area to have broader visitor appeal and create opportunities for waterfront activation through formalised, accessible pathways, seating areas, improved landscaping and shade.</p> <p>S3.4 Enhance the riparian characteristics of Duck Park and provide additional tree plantings for increased shade.</p>
Active connections		
S4	Improve active pathways and open space connections	<p>S4.1 Create a network of paths to connect local parks and open spaces within the township and leverage the existing asset of Loontitetermairrehoiner Track. The route should connect Saltwater Creek, the Esplanade, Waterloo Point and Waterloo Beach. Explore opportunities for NRM funding to support this.</p> <p>S4.2 Explore the feasibility of a new footbridge across the Meredith River to Dolphin Sands.</p> <p>S4.3 New pathways or upgrades should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be fully accessible to safely provide for all ages within the community. • Avoid potential road user conflicts. • Embed opportunities to include cultural and historic interpretation and public art features that reinforce the township identity.

Ref	Recommendation	Action
Public space and facilities		
S5	Prepare a streetscape master plan for Franklin Street	<p>S5.1 Prepare a streetscape master plan for Franklin Street to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Franklin Street's role as a coastal high street with overnight visitation and daytrip appeal. • Prioritise safety features such as crossings and traffic calming devices to elevate to role of the pedestrian and improve visitor attraction. • Identify opportunities for pedestrian through-site links and view corridors to guide the redevelopment and renewal of key sites to better connect the township to the bay and iconic views. • Guide high-quality streetscapes and works in the public realm to focus investment on visible public works. • Guide high-quality landscaping, footpath upgrades, street furniture and outdoor lighting throughout Swansea.
S6	Enhance public facilities and community assets	<p>S6.1 Investigate the renovation of the Council-owned assets on Noyes Street to offer a multipurpose function space for the community. Examples include a tourism experience based around East Coast heritage, or a space for community event hire.</p> <p>S6.2 Repurpose the existing scout hall site to also accommodate a surf club. The existing scout hall site is underutilised and Swansea does not presently have a local surf life saving club (Bicheno is the closest). Surf clubs enable learn to swim opportunities, build surf swimming confidence and create a shared space to build community resilience, wellbeing and broader cohesion.</p>
Infrastructure		
S7	Improve stormwater management	<p>S7.1 Develop a stormwater improvement plan to support infill subdivision and the development of new growth areas.</p> <p>S7.2 On land located at the junction of Maria and Wellington streets, investigate the provision of a riparian buffer and walkway along Saltwater Creek, and incorporate a natural detention area to limit downstream flooding risk.</p>



takara limuna (Sheoak Walk) Clarence City Council

The takara limuna walking trail features a viewing platform and gathering circle, and five interpretation panels written and researched by Aboriginal cultural practitioners Theresa Sainty and Zoe Rimmer with translations and audio recordings in palawa kani. The trail is illustrated with artworks by Allan Mansell and panels designed by Alex Miles.



Bridgewater Community Parkland Brighton Council

Engaged by Brighton Council, Playstreet master planned a large, vacant parcel of land between Bridgewater and the Derwent River. The area of land was selected due to its potential to connect the Bridgewater commercial zone to the Derwent River foreshore, and unlock the recreational value of the river for the suburb of Bridgewater.

Next steps and implementation

This section will be informed by the consultation process for this draft structure plan and will be provided in the final document.

Mayfield Estate
Source: Jasper Da Seymour



Contact us

ERA Planning and Environment
Level 1, 125A Elizabeth St, nipaluna (Hobart) 7000

☎ (03) 6165 0443

✉ enquiries@eraplanning.com.au

eraplanning.com.au