



Kempsey Shire Council

Local Community Plan 2009 Stuarts Point



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The Vision

A healthy community is a form of living democracy: people working together to address what matters to them.

- Stephen B. Fawcett, et. al

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council initiated a local Community planning program to engage and work cooperatively with local communities to identify priorities and actions for improvement.

The Local Community Plans aim to make a difference through developing a relationship between communities and Council, solve problems through creative thinking and identify actions to bring about improvements. The foundation of the community plans are the visions and aspirations of the people who live in the Macleay Valley.

The Community Plans commit Council to work with their local communities to identify, promote and enhance the distinctive character of their local areas.

Finally, the Plans will aim to guide the development of partnerships between local communities, community organisations, and Kempsey Shire Council.

Kempsey Shire Community Strategic Planning Process

The Community Strategic Plan, developed in 2007, set out the long term vision for the whole of Kempsey Shire. The Plan is structured around key focus areas, and encompasses all of Council's actions and responsibilities. The key focus areas are:

- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Social, cultural and community relations
- Infrastructure
- Relationships
- Effectiveness, Efficiency and Accountability

Kempsey Council is now taking its Strategic Plan to the local level through the development of Local Community Plans. These plans have been developed for nine distinctive catchment areas throughout the Macleay Valley. These are Bellbrook, Crescent Head, Frederickton & Collombatti, Smithtown, Gladstone, Hat Head, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Willawarrin.

To access other Local Community Plans, go to the Kempsey Shire Council website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

The local community planning process for all of these catchment areas follows a similar path where the following questions are collectively discussed and responded to:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- Are we getting there?

Community Involvement

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council set out to engage with local communities to identify the hopes, ideals and needs of the local residents that live in Stuarts Point.

The consultation included a community workshop and online survey with the local community. Many issues and suggestions were raised during the consultations, and resulted in the formation of common visions and identified actions to meet the needs of the future Stuarts Point community.

Council will respond to the community needs in a number of ways:

- Directly on planning matters and policy direction
- Directly as a service provider
- Collaboratively through partnerships with the community
- Indirectly as an advocate for the community

Community suggestions that have been incorporated into the Local Community Plans will be the subject of further and ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Council and the community. Council will hold community workshops in the future to review and monitor the outcomes and success of the Local Community Plans.

Get Involved

Kempsey Council looks forward to your involvement in the implementation of these Local Community Plans. Contributions or suggestions should be directed to Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3200.

Stuarts Point in Focus

Stuarts Point Today

- There is great community capacity in Stuarts Point
- Large elderly population
- There is limited infrastructure in the area
- There is no Police Station
- There is some social inequality within the community
- There are issues with transport and youth activities
- There are diverse employment industries including agriculture, the creative industries (eg: artists) and a growth in tourism

History

Stuarts Point is located in the Mid North Coast region of NSW. Stuarts Point is a relatively isolated coastal settlement between South West Rocks and Nambucca Heads, north-east of Kempsey. It was once a thriving port and shipbuilding centre before the Macleay River changed course, flowing into the sea at South West Rocks. Stuarts Point is nestled on a tributary of the Macleay River which separates it from beautiful beaches to the east. Grassy Head, less than 3 km to the north is a rural settlement adjacent to the beaches. Both locations are popular holiday destinations for surfers and fishermen.

Population

In 2006 the population of Stuarts Point was 724, a marginal decline of 1% since 2001, compared with Kempsey Shire population which increased by 3.7%.

The population of Stuarts Point is considerably older than that of Kempsey Shire, however the average age in Stuarts Point has fallen over the last census period, with growth in the 15 – 24 and 0 – 4 age groups (whereas these cohorts declined for Kempsey Shire).

Education

Level of both school education and post school qualifications are similar between Stuarts Point and Kempsey Shire.

14.1% of the Stuarts Point population have completed their Year 12 Certificate or equivalent compared to 16.2% for the Kempsey Shire. With 16.6% of the Stuarts Point population have a post school Certificate level compared to 15.6% for the Kempsey Shire.

Economy and Employment

The 2001 and 2006 census indicate the population of Stuarts Point are employed in increasingly diverse industries, and while the participation in primary industries, retail trade, property and business, and construction has declined, hospitality, government, education, transport, communication and wholesale have increased. Seasonal and primary industries employment is predominate in the community.

Income and Affordability

Average individual, family and household incomes in Stuarts Point are slightly less than those of Kempsey Shire; however average housing loan repayments are considerably less, indicating a better housing affordability for purchasing property in Stuarts Point. Average rental payments are approximately 6% higher in Stuarts Point than in Kempsey Shire.

Services and Vehicles

Stuarts Point and the nearby settlement of Grassy Head are serviced by a public primary school, sporting facilities (tennis courts), local retail and agricultural businesses and two registered pubs / clubs. For most services and facilities, residents must travel to Kempsey. Weekday bus services are available to Kempsey and Macksville.

In 2006, a slightly larger portion of Stuarts Point households had no vehicle, in comparison to Kempsey. A significantly greater proportion of workers in Stuarts Point travelled by car to work, or walked (more than twice the incidence than for Kempsey). Overall, due to its relative isolation, Stuarts Point residents are more car dependent, however local seasonal and rural employment also significantly affects mobility in the community. This is particularly important when viewed in terms of the older population of Stuarts Point, and the needs of the community with almost one in ten residents reporting the need for assistance in their daily living in 2006.

What do the community love about living in Stuarts Point?

- The environment, mountains and where the forest meets the sea.
- The river and beach are good for board riding.
- It's a small area so residents can walk and ride everywhere.
- The size of the community is smaller than other areas.
- Rural environment.
- Proximity to quality beaches.
- Friendliness of people living here.
- Climate.
- Relaxed lifestyle.

- Near National Park.
- Community support, good spirit, and village atmosphere.

What are the challenges for Stuarts Point?

- Dogs roaming free (some are strays), no dog bags and no signage to say clean up after your dog.
- Some people in the community have abusive language and are violent.
- There are safety concerns.
- Unemployment
- Lack of facilities (organised) for children and youth.
- Lack of commercial and medical facilities.
- Apathy within the community.
- Community hall is not user friendly.
- Village location is exposed to fire hazard.
- Signage – there is no signage at the entry to the village.
- The sewerage affects the waterways during rainy times.

What changes have been seen in Stuarts Point in the last few years?

- An opposition to change from long time residents.
- Group of community-minded people want to make it a better place with better facilities (already getting skate park, hall improvements).
- Fishing has deteriorated in the river with sand build up. Locals now being pushed out by the professional fishermen and there is less fish.
- There is an increase in large trucks travelling up and down the beach for the mullet runs.
- New people adding to culture of the community but a lot of community members are not getting involved.
- Slight improvement in village streets.
- New footbridge.
- Road services deteriorating.
- Slight increase in violence and perhaps an increase in drug and alcohol problems.
- No regular doctor – doctor visits two half days per week and there is no chemist.

Community Visions for Stuarts Point

The community workshop and feedback session held in Stuarts Point drew out the common community visions for the future of the area. Below is an overview of the community visions, and the community suggestions for action.

"Stuarts Point becomes the Walcha of the Coast"

"More public services"

"A Community Centre"

"More opportunities for jobs"

Community suggestions to be considered

Community vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Cultural trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plan to lobby for funding, community group is looking at history walking trail – so this idea could add to and enhance their existing idea • Trail examples – like Nambucca Trail or Corindi to Red Rock – boardwalk through wetlands • Heritage walk along river • Liaise with Aboriginal community re location of trail. Extensive heritage studies have already been conducted
Aged care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time medical doctor – new medical centre would need to be based on need – also need to have population to attract funding • Small Aged Care facility within the community • Promotion of home services that already exist within the community

Community vision	Community suggestions to be considered
River / Beach environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address river bank erosion in front of the caravan park • Limit vehicle traffic on the beach to reduce damage to environment • Advocate for the monitoring of mullet fishing • Monitor camping at Stuarts Point Beach near breakwater
Improved community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location for Men’s Shed – potentially the unused Rural Fire Shed • Supply dog bags and signage to ensure people clean up after their dog • Attracting commercial and visitor interest by creating a website about Stuarts Point (promote it as a base for a holiday in the area). There is grant funding available to establish the website • Perhaps open farms to visitors on certain days? Is there an issue with OH&S regulations? Could have progressive dinners – minibus takes people around to different farms for different courses • Need to address sewerage issue by investigating the cost and viability of constructing a sewerage scheme. A sewerage scheme will lead to further development • Improved disabled access to the river and facilitate the availability of a beach wheelchair for hire • Investigate, design and build a multi-functional community centre (located adjacent to the hall) • Electric barbeques at Grassy Head reserve • Provide signage at caravan park indicating public access is available along the river in front of the caravan park • Bike track in the village • Maintain bike track along Grassy Head Road

Community vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Streetscape improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerbing and tree planting especially on main street (Ocean Ave) • Improve drainage in front of the club • Signage upon entry to town (what is called an 'entry statement' in urban design terms) • Works committee to be established – community input to this • Appearance of industrial property at entry – look at ways to minimise or enhance look through screenings / plantings (note: there is a line of new young native trees along the fence line already) • Change industrial zoned land at entry to town?

The Plan

The Plan has been developed from the outcomes of the community consultation undertaken during 2009. The Plan highlights specific actions to be implemented in order for community visions to be reached. The timeframe for the plan is 2009 – 2012. Priority ratings were allocated according to the community's view on how urgently actions needed to be addressed. The priority ratings that have been allocated to actions are as follows:

- Low Priority - action commenced within 4 years
- Medium Priority – action commenced within 2 years
- High Priority – action commenced with 1 year

The Council role will vary from action to action. The Council role will be one of the following:

- Direct involvement through the provision of services and/or infrastructure
- A collaboration role by teaming with the community and/or relevant industry organisations
- An advocacy role by speaking on the behalf of the community to relevant groups and bodies.

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Cultural trail	Develop plan to lobby for funding	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Heritage walk along river. Liaise with Aboriginal community re location of trail. Extensive heritage studies have already been conducted	Medium	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Aged care	Full time medical facilities	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Small Aged Care facility within the community	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Promotion of home services that already exist within the community through the club	High	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Macleay Community Care Options to provide information to the club on the availability of homes services
River / Beach environments	Address river bank erosion in front of the caravan park	High	Direct Involvement	Completed: Remedial works were completed in 2009 in front of caravan park where the bank erosion was occurring
	Limit vehicle traffic on the beach to reduce damage to environment	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Advocate for the monitoring of mullet fishing	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Monitor camping at Stuarts Point Beach near breakwater	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
Improved community facilities	Location for Men's Shed – potentially the unused Rural Fire Shed	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Commenced: Community consultation and discussions have been held concerning the location of the Men's Shed. Discussion are now taking place for the shed to be located at the Waste Transfer Station

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Supply dog bags and signage to ensure people clean up after their dog	Medium	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Economic development through tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open farms to visitors on certain days • Progressive dinners 	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Attracting commercial and visitor interest by creating a website about Stuarts Point (promote it as a base for a holiday in the area). There is grant funding available to establish the website	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Need to address sewerage issue by investigating cost and viability of constructing sewerage scheme	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Improved disabled access to the river and facilitate the availability of a beach wheelchair for hire	Medium	Direct Involvement	<p>Background Information: Macleay Community Care Options have a beach wheelchair that is available for hire. To access the river however would require a ramp that meets the Australian Standards. The only known ramp into the river at Stuarts Point is the boat ramp. This ramp may not meet the standards.</p> <p>Recommendation: Council to determine priority and</p>

				funding
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Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Investigate, design and build a multi-functional community centre (located adjacent to the hall)	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Electric barbeques at Grassy Head reserve	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Provide signage at caravan park indicating public access is available along the river in front of the caravan park	High	Direct Involvement	Commenced: A small budget has been set aside to address signage. Signs to be ordered after community engagement undertaken to determine preferred location
	Bike track in the village	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Maintain bike track along Grassy Head Road	High	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
Streetscape improvement	Kerbing and tree planting especially on main street (Ocean Ave)	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Improve drainage in front of the club	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Signage upon entry to town - an 'entry statement'	Low	Direct Involvement	Commenced: A small budget has been set aside to address signage. Signs to be ordered after community engagement undertaken to determine preferred location.

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Works committee to be established – community input to this	Low	Direct Involvement	Commenced: The new committee structure adopted by Council involves a Infrastructure Committee this committee has membership of SPADCO on it and will address this issue
	Appearance of industrial property at entry – look at ways to minimise or enhance look through screenings / plantings	High	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Change industrial zoned land at entry to town?	Low	Advocacy and direct involvement	Council to determine priority and funding