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## Draft Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy

Mr Tim Crosdale  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
By email to [council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Crosdale,

The Property Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy and the accompanying draft Housing Supply Plan.

The Property Council champions the interest of more than 2200-member companies that represent the full spectrum of the industry, including those who invest, own, manage and develop in all sectors of property. The property industry shapes the future of our cities and regions – we have a deep long-term interest in seeing them prosper as productive and sustainable places.

In the Hunter, the property industry contributes \$3.4 billion to economic growth, pays \$1.48 billion in wages and generates 23,287 jobs.

The draft Port Stephens Housing Strategy makes a smooth transition from its predecessor document Live Port Stephens and we are pleased to note the progress made by Council over this four-year period. Across the proposed Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Plan we are also pleased to see the emphasis on encouraging greater density and diversity of housing types proposed. This diversity will be critical given the growing demand for housing and employment opportunities coming online in Port Stephens and the surrounding region.

### **Growth arriving ahead of projections**

Since the last population projections, the Port Stephens population has exceeded the anticipated from 0.5% to 1.1% growth rate (Hunter Regional Plan 2041). The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports a 1.7% increase in population between 2020/21 to 2021-22. This surge in demand is reflected in similar coastal regional areas in NSW and warrants a renewed emphasis on unlocking additional housing supply.

### **Medowie and Raymond Terrace**

The Property Council supports the identification of Medowie and Raymond Terrace as focal points for additional housing. The proximity of these communities to the Williamstown and Tomago employment areas positions these centres with an emerging strategic significance across the Port Stephens local government area and Greater Newcastle.

Concurrent to the town planning task, we encourage Council to ensure its capital works program aligns with the needs of these growing communities, while also advocating for stronger public transport links to connect the homes with employment opportunities at Williamstown and Tomago.

### **Infill development opportunities**

The Property Council is supportive-in-principle of the opportunities for additional housing supply identified within the Housing Supply Plan. These areas include Anna Bay, Fingal Bay, Shoal Bay, Nelson Bay, Salamander Bay, Corlette, Soldiers Point, Lemon Tree Passage, Tanilba Bay, Fern Bay, Medowie, Karuah and Raymond Terrace.

We are mindful of the fact that this list may not necessarily be exhaustive and encourage Council to remain open to opportunities put forward by our industry to help alleviate our housing supply crisis.

### **Greenfield development opportunities**

The Property Council welcomes the intention of Council to “enable more efficient and sustainable development outcomes for new greenfield housing”. We support the incorporation of small lot housing or multi dwelling housing where this aligns with market demand.

We note the draft strategy relies on the Housing Preferences in Port Stephens Report (Housing Preferences Report 2019) prepared for Council by SGS Economics and Planning is now five years old and was used to justify the previous Housing Strategy. Given the impact of COVID-19 on housing patterns across the state, particularly in regional areas, and the significant time that has elapsed since the report was Commissioned, we would encourage Council to be open to considering more up-to-date data when considering any future planning proposal.

As more current information on housing trends comes to light, there may be opportunities for redevelopment sites in existing urban areas to satisfy this demand, as well as opportunities for new urban release areas to offer a broader range of housing types and sizes. The encouragement of more diversity in lot sizes is supported by industry.

### **Next steps**

The Property Council looks forward to the adoption of the Port Stephens Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Plan, inclusive of feedback provided by industry. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0439 253 710 or [ahugo@propertycouncil.com.au](mailto:ahugo@propertycouncil.com.au).

Yours sincerely



Anita Hugo  
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Property Council of Australia