COOLANGATTA AND KIRRA BUSINESS CENTRE PLACE BASED MASTER PLAN

FEBRUARY 2020 – VERSION 3
Coolangatta and Kirra has always been a favourite place for Queenslanders – and lots of other Australians. It is one of our most popular day-trip destinations but many came to visit and loved the place so much they stayed permanently and now it is a major residential precinct.

Of course, that amazing stretch of beach along Coolangatta and Kirra is loved by millions around the world and it certainly deserves very special consideration as we plan the future for this area.

Our community consultation on this Master Plan gave us a lot of valuable feedback and the greatest asset was that people felt safe here so that is a key consideration for the future.

Many local residents love walking and rated the importance of footpaths highly while those who come by car, especially from northern New South Wales, want parking improvements. This reaffirms my belief that the Light Rail network must proceed to the Airport and Coolangatta as quickly as humanly possible.

And if the NSW government finalises a business case and decides to link with our Light Rail from their side that would be a very smart move.

Our determination to improve local parks has received a big tick from the community who see them as a great asset, along with wanting more trees and shade. Another very popular feature people asked for is an expansion of cycleways.

The beach culture of Coolangatta-Kirra is deeply ingrained and that will be a major design influence as we proceed to expand and enhance community facilities.

As a place with a strong historical feel, protection of older character buildings is seen as a priority.

So, our vision for Coolangatta and Kirra is to celebrate the uniqueness of the place and enhance the most popular features to cater for local population growth and growing domestic and international visitation. Above all else we want to nurture the look and feel of this place that people from everywhere love and enjoy.

MAYOR TOM TATE
CITY OF GOLD COAST
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“IF YOU PLAN CITIES FOR CARS AND TRAFFIC YOU GET CARS AND TRAFFIC. IF YOU PLAN CITIES FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES, YOU GET PEOPLE AND PLACES.”

– Fred Kent

The founder and president of the non-profit organisation Project for Public Spaces. The organisation is dedicated to creating public places that foster communities.
PART A – UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT
1.0 Introduction

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Coolangatta and Kirra’s business centre are the subject of a place based master plan, produced in consultation with the area’s business leaders, key stakeholders and community.

Through well engaged place making, thorough site analysis and urban design, opportunities aim to improve the street environment and quality of the public realm within the business centre areas. This will ultimately attract more people to stop, stay and shop, and better meet the needs of the local community, visitors and business environment.

This place based master plan describes the overall vision for the business centres of Coolangatta and Kirra. It is a decision making tool which will identify future project opportunities, inform budgets and guide decisions for development assessment. Individual capital works projects will roll out as funding permits.

Many of the challenges in strengthening and enhances the area’s pedestrian environment and public space revolves around achieving solutions with existing traffic issues.

1.2 BACKGROUND
A master plan has never been commissioned for Coolangatta and Kirra. With increased development and growth, there is a need to investigate how the precinct currently works and explore the potential of the area.

There have been a number of capital works, maintenance and renewal projects delivered that lacked an overall direction.

The urban make-up of Coolangatta and surrounding areas can be attributed to the dominance of the vehicle. A new focus needs to be given to the pedestrian to complement the relaxed beachside vibe.

Coolangatta’s landscape setting is unique: it’s north facing aspect is comprised of precincts separated by landmark headlands.

Coolangatta is a regional centre and tourism hot spot of the southern Gold Coast.

Coolangatta has a unique border town relationship with Tweed Heads.

1.3 PURPOSE OF REPORT
The Coolangatta and Kirra Business Centre Place Based Master Plan (master plan) aims to unlock the precinct’s potential and guide its transformation into one of the city’s most vibrant and diverse beachside neighbourhoods and business centres.

Small-scale, incremental, low cost improvements, known as ‘tactical urbanism’, may be implemented as early actions out of the master plan, building community interest and momentum, as well as testing ideas for future permanent changes.

This report has been created to assist Councillors and officers in making clear, concise decisions for future projects within the precincts.

1.4 WHAT IS PLACE MAKING
According to Project for Public Spaces (PPS), place making capitalises on a local community’s assets, inspiration and potential to create higher quality public spaces that contribute to people’s health, happiness and well-being.

Place making refers to a collaborative process in which the public realm is re-structured to maximise its value and strengthen the connection between people and the place they share. Its focus is on local community assets with the intention of creating public spaces that are lively and diverse.

“Start with the Petunias – little things can set the stage for big change.” - PPS

Place making goes further than promoting great urban design, it facilitates creative patterns of use which recognise the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and its continuing development. Large capital upgrade projects are identified in a precinct master plan and will generally include substantial changes to the public realm that focus on pedestrian amenity and address the following:

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1.5 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Internal consultation

Division 14 Office
Transport and Infrastructure
Lifestyle and Community
Economy, Planning and Environment
Office of the CEO
Gold Coast Water
Active Travel
Office of the City Architect
Parks and Open Space
Safe and Livable Communities
Waste Management
Urban Precincts
Local Law

External consultation

Local business community
Local community and visitors

HISTORY

Surfing culture and beach; headlands; old buildings; rail track; indigenous; old sailing ships.

CHARACTER

Everything related to the beach and surfing; heritage; laid back vibe; family orientated and friendly; country town feel.

FUTURE

Walkable and cycle friendly; accessible; reduce vehicle dependency; safe and community focussed; trendy; vibrant; retain existing scale; enhance the natural beauty.
1.6 STUDY AREA

The core study area comprises Kirra and Coolangatta business centre precincts (as shown below). However, to create changes that will assist Coolangatta and Kirra to thrive and flourish, the report considers the need to investigate and analyse the areas surrounding business centres. These include:

- Kirra Headland and the open space reserve (railway cutting)
- suburban areas to the south of Kirra and Coolangatta
- Tweed Heads including Bay Street, Wharf Street and Stuart Street
- surrounding parks.
1.7 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

This master plan is guided by a number of documents, including:
2.0 Community Consultation

2.1 KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK

Effective engagement is essential for producing the best place based master plan that meets community needs, and enhances and protects the values of Coolangatta and Kirra.

Initial engagement was undertaken with a key group of local business and community leaders to develop a vision and conceptualise ideas for a draft plan. The draft plan was then received by an internal stakeholder group before seeking feedback from the community.

2.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The community engagement was designed to maximise feedback from the community; especially those most affected by the plan including residents, property owners and businesses within Coolangatta and Kirra. The feedback was also sought from broader Gold Coast community who visit or have an interest in the area, visitors who may be visiting during the consultation phase and the planning and development industry.

The engagement period ran from 25 March to 15 April 2019. During community engagement, the draft master plan received 678 completed surveys from respondents and 33 ideas and suggestions for implementation in the draft plan. A survey aimed to provide feedback on specific aspects of the master plan, whilst an ideas tool allowed community suggestions to be captured for the topics:

- 20 year plan
- arts and culture
- historical preservation.

A range of marketing and communications tactics were utilised including:

- media announcement
- social media campaign
- direct mail of postcards to residents and businesses within walking distance to Coolangatta and Kirra, plus distribution to local cafes and restaurants
- electronic direct mail to the City Panel
- Planning and Development Hub and Alert
- pop-up display – approximately 4000 people visited the stand during the engagement period
- engagement with local Divisional Councillor to share information.

Key findings

From a total of 678 survey responses:

- 54.9% made day trips to Coolangatta/Kirra for recreational purposes
- 76.3% used a private vehicle as the primary mode of transport in the area
- 72.9% were most satisfied with the safety of the precincts during the day, whilst 51 per cent were most unsatisfied with car parking
- approximately 74 per cent strongly or somewhat supported the proposed Master Plan and more than 80 per cent strongly or somewhat supported the proposed park improvements
- a total of 33 ideas were submitted from 26 respondents.

The engagement highlighted how passionate the community are for Coolangatta and Kirra. They appreciate the master plan and the importance of getting it right for the improvement of the business centres.

Respondents who lived in the area identified walking as a mode of transport almost as frequently as private vehicle use.
Car parking was the most unsatisfied feature, with 51 per cent of respondents either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Of this 51 per cent, 87.8% were from Northern NSW. Most age groups considered car parking to also be the most unsatisfied feature, including the 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 65-74 years and 75 years and over. The second most unsatisfied feature was traffic (47.6%) followed by safety at night (37.6%). Of this 47.6%, approximately 87 per cent were from Northern NSW. The 55-64 years age group were most unsatisfied with traffic, while the less than 18 years and 18-24 years were most unsatisfied with public art. The most unsatisfied feature for Gold Coast residents was traffic, followed by car parking, and shade and street trees.

Car parking and traffic appear to be bigger issues for people over the age of 54 and people coming from Northern NSW. Public art was as big an issue to car parking for people below 35. Safety at night was a bigger issue for people over 34, and shade and street trees were consistently important across all groups.

It appears the main reason people strongly opposed the master plan (6.7% of respondents) is their fear of losing what they have – particularly the relaxed vibe and character. They particularly don’t want over development with too many high rises or to lose what they have, to become like Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach. People who somewhat opposed the plan were also concerned with issues of parking, improvements to footpaths, pedestrian safety and providing more seating and shade.

Other than the definite top two priorities ‘Reduced traffic congestion’ and ‘Street trees for shade’, people over 54 appeared to then favour improving the conditions for walking followed by headland and park improvements. The highest priority for the under 18 year age group was ‘Wall murals and pavement art’, whilst 18-25 years considered ‘Water Sensitive Urban Design’ (WSUD) the highest priority. The 35-44 years age group identified ‘Boardwalk improvements including viewing platforms’ as the highest priority and the 65-74 years considered this to be ‘Street lighting for safety’. The top three priorities for Gold Coast residents were reduced traffic congestion, street trees for shade, and parking facility improvements.

### DO YOU SUPPORT PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS?

- **Somewhat or strongly support**: 81.4%
- **Somewhat or strongly oppose**: 6.7%
- **Neutral**: 13%

### IDEAS FOR THE 20 YR PLAN

- “Plant more native trees on median strips and open grass areas for shade and to attract birds.”
- “Restrict speed of non-pedestrian traffic on footpaths and dual use paths.”
- “Pedestrianise Griffith Street.”

### DO YOU SUPPORT THE MASTER PLAN?

- **Somewhat or strongly support**: 74.2%
- **Somewhat or strongly oppose**: 10.1%
- **Neutral**: 15.6%

### TOP THREE MASTER PLAN PRIORITIES

1. **Reduce traffic congestion**
2. **Street trees for shade**
3. **Extra places to sit and enjoy views**
Shown above, the most common theme from comments was pedestrian walkways and crossings. Many respondents were supportive of the walkway improvements to encourage a more active lifestyle; however, improving the shade along pathways was also suggested to encourage a more active lifestyle. Road improvements were frequently mentioned to improve pedestrian safety and mobility. In addition, comments repeatedly called for bicycles and motorised skateboards to be removed from the walkways, as they were hazardous to pedestrians.

The second prominent theme was parking: most respondents wanted more parking (including additional parking for disability and electric scooters); requests for free parking; new developments to provide adequate parking; issues about most people driving in Marine Parade are looking for parking; suggestions of a multi-story car park in Chalk Street; safety issues; event parking; and enforcement.

The third most common theme was roads and traffic, with over development and population growth in the area placing a strain on road infrastructure, further intensifying the problem. Addressing the road and traffic issues for Coolangatta and Kirra were considered high priorities with respondents suggesting these should take precedence over other aspects of the master plan. Road and traffic concerns were also identified as posing safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists. In particular, several comments suggested reducing the foliage in and around intersections to promote visibility. Suggestions for the master plan included revising the speed limits for some streets, such as Griffith Street, Marine Parade and Stapylton Street, among others. Others suggested making the ocean front roads one-way or making Marine Parade car free.

**QUALITATIVE THEMES OF OTHER SPECIFIC NEEDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian walkways and crossings</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green spaces</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>Arts and culture</td>
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<td>Local atmosphere and identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation facilities</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Public transport</td>
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<td>Asset maintenance</td>
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<td>Crime and policing</td>
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<td>Seating</td>
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<td>Cycleways</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
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<td>Amenities</td>
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<td>Social welfare</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dining and entertainment</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy and business</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Environment protection</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
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<td>Financial wastage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal and pest management</td>
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<td>Waste and recycling</td>
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<td>Information and transparency</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

“CITIES HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY, ONLY BECAUSE, AND ONLY WHEN, THEY ARE CREATED BY EVERYBODY”

- Jane Jacobs
  Author and Urbanist
This master plan has been developed with four governing and guiding themes.

It is believed these four themes capture the essence of best practice place making and can be used for both precinct scale and street scale analysis and design.

This approach also allows the analysis (Part A) to translate into the vision (Part B) of this master plan.
The analysis was conducted from late 2017 through to mid 2018. It is noted that cities and places are living organisms and are forever evolving and changing and this static document acknowledges that some information shown below may become outdated or subject to change in the near future.

### 3.1 TRANSPORT AND CIRCULATION

Coolangatta and Kirra are desirable locations for a large number of day trippers, short and long-term tourists due, in part, to the beautiful and alluring natural landscape, surf and surrounding beaches.

Three key issues which have been highlighted throughout the analysis and community engagement are:

- Traffic congestion and management of traffic conditions;
- Car parking and management of car parking;
- Walkability and cycling

“The real bottom line is that walking, biking and transits are the way cities and communities thrive” – Peter Calthorpe, 2017

#### 3.1.1 Walking and cycling

Generally, from past experience and recent worldwide research, creating a great walking experience presents extensive social, economic and physical benefits for all demographics belonging to a community.

According to Heart Foundation’s ‘Good for Busine$$’ report, 2011, some noticeable benefits of making streets walking and cycling friendly include:

- increase in retail rental values
- generates more business and stimulates the local economy
- increase in property values
- people stay longer in business centre areas if they walk compared to driving.

Ben Rossiter from Victoria Walks, suggests walking becomes the primary source of transport and leisure for people over the age of 70 and reveals studies which claim more 15-20 year olds rely on walking to get around and have no desire to own a car.

The ‘Walking Score’ (www.walkscore.com) which measures the walkability of a particular place has scored Coolangatta 78 out of 100, meaning most errands can be accomplished by foot. This compares favourably with Broadbeach’s score of 79 which tops the list for Gold Coast suburbs. It should be noted however, this score gives a general insight into an area’s walkability by only considering limited criteria to conclude a score.

A detailed walkability audit (Map 1) was developed to examine the local conditions of the surrounding suburban streets and the effectiveness to facilitate active transport into the business centres. This audit was customised using numerous walkability audits as a guide. A criteria of 20 questions under four topics of walkability was created and used to audit and score 40 kilometres of street footpaths in Coolangatta and Kirra. Key findings from the audit include:

- most suburban street footpaths and staircases are old, in original condition and in need of replacing or maintenance
- the majority of footpaths are 1200mm wide, or less, and contain many Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) issues
- seating and resting spots with “things of interest” are very limited (excluding the Oceanway)
- shade and trees are lacking along all footpaths.
Further investigation and analysis reveals crucial missing or confusing links in the pathway connectivity and permeability between destination points and obstructions blocking pathways in many instances.

The popular Oceanway footpath allows for tremendous active transport opportunities between the Coolangatta and Kirra business centres. It takes advantage of the beautiful scenery of the area making for an interesting walk or cycle, and is the primary mode of active transport in the area. However, stakeholder and community engagement feedback reveals the popularity of this infrastructure is causing overcrowding which increases the risk of injury and dangerous situations between walkers, joggers, skateboarders, cyclists, and scooters. This will continue to be an issue as the local population and tourist market grows.

Another major constraint which affects the ability to actively travel by walking or cycling includes the topographical landscape of the area. Coolangatta is surrounded by hilly suburban terrain of up to 20m above sea level. Grades are as steep as 18 per cent in some parts making walking very difficult for a population with 26 per cent over the age of 65 and an average age of 50 (Australian Bureau of Statistics national census 2016).

Despite these issues, there are many locals walking on and over the hills into the business centre area from their homes.
Pedestrian counts within Coolangatta and Kirra, includes dominant pedestrian desire lines. Data taken 2017-2018

**Walkability**

- Existing car parking in Marine Parade creates difficulties for pedestrians (image taken 2018)
- A-frames, car overhang, outdoor dining are all obstacles for walkers in Griffith Street (image taken 2018)
- Existing footpath widths may not be suitable in built up pedestrian areas (image taken 2018)

Legend

- > 1000 pedestrians / day
- 601 - 1000 pedestrians / day
- 201 - 600 pedestrians / day
- < 200 pedestrians / day

Pedestrian desire line and counts
A popular walking route for locals which somewhat connects Kirra and Coolangatta is the old railway track which has a cutting through the 20 metre hilly terrain, making the walk more manageable and convenient. However, community engagement feedback reveals safety issues (particularly at night) walking through the cutting.

Within Coolangatta business centre, the majority of pedestrians favour Marine Parade, between McLean Street and Warner Street - refer to Map 2 and 3. The pedestrian crossing outside The Strand connecting to Queen Elizabeth Park and the Oceanway is the most popular pedestrian crossing of many in the business centre.

Onsite observation found pedestrian direction of travel to be East-West, or West-East, along Marine Parade and Griffith Street. This may be due, in part, to the high amount of holiday accommodation surrounding the business centre.

Compared to Griffith Street, the full-width footpath of Marine Parade is narrow given the number of walkers and cyclists frequenting this footpath. This combined with physical obstructions such as A-frame boards, shop displays, car parking and outdoor dining on both sides of the footpath, make it extremely difficult to navigate—especially for the vision impaired.

Griffith Street isn’t immune to footpath obstruction either as the profile of footpath structure, or lack thereof, creates a zig-zag walking route for pedestrians using the space. The width of footpath is adequate along Griffith Street however, some areas are prone to heavy cross falls which are not compliant to DDA requirements.

Kirra’s business centre footprint is a lot smaller than Coolangatta and with new residential developments being built within this business centre most of the old and poorly maintained footpaths have been upgraded. There are however, walkability issues such as obstructions (outdoor dining and bus stop shelters, etc.) which may impact some users.

The experience of walking into Kirra’s business centre from suburban areas is poor (refer to walkability audit) however one benefit Kirra has over Coolangatta is its flat topography, making walking easier.

Pedestrian connectivity between the business centre and other destination points like Coolangatta State School, or Kirra Sports Club is lacking and could be stronger with better way-finding and permeability.

Another pedestrian connectivity issue to note is the link from Kirra Headland bus stop on Marine Parade, to the Kirra Pavilion on Kirra Beach. The crossing point across Marine Parade is visually and physically disjointed making it hard for any pedestrian to navigate.

Dedicated on road cycling routes (Map 4) can be found in Marine Parade in Coolangatta as well as Miles Street and Musgrave Street in Kirra. These, along with the Oceanway, are key active transport routes through the area and are busy routes for vehicular traffic as well.

The 90 degree nose in parking and narrow vehicle lanes, adjacent formal bike lanes on Marine Parade causes legitimate safety concerns for cyclists.

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**Pedestrian counts of formal crossings within Coolangatta business centre – Audit taken 5 October 2017**

1. 11 people - 9.45-9.50am
2. 15 people - 9.51-9.56am
3. 27 people - 10.06-10.11am
4. 20 people - 10.13-10.18am
5. 13 people - 10.26-10.31am
6. 8 people - 10.45-10.50am
7. 4 people - 10.52-10.57am
8. 9 people - Signalised intersection
9. 14 people - 11.42-11.47am
10. 38 people - 11.34-11.39am
11. 17 people - 10.45-10.50am
12. 3 people - 10.52-10.57am
13. 11 people - 11.06-11.11am
14. 8 people - 11.07-11.09am
15. 1 people - 12.03-12.08pm
16. 19 people - 11.04-11.09am
17. 4 people - 12.03-12.08pm
18. 11 people - 12.03-12.08pm
19. 25 people - 10.32-10.37am
20. 29 people - 10.20-10.25am
21. 3 people - 12.30-12.35pm
22. 9 people - 12.39-12.44pm
23. 9 people - 12.39-12.44pm
24. 18 people - 9.59-10.04am
25. 25 people - 11.42-11.47am
26. 33 people - 11.20-11.25am
Cycling bike racks on Marine Parade are well utilised. (image taken 2018)

Cycling bike racks in Griffith Street are always busy. (image taken 2018)

Cycling confusion at the intersection of Marine Parade and Hill Street. (image taken 2018)

Cycling bike racks to Marine Parade outside The Strand seems to be always full. (image taken 2018)

Cycling bike racks being used in Dutton Street. (image taken 2018)

Cycling leisure cyclists riding on Hill Street. It's the only real option. (image taken 2018)

Cycling most cyclists seem to ride on business centre footpaths for safety reasons. (image taken 2018)
The audit indicates pedestrian activity is highest in the key business centre areas. North/south activity is high from Chalk Street car park to QEP as is east/west pedestrian travel on Marine Parade and Griffith Street.

Safety concerns are echoed across Coolangatta’s business centre by the community and external stakeholders with many saying they don’t ride on the roads due to the high number of vehicles frequenting the area as well other unsafe traffic conditions. This was visible during the site analysis, with very minimal cyclists observed riding on the road. It is also evident how many vehicles dominate the road space in and around Coolangatta and Kirra.

Many of the cyclists riding along the streets of Coolangatta and Kirra business centre were observed as leisure/recreational riders with a riding speed not much faster than walking speed. A number of families (locals or tourists) on bikes were also witnessed and both of these riding groups favoured the footpath over the road.

It was also noted bike racks within the business centre area were constantly full or being used with overflow bikes being secured to nearby structures.

The hilly terrain of the suburban areas behind the Coolangatta business centre precinct physically discourages cyclists, as it is near impossible to ride up the steep gradients of this topography. There is however the flat terrain of Goodwin Park which connects Coolangatta’s business centre area to the southern back streets of the suburb. This route may facilitate cyclists entering the business centre from these southern most suburban areas of Coolangatta.

The local roads of Kirra leading to the business centre have low vehicular traffic numbers (excluding Musgrave Street and Miles Street) and therefore make on road cycling more desirable. It is noted however, that most of these local roads can foster speeding vehicles as they do not contain any traffic calming elements such as road or edge lane marking which may psychologically facilitate a slow speed environment. Riding on the local footpath network within Kirra is difficult as the width and condition of the majority of footpaths are of low quality.

The Oceanway footpath is by far the most popular choice for leisure cyclists travelling between Kirra and Coolangatta and beyond. However, the Oceanway is also very popular for pedestrians and overcrowding is now becoming an issue.

Community engagement feedback suggests the Oceanway footpath is becoming more dangerous with near misses at pinch points, such as at Kirra Pavilion, becoming a daily occurrence. Furthermore, feedback received suggests the type of cyclist that uses the Oceanway is evolving and now includes a larger number of high speed cyclists, electric bikes and scooters.
“EVERY TIME YOU TRAVEL YOU PUT MONEY INTO THE SYSTEM, BUT YOU ALSO COST THE SYSTEM. YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO AND BURDEN ON THE SYSTEM DIFFERS DEPENDING ON HOW YOU TRAVEL.”
3.1.2 Public transport

The existing public transport system comprises of a bus network that runs from Wharf Street in Tweed Heads, through Griffith Street and then onto Marine Parade/Musgrave Street, passing through Kirra and then out of the precinct and vice versa.

There are high numbers of buses and coaches which frequent the business centres of Kirra and Coolangatta with approximately 400-500 trips made daily. Bus route 700 for instance, connects Coolangatta to Broadbeach and travels through Griffith Street with buses heading north over 130 times a day (equating to stopping in Griffith Street every 8-20 minutes).

Furthermore, the frequency and number of buses entering the centre means that bus congestion occurs, with some buses double parking whilst waiting for the bus stop ranks to become available.

Onsite observations revealed convoys of up to four Translink buses travelling south together along Griffith Street. Whilst this may function from a public transport viewpoint, the traffic congestion and noise pollution it creates through ‘stop-starting’ at every pedestrian crossing and roundabout along Griffith Street creates other negative issues for street amenity. Feedback from community engagement suggests the buses that come through are very efficient in transporting between Coolangatta and other seaside suburbs like Broadbeach and Southport (Map 5). A bus ride on route 700 to Broadbeach takes approximately 45 minutes according to the Translink timetable.

An issue identified with accessing Coolangatta’s business centre areas from other parts of Gold Coast and Northern NSW, via the bus network, is that it takes approximately three times longer by bus to arrive in Coolangatta as opposed to using a private vehicle (see images on page 25). Couple this with the cost of taking the bus and the delay in getting to a bus stop and waiting times, it is understandable that a lot of the community are electing to drive rather than take public transport into Coolangatta.

Community feedback shows 76.3% of respondents advised they arrive in Kirra and Coolangatta via private vehicle transportation.
As mentioned previously Coolangatta and Kirra are surrounded by hilly terrain which is a constraint to walking. It also excludes Translink buses which cannot access gradients as steep as those in this area. The outcome being a lot of local residents from Point Danger to the back streets of Coolangatta don’t have convenient access to bus routes and bus stops.

Greyhound Australia operates an interstate coach route twice daily connecting Sydney and Brisbane, via Coolangatta. There is a designated stop at the Coolangatta Transit Terminal on the corner of Warner and Chalk Street which is accessed via Lanham Street when travelling from Brisbane. Continuing south, the coach navigates along Gerrard Street before turning right onto Dixon Street to leave the precinct. Currently the Coolangatta Transit Terminal is a place where some displaced persons congregate. Way finding and tourist information was absent at the bus stop.

Taxi ranks are located within the business centres of Coolangatta and Kirra with popular secure ranks located in Griffith Street near Dutton Street and Marine Parade (outside The Strand).

The rise in popularity of Transportation Network Companies (TNC) such as Uber and other ridesharing companies provide an alternative service to taxi services. Deloitte’s 2016 report ‘Economic affects of ridesharing in Australia’ points out that 64 per cent of Uber rides start in ‘transport deserts’ or the ‘last mile’ - areas around 800 metres from medium frequency public transport. It also mentions the average waiting time for Uber was 4.46 minutes compared to 7.79 minutes for taxis. In fact, a local taxi company is spruiking a 90 per cent success rate in collecting passengers within 15 minutes.

Both taxis and ridesharing companies play a major part in the current public transport system of Coolangatta (specifically the ‘last mile’) due to the aging demographic and hilly terrain of the area.

3.1.3 Private transport

The 1950s-60s in Coolangatta and Kirra, like most coastal suburbs on the Gold Coast, saw our streets designed for motor car use with large sweeping corners, wide roads and car parking located in prime pedestrian areas the norm. This is approximately the same time the passenger train connecting Coolangatta to Brisbane was decommissioned.

Pat Fagan was one of the first to bring a vehicle to Coolangatta, he did so to transfer his tourist clientele from the local train stop to his hotel in the early 1900s. By the 1930s, the sight of cars spread along the foreshore of Kirra and Coolangatta was a regular occurrence.

Of the 678 respondents of our community engagement feedback, 54.9% advised they come to the precinct for recreational/leisure purposes and 76.3% travel to the precinct via personal vehicle.

Community feedback revealed car parking is currently an issue at the forefront for residents, employees and day trippers. Car park locations that were favoured in the feedback included those in Griffith Street and Marine Parade.

As seen in Map 6, of the marked car parking bays in Coolangatta’s business centre, it is estimated 40 per cent to 45 per cent of these bays are allocated as unrestricted which means drivers can park their vehicles all day leading to potential economic ‘impacts’ for local retailers.

Surrounding Kirra and Coolangatta’s business centre is a street network of approximately four kilometres of unmarked car parking availability. These areas are all within 400 metres of the respective business centres.

Premium on street car parking bays are located along Marine Parade in Coolangatta which is also the busiest vehicular route in the Kirra and Coolangatta precinct. The 90 degree parking bays in Marine Parade are time restricted to three hour parking and provide easy access to the park and beach on one side and shops on the other side of the road. The manoeuvring of vehicles in and out of these car parks, and the time it takes to do so increases traffic congestion.

“It is estimated that up to 30 per cent of urban traffic is generated by drivers looking for parking” Wani Kabbaj, 2016
Getting to Coolangatta and Kirra from surrounding areas

Images derived from Google mapping - 2017
“PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS A PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF TRAVEL. IT IS BENEFICIAL BECAUSE IT CREATES JOBS, REDUCES GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, AND PROMOTES SAFE TRAVEL”

– Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Popular off street public parking is located in Chalk Street, behind the Griffith Street shops. There are more than 157 unrestricted parking bays provided. A further 160 off street public car parks are located towards Greenmount Beach, off Marine Parade.

Secure Parking at The Strand has approximately 650 private car parks available to the public with the first two or three hours free, depending on the day.

Car parking appears to be more of an issue during the week than on the weekend. Most likely due to the amount of employees that park in the area, inadvertently impacting on potential customers who then encounter difficulties finding car parks. This could lead to a potential loss in revenue for shopkeepers.

At the time of writing this report, the City’s Transport and Traffic Branch is undertaking a car parking study to investigate:

- improving parking turnover
- ensuring the right parking in the right location
- minimising impacts from overflow parking to residential streets.

This study will supersede a 2016 Coolangatta car parking study undertaken by consultancy firm Bitzios on behalf of City of Gold Coast and will focus mainly on time restriction changes.

As with car parking, existing traffic conditions and management of traffic is the biggest concern for the community, according to the feedback received as part of community engagement. Map 7 highlights this concern as large numbers of vehicles enter the precinct on a daily basis with one count at Kirra Headland on Marine Parade registering more than 17,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Marine Parade and Griffith Street (the section of street bordered by McLean and Warner Streets) regularly record vehicle counts hovering around 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd).

In comparison, The Esplanade in Surfers Paradise registered counts of 15,000 (2015) and Surf Parade in Broadbeach registered counts of 10,500 vpd in 2015.

Jeff Speck, an author, presenter and American city planner suggests two-way streets have road capacity for up to 10,000 vpd. If this is the case, the main streets of Coolangatta have reached their capacity.

Adding to traffic congestion during peak times is the combination of:

- on-street nose in car parking
- 31 formal pedestrian crossings which cater for the high number of pedestrians
- lack of convenient public transport options.

Onsite observations support this with the intersection of Griffith Street and Warner Street constantly queued with vehicles banked up at this roundabout, from each direction, causing a constant concertina effect. Furthermore, while counting pedestrians crossing at this intersection (10.45am-10.50am), it was noted more than 115 vehicles passed through this intersection in five minutes, equating to one vehicle every 2.5 seconds. At the same time around 87 people used the four pedestrian crossings of this intersection, which equates to one pedestrian every 3.5 seconds (these observations weren’t made during peak traffic and pedestrian times).
Vehicular traffic counts in Coolangatta and Kirra.
Data obtained 2018.

MAP 6

Car parking in Coolangatta and Kirra. Data obtained 2018.
* City's Transport and Traffic Branch is undertaking a car parking study which will ultimately supersede this map

MAP 7

Vehicular traffic counts in Coolangatta and Kirra.
Data obtained 2018
More than 66% of people travelled by car; driver or passenger.

11.2% of people walked or cycled.

3.5% of people travelled by public transport.
The traffic congestion maps show different points of congestion throughout the weekdays starting from 8am and finishing at 4pm. Foremost, it highlights the constant daily stress Marine Parade and Griffith Street is under from 9.00-10am right through to 4.00pm. It also exposes the traffic stress at all entry points including Miles Street, Coolangatta Road and Wharf Street – the main entrance from Tweed Heads.

It is interesting to note other key trends:

- Congestion at Point Danger and Snapper Rocks builds up throughout the afternoon. This could relate to the surf breaks attracting surfers after work.
- ‘Rat-run’ into and out of Coolangatta via Gordon Lane which once was a ‘little secret’ for locals, is now becoming more popular and mainstream. As a consequence it is becoming congested for much of the day.
- The intersection of Griffith Street and Warner Street is congested from 9am, peaking at lunch time.
- The amount of vehicle traffic in the region is generally highest between the times of 11.30am–1pm.

It should be noted that these maps do represent the traffic on weekdays only and not on weekends. The severity of congestion points will no doubt differ as the use of the precinct changes.

These traffic congestion maps were derived from Google over the span of three consecutive months from 2017 to 2018.

Each map represents five individual maps taken from random weekdays which were then placed on top of one another to emphasise the main traffic congestion and traffic flow issues of this area.
“PLACE IS MORE THAN A SPOT ON A MAP. PLACE IS WHAT MAKES YOUR HOME TOWN DIFFERENT FROM MY HOME TOWN”

– Ed McMahon

Senior Fellow at the Urban Land Institute
3.2 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Coolangatta is Gold Coast’s southernmost urban area and major centre. It has a unique physical environment nestled between hills to the south and west, and curving north-facing world-class surfing beaches and headlands to the north and east.

It’s central area contains a mix of land uses including retail, commercial, restaurants, cafés, bars, hotels, music venues, clubs, local services and a wide range of accommodation. Previous streetscape improvements undertaken by the City has enhanced part of its business centre as a more modern, safe, attractive and pleasant place to visit.

Kirra is also part of the world-renowned surfing area. It is the ‘younger cousin’ to Coolangatta; physically separated from Coolangatta by Kirra Hill, and located at the southern end of the long stretch of beach which connects to Currumbin in the north. Kirra has modernised from the early years with an increasing number of luxury boutique-style apartments, popular cafés and gourmet restaurants lining the beachfront.

3.2.1 Streetscape amenity

Coolangatta’s urban streetscape amenity lacks aesthetic consistency in landscape elements. For example, there are more than 35 different footpath treatments in this business centre alone.

Griffith Street is a long street (approximately 800 metres) with varied active commercial frontages and accommodation frontages along both sides. The built environment is mixed with small town-scaled buildings (some with original character); high-rise accommodation and a large shopping centre. Aesthetically, Griffith Street is separated into two parts which reduces the visual cohesion of the street. As a whole, the street looks tired and old and fails to blend in with the neighbouring business centre streets of Tweed Heads, an issue the feedback from external stakeholders identified. Although not as busy as Coolangatta, the business centre area of Kirra has the same footpath profile issues.

Improvements to Griffith Street streetscape which may include widening and re-levelling of the footpath for better pedestrian use is difficult due to existing storm water constraints. Any works to improve the streetscape in this form will require major civil works at significant costs.

New ground cover planting has been incorporated into part of Griffith Street and surrounds. The implementation of this desert palette was influenced by a perceived reduction to maintenance costs. A greater cost is the depletion of the overall landscape character and shade amenity of the area, noting the SEQ Regional Plan indicates a sub-tropical planting palette is desired. Feedback from community engagement was generally mixed in relation to this new planting palette.

The footpath profile and structure of both Griffith Street and Marine Parade (approximately 950 metres long) is flawed causing numerous pedestrian congestion problems, including A-frame signage boards, selling racks from adjacent shops and outdoor dining dispersed on either side of the footpath. Walking through both streets, especially for the vision impaired, is difficult and is further impacted by limited pedestrian space in Marine Parade. Although not as busy as Coolangatta, the business centre area of Kirra has the same footpath profile issues.

Marine Parade has an impressive scenic outlook from the commercial side of the street overlooking Queen Elizabeth Park with filtered views through to the beach and surf. Mature Norfolk Pines dominate the street and are an important landmark for Coolangatta. Street facilities such as seating for resting is limited along Marine Parade, as are bike racks and bins.

Chalk Street, to the south of Griffith Street, for many years has had a negative reputation due to the total lack of street amenity.

The northern side of Chalk Street is composed of ‘back of house’ buildings (that front onto Griffith Street) with uncomplimentary skip bins located kerbside. Car parking areas line the southern side of Chalk Street.

It is this car parking and the continuous ‘back of house’ frontage which impedes pedestrian permeability and connectivity into the main business centre and the suburban streets of Coolangatta.
Warner Street is visually unattractive. It plays an important role as one of the main vehicle entry points into Coolangatta from Scott Street and hosts the Coolangatta Transit Centre. As a tourist dependent town, first impressions and a visually attractive streetscape are highly important and Scott and Warner Street fail Coolangatta in this regard.

Kirra has a very limited commercial streetscape area with most of the amenity being realised by newer development. Even though the quality of footpath and furniture types has improved in this area, the consistency of aesthetic material differs between each development. Furthermore, additional residential development has been approved for Kirra with some under construction at the time of writing. This will no doubt add to the visual inconsistencies of Kirra.

Many of these newer buildings are, or will be nine storeys or higher and will ultimately influence further change to the streetscape amenity as have recently built apartments.

To feel comfortable in a space and have a sense of enclosure as a pedestrian, a 1:1 to 1:3 ratio relating building height to street width ratio is generally accepted worldwide. This means if a street is 20 metres wide, as is the case for Douglas Street, the building height on each side should be approximately 7–20 metres tall.

Approaching Kirra business centre from the east and west, the scale of these 10 storey plus buildings, especially along Musgrave Street, is somewhat offset by the mature Norfolk pines that sit adjacent and at a similar height to the buildings.

The outlook from the commercial area (mainly consisting of cafés with outdoor dining) is pleasant as it overlooks the open expanse of Roughton Park.

Suburban streetscape amenity for the streets which lead into the business centre of Kirra represents a laid back, informal profile of a small country town with most of the footpath network in original condition and showcasing the standards of yesteryear. The vegetation palette spills over from private landscapes whilst the limited street tree planting is mixed and random without structure.

Distant views out to the ocean and Surfers Paradise from the hilly streets of Kirra and Coolangatta create moderately entertaining and interesting pockets of visual amenity. Much like Kirra, the suburban streetscape amenity of Coolangatta contains a mixed planting palette and relies heavily on the spill over of private landscape planting. For the most part, street elements such as the footpath are in original condition and most of these surrounding streets do not have street furniture for resting opportunities.

The built environment of the surrounding suburbs is made up of three storey walk ups and single dwellings of varying quality and forms.

Between Griffith Street and Marine Parade, the streetscape amenity of Warner Street is disturbing with:

- drive ways and loading docks that monopolise the street
- dominant façades of non-active edges straining vitality and human scale
- inadequate quantity of street trees and street furniture
- infrequent gusty winds penetrating between high rises
- street generally lacking vibrancy.

The gusty winds have a negative effect on the streetscape amenity of both Coolangatta and Kirra in general. The wind filtered into the area by the topological nature of the land accelerates when it hits the high rises, and is channelled through at street level. Wind speeds of more than 80km/hr have been registered at nearby weather stations. Wind speed on ground level generated by high rise buildings and the venturi effect has the potential to produce even higher wind speeds than this recording.
3.2.2 Open space amenity

Coolangatta and Kirra have large expanses of open space parklands (Map 8) as well as a network of open space linkages in and around the core business centre areas. The amenity of this green open space balances the scale of the built environment with the beach and surf that the area is famous for. This offers residents and tourists world class amenity.

Roughton Park and Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) combine to create a buffer between the beach and the business centres. They are the most widely used parks in the area providing exceptional visual amenity through to distant views of the Gold Coast coastline.

QEP is by far the most popular park for locals and tourists as it stretches the entire length of Marine Parade and sits adjacent two of the most popular beaches, Coolangatta Beach and Greenmount Beach.

Goodwin Park, located immediately south of Coolangatta business centre, is a 6.5 hectare park filled with mature trees and comprises a sports field, dog off-leash areas, a skate park and general parkland amenity.

Previously, Goodwin Park was a tourist caravan park, home to many holiday makers and is subject of entertaining stories including one about a visit from Manchester United Football team in the 1960s, according to one conversation with local resident.

Today, Goodwin Park is quiet and does offer respite, however social issues and safety, especially at night, is a major concern for locals.

Most of the park amenities are dated including the children’s playground and bench seating. This, together with previously noted issues, creates a park lacking identity and not a desirable destination.

Users consist mainly of locals, of varying demographics, as it is bordered by suburban residential areas and close to a number of primary schools, kindergartens and a TAFE.

Kirra’s Roughton Park, as previously mentioned, is a popular recreational park, linked to Coolangatta via the heavily used Oceanway. Most of the use of this park is based on the Oceanway infrastructure. Kirra Beach borders the park and is also another reason for people to use this park.

Roughton Park holds smaller local events such as Seaside Sounds and Swell throughout the year.

The existing sea wall aligns the Oceanway and effectively cuts the park longitudinally into two halves. This restricts infrastructure located seaside as it is deemed sacrificial in storm surge events.

Feedback from external stakeholders suggests more park facilities such as picnic tables and benches are needed across the entire park. Some also called for land reclamation for more recreational space.

Special attention needs to be focussed along the Oceanway adjacent Kirra Surf Club to improve seating, shade and safety for pedestrians from cyclists, where the path is narrow.

Roughton Park is an open park with limited intimate spaces. It is adjacent to busy Musgrave Street/Marine Parade, making for an unsettling experience for users trying to relax close to the edge of the park.
Percy Pease Memorial Park is triangular in shape and bordered by roads on all three sides, effectively isolating this park to other pedestrian areas. For this reason, Percy Pease park is underutilised and existing park amenities made up of a small number bench seats reflect this.

The dominant feature of the park is the mature Norfolks and Cook Island Pines. Most man-made features of the park are outdated.

Kirra Headland and Greenmount Headland are well loved natural landscapes and are associated with the area as much as the beach and surfing culture. They offer astounding views across Coolangatta, Kirra and north towards the Surfers Paradise skyline.

The standard of park facility and useable open space is lacking on Kirra Headland. The City is currently in the process of re-designing the headland to increase user amenity to make it more user friendly and increase viewing opportunities.

Greenmount Headland is just as active, if not more active than Kirra Headland, with pedestrians. This is because access is limited to the lower parts of the headland, so it is more viable for people to utilise this space. Facilities are located around the headland with recent upgrades to viewing platforms requiring more shade. The headland abuts Greenmount Beach which has historically been a popular, safe beach for locals and tourists.

Other prominent green spaces in Coolangatta and Kirra include the old railway cutting which is an important pedestrian link between the two suburbs. Also, the under utilised Coolangatta Creek buffer verge which runs adjacent Winston Street in Kirra.
3.2.3 Character and sense of place

In terms of the history, Coolangatta has much character and many stories. The character, history, culture and stories could help drive the area forward and be at the forefront of future urban design decisions.

Coolangatta is book-ended by the historically significant headlands of Kirra and Greenmount, whilst Kirra is located between Kirra Headland and Coolangatta Creek. Both Kirra and Coolangatta kiss the famous surf breaks to the north and the hills and state border of New South Wales to the south and east.

It’s the beauty of these topographies and cadastral history which have helped shape and define Coolangatta and Kirra’s intimate town-like character and identity. This continues to draw holiday makers and new residents to the area.

“In places that succeed, the development is shaped by the city’s character. In less successful places, the development shapes the character of the city.”

Ed McMahon, Chair - Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy at the Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C.

The beaches and world-class surf breaks have provided a fun and vibrant lifestyle for many years. What is unique and different to this area from other parts of the Gold Coast, is the beaches and surf breaks which join together at the points of the headlands – from Kirra to Greenmount and Snapper to Duranbah and has recently become the 8th World Surfing Reserve. Furthermore, it’s the only location on the Gold Coast where the beaches face true north which means a shadow will never be cast onto the sands from nearby developments. This is something Doug Roughton took full advantage of everyday with his famous Hokey Pokey dance in the mid-twentieth century.

Long before European settlement, the area along with the greater Tweed Coast became home to the Bundjalung and Yugembeh Indigenous people who remain significant stakeholders of the area. The land, waters and river mouths to the south and north of the area were recognised as a rich source of food. It has been suggested Indigenous activity directly relating to the Coolangatta and Kirra localities wasn’t as extensive compared to that on the lands of Tweed Coast and Tweed Valley, or to the northern regions near Currumbin.

Symbolic stories have resonated recently and one centred around Churaki who was honoured during the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Churaki was one of the saltwater people of the Bundjalung dialect who made the first recorded surf lifesaving on the Gold Coast at Greenmount Beach in the early 1900s. It’s stories like these, plus many others, which strengthen Coolangatta’s sense of place and history and is an important aspect to showcase moving forward.

Since European Settlement, the area has undergone significant change and the stand of Melaluecas which populated the area started making way for development pre-1900. However, little remains of these early buildings but evidence remains of subsequent development from the early years of the twentieth century. Coolangatta’s business centre is home to some of these early buildings, including Coolangatta Sands Hotel, Jazzland building and Griffith Street’s house-shops which line the southern side of Griffith Street.
COOLANGATTA IS

EVERYTHING RELATING TO THE BEACH AND SURFING INCLUDING HEADLANDS AND FORESHORE

FAMILY ORIENTATED

COUNTRY TOWN FEEL AND STILL A FAIRLY SLEEPY RESORT TOWN

DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT TO BROADBEACH AND SURFERS

NOT OVERRUN BY HIGHRISE

LIKE A YOUNGER, SMALLER COOLANGATTA

MORE PEACEFUL AND QUIET

LESS BUSY, LESS TOURISTS, AND AN OLDER CROWD

RELAXED

*Results from external stakeholder feedback*
Mid-rise and high-rise residential and resort apartment buildings dating from the 1980s run the length of the coastal business centre strip, broken only by pockets of low-rise and unit developments. Onsite community engagement feedback suggests many of these developments were favourite hangouts for locals during the 50s, 60s and 70s.

Apart from Kirra Headland, the location of the former Coolangatta State School (1920), Kirra consists of a mix of detached, original two and three storey walk ups (which reflect past beachside holiday development) and newer unit developments along Coolangatta Creek. An emerging strip of high rise (up to 15 storeys) is overlooking the beach along Musgrave Street and this newer development is slowly changing the character of Kirra – some might say it has already changed Kirra’s sleepy beachfront character – maybe more sophisticated; maybe it is becoming a “smaller Broadbeach”.

Culturally, it wasn’t long ago that Coolangatta and Kirra were Gold Coast’s favourite tourist hang outs, long before Surfers Paradise was even a dot on the map. Surfing and beach life has dominated the area evident by the rise of Kirra Surf Life Saving Club in the early 1900s. The 1940s marked the turning point of a cultural revolution in Coolangatta, social freedoms grew on the back of the Second World War as the area embraced the American way of living. A prominent music and dance culture soon followed for decades after and it is these days that the long-term locals of the era cherish the most.

Today, Coolangatta retains the essence of the unique, beach-focussed culture that has defined it throughout its history. Relatively little redevelopment of the iconic shoreline has occurred, when compared to other areas of the Gold Coast. This laid back, small town feel, is a central element of Coolangatta’s local character. It is Queensland’s quintessential historic holiday destination.

**FACT:** Coolangatta is named after the schooner ship ‘Coolangatta’
Opening of the railway from Brisbane to Coolangatta 1903
Coolangatta town Council was formed 1914

First inhabitants to the land were the Yugambeh people

The brigantine ‘Coolangatta’ was wrecked off Kirra Beach 1846

Coolangatta was surveyed and becomes the Twin Towns to Tweed Heads (which was the more dominant town) 1883

Tweed Heads and Coolangatta SLSC opened at Greenmount Beach 1911
Spanish influenza closed the QLD – NSW border 1919

1828 European convict station

1850 – 1975 Images courtesy of Local Study Library

Looking towards Lennoxs Kirra Hotel from Marine Parade
Beach House Hotel from McLean Street
Aerial view looking down on Kirra
Looking across Kirra Headland towards Kirra

1950 – 1975 Images courtesy of Local Study Library
**1925 – 1950** Images courtesy of Local Study Library

Looking south down McLean Street  
Looking out towards Greenmount Beach  
Overlooking Kirra Beach and the township  
Patrons enjoying the beach life

**1942**

WWII brought American soldiers and a new way of life for locals

**1940s – 1980s**

Coolangatta was an important music venue, with floor shows, variety acts and bands playing at the local hotels. Good fun and good times rolled along during these decades.

**1961**

Railway closed due to the rising use of cars. Streets changed to accommodate these cars

**circa 1980**

Original hotels and guest houses started making way for modern high rise apartments

**2016**

The Coolangatta area became the 8th World Surfing Reserve

**2018**

Coolangatta hosted the Commonwealth Games (Volleyball)

**1975 – 2000** Images courtesy of Local Study Library

Looking north over Coolangatta and Tweed Heads  
Looking south over Kirra Headland and Kirra beach  
Modern high rise apartments starting to dominate the skyline  
View towards Tweed Heads and Coolangatta SLSC at Greenmount Beach
Gold Coast Local Heritage Register places and places of interest

Heritage Register Places

1. Site of the wreck of the Coolangatta
2. Kirra Beach Pavilion
3. Kirra Shelter Shed
4. Coolangatta ANZAC Memorial
5. Wreck of the Coolangatta Memorial
6. Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club
7. Coolangatta Norfolk Pines
8. US Navy Leave Area Greenmount Hill Camp No 4 Picnic Shelter
9. Francis Edward Roberts Commemorative Plaque
10. St Augustine’s Church
11. Jazzland Dance Hall (former)
12. Powell Brothers Commemorative Trees
13. Coolangatta State & Special School (former)

Places of Interest

1. Kirra Beach Hotel (formerly Lennons Kirra Hotel)
2. Rotary Memorial Clock
3. Ocean View Motel
4. Greenmount Beach Resort
5. QLD / NSW Border Marker
6.QLD / NSW Border Marker
7. Coolangatta CWA Building
8. Goodwin Park War Memorial and Gardens
9. Coolangatta Croquet Club
10. Methodist Church Hall
11. The Sands Hotel (formerly Kirrabelle Hotel)
12. Railway cutting - Chalk Street
13. Coolangatta Bowls Club
Significant Development Applications / Recently Built Developments in Coolangatta and Kirra

1. 5 Winston Street - 6 Storeys / 9 Units
2. 1 South Street - 6 Storeys / 6 Villas
3. 2 Lord Street - 15 Storeys
4. 14 Marine Parade - 15 & 10 Storeys
5. 29 Garrick Street - 14 Storeys / 48 Units
6. 15 Haig Street - 9 Storeys / 73 Units
7. 17 Winston Street - 6 Storeys
8. 7 Rutledge Street - 3 Storeys / 15 Units
9. 13 Rutledge Street - 4 Storeys / 3 T/H
10. 134 Musgrave Street - 3 Storeys / 4 T/H
11. 15 Dutton Street - 4 Storeys / 24 Units
12. 140 Marine Parade - 29 Storeys*
13. 55 Eden Avenue - 15-17 Storeys x 4
14. 72 Marine Parade (pre lodgement)

Old and new, together

Before and after
Coolangatta is Gold Coast’s southern most urban area and major centre. It has a unique physical environment nestled between hills to the south and west, and famous curving north facing world class surfing beaches and headlands to the north and east. Its history, relaxed atmosphere, street pattern and mix of building types underlie Coolangatta’s strong sense of local identity. The commercial area’s elongated form emphasises its connection to its beach and foreshore.

FACT: Anecdotally, the name Kirra means ‘leaf’ or ‘boomerang’ in some native dialects.
3.3 COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

One of the more important topics of this master plan relates to the health of Coolangatta and Kirra's community. An analysis on the well being of the community supervenes and explores issues centred around safety, place activity, user experience, community resources, community facilities and leisure opportunities etc.

3.3.1 Safety and business centre user experience

Results from community engagement found the issue of safety manifested itself as one of the more important considerations for this master plan. In particular, three areas of safety including traffic, night time, and social aspects.

Traffic – Due to the number of moving vehicles within the commercial precinct and the potential for cyclist/pedestrian and vehicle conflict.

Main locations:
- Griffith Street and side streets
- Marine Parade and side streets

Night time – Safety in areas of poor lighting, along important pedestrian links and lack of passive surveillance

Main locations:
- Chalk Street and surrounding car parks
- The old rail line, now a pedestrian link between Coolangatta and Kirra
- Goodwin Park

Social – Relating to violence and substance abuse in public areas. Also, issues around displaced persons.

Main locations:
- Goodwin Park
- Queen Elizabeth Park
- Griffith Street
- Coolangatta Transit Centre.

Equitable access and DDA issues highlighted by the City's accessibility technical officer include complaints received by the community relating to the pathway network and kerb ramp connections of the commercial precincts in particular Griffith Street and Warner Street.

Onsite observations support this feedback and note that these pathway network issues are not only confined to the business centres of the area but to the fringes of the precinct including the suburban areas.

Other feedback received from the City's accessibility technical officer includes:
- limited time given to cross at signalised crossing points (of importance due to the high number of elderly residents in Coolangatta / Kirra)
- insufficient seating between destination points for resting opportunities
- shade for pedestrians
- speed limits of Griffith Street and Marine Parade are excessive when considering the manoeuvring of on street car parking
- non-compliance relating to original steps / staircases of the site
- ‘A’ boards for business advertising interrupting the shorelining of people with vision impairment
- street furniture causing obstructions on some pathways in particular to principal commercial areas
- lack of tactile ground surface indicators
- equitable access to the beach including those with disability
- accessibility relating to some bus stops.

![Legend]

- Traffic
- Night time
- Social

MAP 11
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Safety audit’s are conducted regularly by the City of Gold Coast in accordance with CPTED principles to identify potential improvements to the built environment to promote safety. Key principles include increasing lines of sight, landscaping and maintenance to support visibility and surveillance, defining ownership of a space (territorial reinforcement), access control, security and target hardening and the identification of strategies to improve positive interactions and activation in a space.

For example, in 2016, the City of Gold Coast in collaboration with other key stakeholders including the Queensland Police Service conducted a comprehensive safety audit of Coolangatta’s public domain ahead of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

At the time of the audit, many existing design strategies were identified that were in accordance with safe design principles. A number of additional opportunities to enhance safety were noted including additional lighting, improvements to connectivity and accessibility, and mural and urban art opportunities to further strengthen community pride and ownership.

Homelessness

The causes and impacts of homelessness are complex and require a coordinated response by a range of relevant government departments, community organisations and local businesses. The number of people experiencing homelessness has risen across the city and this is reflected in the increase in concern for the welfare of some people in Coolangatta.

The Queensland Government has primary responsibility for providing housing and homelessness services on the Gold Coast through the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW). The City does not provide any direct housing or welfare services.

There are a number of food and specialist homeless services who seek to engage and provide support to people in Coolangatta experiencing homelessness. Concerns around antisocial behaviour displayed by people experiencing homelessness were raised by some participants of the community engagement survey.

The City is a member of, and works closely with, the Gold Coast Homelessness Network who is the peak body representing specialist homelessness services in the city. City officers work collaboratively with Queensland Police, Queensland Health, DHPW and local specialist homeless services and community groups to address these issues and provide people a pathway from homelessness to secure housing.
Notes:
- P2 and P3 are lighting subcategories for pedestrian areas (Category P of Australian Standards AS 1158.3.1):
  - P2 – high pedestrian activity and medium risk of crime
  - P3 – medium pedestrian activity and low risk of crime
- The average horizontal illuminance was measured every 20 metres along centre line of footpaths – no vertical points were considered or recorded.
- Areas of the footpaths that have passed and meet code compliance do not require any further action, however the areas that have failed will require further investigation to determine how the lighting lux levels can be improved to meet code compliance.
The number of crimes at various times during the day. This highlights that night time crime is by far the most prevalent.

The statistics include recorded crimes of Rainbow Bay.

The number of crimes committed each day of the week. This highlights most crime occurs over the weekend periods.

The types of crimes committed in the Coolangatta area. Good order offences and theft rate highly followed by drug offences and traffic offences.
User experience within the business centres was mapped out using a detailed audit checklist similar to the walkability audit. This user experience audit was customised using best practice methodology, focusing on the following:

1. Comfort - walking, evening/night, social activity, sitting
2. Pleasure - scale, climate, aesthetics, views
3. Protection - traffic, crime/violence, environment

Each street has been rated according to these topics with the results identifying aspects that need improving to increase the positive experience of users.

Key findings from the user experience audit for Kirra include:

- most activity is lineal and located on Musgrave Street between Haig and Lord Streets
- newer developments, for the most part, have created corner nodes at intersections that allow sitting, meeting places and greater pedestrian circulation space
- heavy vehicle activity along Musgrave Street can create noise pollution for users in outdoor dining situations
- on street car parking creates a safety barrier between users and the high number of moving vehicles
- limited shade for pedestrians/users in warmer periods of the year
- user amenity reduces immediately outside the main business centre area of Kirra
- the scale of Musgrave Street is adequate for the most part as development height has been restricted to the height of nearby Norfolk Island Pines
- views and outlook across the park is realised
- ambient lighting from food retailers help create an intimate mood.

Further investigation and analysis reveals a lack of way-finding signage; inconsistencies in streetscape palettes due to newer developments bringing individual identity; and restricted connections to Doug Roughton park due to the width of Musgrave Street.
Key findings from the user experience audit for Coolangatta include:

- pedestrian circulation space and sitting/resting opportunities in Marine Parade are limited due to the width and the amount of obstacles littering the pavement
- most of Coolangatta’s nightlife occurs on Marine Parade with some using the park opposite for dinner picnics
- Marine Parade has overlapping functions which keeps people’s interest through day and night
- Marine Parade has distant views outwards across the park to the ocean but can be hindered by on-street car parking
- people activity is concentrated mostly to Marine Parade and Griffith Street between McLean Street and Warner Street with high levels of passive surveillance present
- Warner Street lacks user comfort, pleasure and protection
- many driveways in Warner Street and Dutton Street have been designed for delivery trucks and are located side by side, effectively restricting improvements to user and streetscape amenity including comfort and pleasure
- wind tunnel (venturi effect) is present and especially noticeable in Dutton Street and Warner Street
- Warner Street and Griffith Street intersection is the busiest with noisy vehicles (including a high number of buses) stop-starting and revving
- Griffith Street’s streetscape, for the length of the business centre stretch, is inconsistent and some areas are in need of upgrading
- walking along the shops aligning the southern side of Griffith Street is an array of differing experiences including: smells relating to cafés; air-conditioning spilling out; and music from retailers
- shaded seating opportunities and outdoor dining (southside of street) in Griffith Street is restrictive in the hotter months. The main bus stop also is unpleasant in the warmer periods of the year
- looking across Griffith Street (from southside of street) there is a large expanse of building frontage (The Strand). Impact of this could be lessened with more street tree plantings
- Chalk Street is ‘back of house’ to Griffith Street shops and is an unpleasant, uncomfortable space with minimal user amenity
- night time safety concerns to Chalk Street due to lack of lighting and passive surveillance.
User observation was undertaken on a Friday in January 2018. Site conditions were hot with some wind gusts. Intermittent cloud was sparse so full solar access was present.

User observations were sought to give an indication of how the precinct is used which facilitates better design outcomes. Clear differences of how people use Griffith Street and Marine Parade were observed whilst Musgrave Street in Kirra involved user activity centred around cafés and eateries.

**KIRRA business centre - Musgrave Street. Observations taken after 1pm**

Patrons of the café’s and restaurants located in the newer developments of Kirra seem to be similar to the patrons you would find in Broadbeach. Different to the demographic frequenting Coolangatta.

The older plaza area has an array of different food outlets with more casual offerings than the newer buildings which bring a wider demographic. Seems to be more user activity hovering around this area however users aren’t lingering, it is more like ‘grab a pie and say goodbye’ clientele.

People using the park adjacent Musgrave Street are looking for shade with no user activity happening in the sun.

Some young holiday makers found it difficult to find their accommodation. They were lost walking back and forth.

The majority of user activity is centred around food outlets and outdoor dining.

**COOLANGATTA business centre - Griffith Street. Observations taken between 9am-10am**

Majority of persons walking were in pairs or singular and undertaking one or two errands at the most with some window shopping along the way.

Main demographic in café’s were elderly with all demographics sitting by themselves or in pairs so acoustics from people chatting were low. One exception was the café directly outside The Strand.

In general, people were trying to shelter in shade, especially around the main bus stop. Most of the seating located in the sun was not occupied.

People were walking casually and most were wearing informal footwear such as thongs.

No evidence of people meeting for business or business people on laptops in café’s.

Locals were walking in a east/west direction and it seemed with an end destination in mind – Whilst others were casually strolling with an exploration mindset – These could have been tourists.

Jay-walking across Griffith Street occurred regularly.

Patrons seemed to have a relaxed casual vibe.

Most of the pedestrian activity was occurring between the post office and the pedestrian crossing located at The Strand.

There were a few people that parked in Griffith Street and used the supermarkets within The Strand.

Nearly all the bike racks located in Griffith Street were used and a number of casual cyclists were riding on the pathway.

Windy conditions around Dutton Street and Warner Street intersections.
STREET INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL – conducted at the same time as our user observation audit

She recently moved to the area (Bilinga) for the fact that it is ‘what the old Gold Coast used to look like’ and was drawn to the area by its relaxed, laid back and visual character, and that it is very much different from Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise. She believes tourists and families come for the same reasons and if it changed to become a ‘Surfers or a Broadbeach’ then the holiday makers looking for this experience will just move their holidays further south to Cabarita, Hastings and Pottsville etc.

Note: A morning illegal substance user was observed in the toilet block of Goodwin Park disposing of a needle in a sharps bin. He walked past the skate park area where there were families, heading in the Griffith Street direction.

She prefers to ride her bike along the Oceanway footpath than drive, but drove this time due to the hot weather. She was visiting the post office but took the opportunity to visit another shop as well. She enjoys cruising (on her bike) to the Marine Parade side of Coolangatta at night and can be in QEP until around 9-10pm and still feel safe but doesn’t frequent Griffith Street too much at night as it can feel unsafe with young kids loitering.
3.3.2 Place activation

During community engagement, many local residents expressed concern that the relaxed local character of Coolangatta and Kirra would be lost with the growing number of high rise buildings. Locals were also concerned that facilities focussing on tourists, at the expense of local needs, would erode the unique character and result in another Surfers Paradise or Broadbeach. William Owen from RPS Australia noted that tourists want to be where the locals are - “if you plan for the locals the tourists will come”.

Place activation is a strategy that has been used successfully around-the-world to introduce art and culture programs that celebrate the local character of a place. Activated spaces promote community and connections. They encourage people to connect to each other and to form connections with a place by celebrating the unique qualities of a town or city.

Place activation is about street activation. There is a range of public places where people either gather or move through. These include streets, laneways, a pocket park, build-outs next to bus stops and linear parks. Visible life in streets creates interesting and vibrant places. Street events, art installations and performances, exhibitions, festivals, markets and retail pop-ups are all examples of interventions that can be programmed to celebrate the character of a place and encourage shared experiences.

One mechanism that could be implemented to its full potential is the collaboration between local community groups, artists, property owners, businesses and institutions such as schools or universities. Partnerships between these groups could initiate programs to create vibrant community resources.

There are a number of exemplar projects that have provided inspiration for what can be acheived at Coolangatta and Kirra. It is worth noting that many cities have recognised the importance of arts and culture and the contribution that cultural place making has on community well being and economic success.

Dumbo is a neighbourhood in New York City which has been transformed by Two Trees Management. This is a good example of property developers who realised the potential of working with all sectors to build a strong community and social capital first, which then generates long term economic success.

Two Trees corporate philosophy is founded upon the principle that the developers and property owners must play a fundamental role in cultivating liveable streetscapes.

The area was once a ferry landing with industrial and warehouse buildings. The industrial buildings have been converted into luxury residential lofts, boutiques, restaurants, cafés and art galleries. It is now a centre for technology startups and the headquarters for e-commerce retailer Etsy. (Dumbo - Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass).
The following case studies have provided inspiration for the kinds of projects that can be incorporated into the social infrastructure of Coolangatta and Kirra.

CASE STUDY 1
In December 2016 Maitland City Council (NSW) prepared a Place Activation Strategy together with ARTSCAPE. The strategy is a comprehensive document outlining the role of Council, business and community, and identifies typologies to help deliver solutions that suit the physical, historical and cultural characteristics of places in Maitland. Part of these solutions are mechanisms for property owners to collaborate with artists and community groups to test ideas.

‘By activating key public spaces and activity centres, Maitland City Council hopes to foster pride in place, transform the way the community interacts with the public domain, support cultural expression and build community connections.’

– Maitland Place Activation Strategy

CASE STUDY 2
Brisbane City Markets by Goodwill Projects is held every Wednesday, 8am-6pm in the centre of the city at Reddcliff Place, 266 George Street. And also every Thursday, 8am - 2.30pm at Cathedral Square, 410 Ann Street. These markets transform these city plazas from a pedestrian thoroughfare into vibrant meeting places. Places that provide fresh produce from local farmers, food stalls and entertainment for the many office workers, shoppers and tourists in the centre of Brisbane city.

‘Brisbane City Markets was born with one purpose: to drop a premium selection of fresh, farm-direct, produce and meats, artisan goods, trawler-direct seafood, fresh baked breads, gourmet food and provisions smack bang in the middle of the CBD.’

– brisanecitymarkets.com.au

CASE STUDY 3
Floating land is a cultural event held at Noosa on the Sunshine Coast. Organisers describe it as an outdoor sculptural event. The program involves various collaborations across different sectors. Travelling Colony is one of those events. It has been supported by Arts Queensland through the Regional Arts Services Network, Blaklash, Butter Factory Arts Centre, Creative Arts Alliance, St Andrew’s Anglican College and Sunshine Beach State High School.

‘Visitors will be invited to experience thoughtful, challenging and environmentally aware works that engage sensitively with these special and spectacular spaces.’

– floatingland.org.au
COOLANGATTA CROWD
ATTRACTOR EVENTS

ANNUAL MAJOR EVENTS

Cooly Rocks On
5-9 June 2019

Quiksilver and Boost Pro
3-13 April 2019

Drop Music Festival
6 April 2019
(in conjunction with Quiksilver and Boost Pro)

Kirra Beach Hotel Longboard klasick
11 August 2019

Coolangatta regular medium to low scale local and community events

Beachside market
(every second Sunday of the month and fourth Sunday in five Sunday months)

Coolangatta Melanoma March 3 March 2019

Volleyball events, Australian Junior Beach Volleyball Championships, Australian Beach Volleyball Schools Cup and a round of the Senior Australian Beach Volleyball tour
14-22 March 2020

Volleyball Queensland Beach Schools Cup
10-11 March 2019

Kirra Teams Challenge 29-31 March 2019

Coolangatta Beach Carnival

Parley Beach Clean-Up - Volunteers for the Ocean
5 April 2019

Bungee Trampolines

Gold Coast Film Festival (Frothy Flicks at Coolangatta)
9-14 April 2019

Green Week Panamuna Beach Clean Up
2 June 2019 Manne Parade Coolangatta Beach

NAIDOC recognised street march 12 July 2019

The Distinguished Gentlemans Ride 29 September 2019

Gold Coast Secondary School Surf League 20 September 2019

Kirra Criterium Classic 19 October 2019

Australia Day Beach Ultimate Championships 24-26 May 2019

2019 QLD Beach Series - Round 1

Remembrance Day 11 November 2019

White Ribbon Awareness Day 22 November 2019

Gold Coast Summer Swims

Beach Rugby Australia Spring Break 6-8 September 2019

Beach Warrior 2 October 2019

Coolangatta Gold 12-13 October 2019

Surf Life Saving QLD Memorial Day 5 May 2019

Coolangatta Christmas Carols 15 December 2019

Kirra regular medium scale and local and community events

Seaside Sounds (every Sunday in February starting 27 January 2019)

QLD Championship Circuit Surf Event (18-19 May 2019) QCC MP Classic

Beach Rugby Australia 6-8 September 2019

Soccer In The Sand 16-17 November 2019

Cooly Classic Ocean Swim 28 April 2019

Gold Coast Classic Ocean Race Cup 2019

Point Danger Branch U11-U14 Youth Championships 2 February 2019

Bleach Festival events 17-28 April 2019
3.3.3 Leisure, resources and facilities

An audit was also carried out to record the existing community facilities and leisure resources available. This included a review to determine how the facilities in Coolangatta and Kirra compared with a similar regional area such as Upper Coomera. The results are presented in the table located on the next page.

According to Dr Vivienne Ivory (Principal Urban Scientist, WSP Opus Research), for physical and social well-being, neighbourhood resources should include a variety of facilities that cater for a diverse range of people and ages. Places are interesting and safe when there is more than one reason to visit.

Upper Coomera Community Centre includes a diverse range of facilities including rooms for hire for different activities. Southport Community Centre and Runaway Bay Community Centre are other examples on the Gold Coast that offer combined facilities.

The demographic in Coolangatta and Kirra is an average age of 50 years with 26 per cent over the age of 65 years. The analysis shows there is a lack of facilities for young people and a lack of co-combined facilities. While there are leisure opportunities focussing on beach/surf activities for young people, there is no dedicated community facility such as a youth centre. The majority of community buildings focus on the needs of seniors. Recently the lawn bowls club introduced barefoot bowls to attract younger groups.

Coolangatta and Kirra host a number of regular major events which contribute millions of dollars in revenue to the local economy.

The large to medium scale events are predominantly held in the foreshore parks along Marine Parade at Queen Elizabeth Park and Roughton Park.

Cooly Rocks On is a very successful event with record attendance and record takings ($6.92 million) in 2019. Its success is due to the fact that the festival celebrates the rich history of the southern Gold Coast with music, dancing, cars and fashion of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. This was a time that is fondly remembered for relaxed summer holidays spent at the beach dancing and having fun.

While large events are important tourist attractors for the local economy, equally important are events that encourage local residents to tell the story of their place, to foster a sense of belonging and community. These local scale events build social capacity which builds economic confidence for long term investment in an area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITY / RESOURCES</th>
<th>COOLANGATTA / KIRRA</th>
<th>COOLANGATTA NOTES</th>
<th>EXAMPLE (UPPER COOMERA)</th>
<th>EXAMPLE NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY</td>
<td>GCC LIBRARY</td>
<td>Low visibility and incidental access as the library is located on level 1 of the Strand Shopping Centre.</td>
<td>Upper Coomera Community Centre</td>
<td>Upper Coomera Centre facilities are co-located and include: Upper Coomera Branch Library; CoGC Customer Service Centre; Upper Coomera Aquatic Centre; Division 1 Cllr Office; Cafe; Community Centre Youth Group; Justice of the Peace; Centacare; Carers QLD; Free wi-fi and internet. Accessibility features: Reception office accessible by wheelchair; six accessible parking spaces; accessible pathways to amenities and rooms; accessible bathroom facilities hearing loop within reception office; free recharge points for electric mobility devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH CENTRE</td>
<td>Currently no dedicated youth facility in Kirra or Coolangatta</td>
<td>There is a PCYC (Police Citizens Youth Club) located close to the NSW and QLD border in Tweed Heads. The location is not prominent (Cnr of Florence &amp; Adelaide Sts) and is 1 kilometre from the Coolangatta commercial centre along a route that is steep, hot and busy with traffic.</td>
<td>Refer to notes above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIORS CENTRE</td>
<td>COOLANGATTA SENIOR CITIZENS ACTIVITY CENTRE</td>
<td>Offers a variety of activities to promote well-being and healthy active ageing. Facilities include a large hall, a library, a board room and exercise room. All available for hire including furniture and kitchen. Car park on-site and on-street parking available also. Mini bus available for members with limited mobility or transport difficulties to enable access to centre activities. Professional hairdressing for men and women at affordable rates.</td>
<td>Refer to notes above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTRE</td>
<td>KIRRA HILL COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTRE</td>
<td>Includes outdoor event spaces and rooms for hire, including kitchen and equipment (chairs and tables). It also has an art gallery and a heritage display room. Access is difficult as the location is 25m above sea level. Pedestrian footpaths are not a continuous link. Missing links along a steep route. Car parking is difficult as there is limited car parking on-site and neighbouring residents and visitors to Kirra Hill lookout compete for on-street parking.</td>
<td>Refer to notes above</td>
<td>Rooms for hire at the Coomera Centre for various activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWA COUNTRY WOMENS ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>Location: CWA Hall 169 Griffith St Coolangatta QLD</td>
<td>A women’s organisation that offers a range of opportunities for community involvement.</td>
<td>Refer to notes above</td>
<td>Rooms for hire at the Coomera Centre for various activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWEED HEADS COMMUNITY MENS SHED</td>
<td>Location: 4 Park St Tweed Heads NSW</td>
<td>A men’s organisation that aims to support the health and well-being of men across the Tweed Shire.</td>
<td>Refer to notes above</td>
<td>Rooms for hire at the Coomera Centre for various activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FORMAL LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITY</th>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point Danger Scout Group</td>
<td>Young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolangatta Croquet Club</td>
<td>Predominantly seniors</td>
<td>Offers programs for school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolangatta Bowls And Recreation Club</td>
<td>Predominantly seniors</td>
<td>Recently introduced barefoot bowls to attract younger age groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Up Studio + Gallery Youth Arts Incubator</td>
<td>Young people and adults</td>
<td>Potential for other youth programs to link with Level Up program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweed Heads And Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolangatta Tweed Rugby Union Club And Sports Oval</td>
<td>Young people and adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirra Sports Club And Afl Sportsfield And Clubhouse</td>
<td>Young people and adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INFORMAL LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Park</td>
<td>Bench seats, barbecue, picnic tables and shelters are plentiful, there are two playgrounds, a huge event space, enough general active leisure space, and access to the oceanway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roughton Park</td>
<td>Bench seats, barbecue, picnic tables and shelters are plentiful, there is one playground, enough general active leisure space, fitness stations and access to the oceanway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwin Park</td>
<td>Bench seats, barbecue, picnic tables and shelters, there is one playground, enough general active leisure space, a sports field, a skating facility and a dog-off-leash area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT Peak Memorial Park (Kirra Hill)</td>
<td>Bench seats, barbecue, picnic tables and shelter, enough general active leisure space (steep gradient), viewpoint and lookout for passive leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy Pease Memorial Park</td>
<td>Bench seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JE (Bluey) Gray Park</td>
<td>Bench seats, picnic tables, access to the oceanway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS A SET OF PHYSICAL PLACES AND ORGANISATIONS THAT SHAPE OUR INTERACTIONS. WHEN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS ROBUST, IT FOSTERS ALL KINDS OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, HELPS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, AND TURNS COMMUNITY FROM A VAGUE, FUZZY CONCEPT INTO A LIVED EXPERIENCE. WHEN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS DEGRADED AND NEGLECTED, IT MAKES IT FAR MORE LIKELY THAT WE WILL GROW ISOLATED AND BE LEFT TO FEND FOR OURSELVES.”

- CITLAB.COM
### ECONOMIC SWOT – RPS (MARCH, 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
<th>THREAT</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor regional access</td>
<td>Competition from other centres</td>
<td>Appeal of the main streets</td>
<td>Increasing number of local workers and residents as remaining sites develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many edges to truly activate all to a high level</td>
<td>Extensive vacant space</td>
<td>Proximity to the beach</td>
<td>Improve accessibility (light rail?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under activated parts of the centre - large linear centre</td>
<td>Limited local population growth, retail must appeal to regional residents</td>
<td>History and built form</td>
<td>Low opportunity cost (low rent precinct) - can incubate innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overbuilt (too much retail GFA - moving tenants as opposed to attracting new)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diverse patronage base (local residents, regional residents, workers, and tourists)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor access to regional residents and insufficient nearby residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of vacant space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity of the border and demography profile of Tweed Heads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 ECONOMY

Coolangatta and Kirra along with Tweed Heads, is promoted in the South East Queensland Regional Plan as a major regional economic centre. Some external stakeholders casually identified Tweed Heads as the place you make your money and Coolangatta as the place you spend your money.

This economic analysis is to be used in the context of place making. It is by no means endeavouring to fully appreciate the economic complexity of the area. With this in mind, topics such as office and retail, tourism, events and attractors will be touched on.

**Office and retail**: The City commissioned RPS in early 2018 to undertake a Economic Baseline Study, including analysis on Kirra and Coolangatta’s office and retail status.

A quick snapshot of the report reveals over 23 per cent of Coolangatta’s shopfront retail tenancies were vacant, equating to 92 tenancies. Many vacant shops create dead places of no interest, therefore reducing the vibrancy and vitality of the whole street or area. It has been suggested that once an area reaches 30 per cent in vacant tenancies, the area will be in considerable anguish and distress for an extended period of time. As a response activating these shopfronts is critical to the life of the streets in Coolangatta.

**In 2018, more than 23 per cent of Coolangatta’s shopfront retail tenancies were vacant**

Kirra’s shopfront retail tenancies was at 12.5% vacant, equating to six tenancies. Of the shopfronts operational more than 18 per cent related to the food and beverage market.

Office space within Coolangatta contains more than 9500m² of floorspace with over 1150m² unoccupied as at March 2018. Most of the office space resides above the shops on level three and level four in The Strand.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – RPS**

Coolangatta and Kirra have a diverse retail and service offering with food and beverage, professional services and health and medical businesses the dominant forms. Recent development has focused on food and beverage to the point where this sector is now oversupplied.

Coolangatta has a large retail footprint in the context of the number of local residents (about 6,000). To be successful, the retail operations must cater to regional residents and tourists (including those that stay in the area). This means that Coolangatta is competing with all major coastal centres on the Gold Coast.

Many of the oversupply problems can be traced to the ‘build it and they will come’ mentality that was in place when The Strand was originally developed.

This excess of ground floor retail shopfront space and the number and extent of designed ‘active edges’ create areas of inactivity that detracts from the appeal of the centre.

In simple terms, Coolangatta is overbuilt and underutilised (from a retail point).
A map of holiday accommodation places in Kirra and Coolangatta. The arrowed point on the circle refers to the street the hotel reception entry opens to.

Tourism: Coolangatta and Kirra rely heavily on the tourism economy and always has since the day Pat Fagan built his hotel on Greenmount Hill circa 1900. The RPS Economic Baseline Study report reinforces the importance of tourism to the health of the economy.

Hotel occupancy rates for Coolangatta and Kirra were between 70 per cent to 75 per cent in 2018. This suggests overnight holiday makers still frequent the area in large numbers and add to the vibrancy and vitality of the business centres year round. Furthermore, feedback from the community during onsite engagement suggests that AirBnB accommodation is increasing in the area.

An analysis of the accommodation ratings for standard accommodation (refer map above) suggest that three and four star accommodation are well catered for - especially in Coolangatta. This allows for a wider demographic of individuals, friends and families to stay and play in the area. It is interesting to note Kirra is home to the only five-star accommodation in this precinct.

Day trippers have always made Coolangatta and Kirra their favourite leisure destination with many people from NSW, Gold Coast and Brisbane making use of the beautiful views, relaxed vibe and local shops.

Research from 2018 suggests each day tripper to the Gold Coast spends an average of $100

Over the years, local entrepreneurs have been quite novel in their marketing approach to influence and entice day trippers and holiday makers to Coolangatta. Doug Roughton was one such entrepreneur who created constant fun at the beach and in clubs and was also at the forefront of the famous jingle ‘If it’s hot in Brisbane, it’s Coolangatta’ - a marketing song funded by local businesses and broadcast around the country to lure patrons to this area to provide a boost to the economic health of local businesses as well as creating an atmosphere which would entice others - People attract people.

“Centrally located. Clean and well maintained apartments with a beautiful lush garden surrounding the swimming pool. Across the road is the beach, - shops and restaurants surround the resort. Park the car and walk everywhere!”

“We’ve stayed several times. The staff are great, the pool has been refurbed and so have the rooms - really nice. Such a great view and Cooly remains one of the best beaches around! Much nicer that the noisy north!”

“Back in the 70s/80s this was a nice beach with nice people and a laid back vibe, first visit in almost 40 years, hate it...high rise apartments, trendy coffee shops, no “old school pubs with true beer gardens left. Coolangatta was certainly a better place back then!!”
One of many ways place making can help tourism and in turn benefit the local economy is to make first impressions/sense of arrival significant and to improve the city image of the area.

A visitor’s memory of a holiday destination usually relates back to the first impression of the area. First impressions are usually made within minutes and can be hard to change. It is important for Coolangatta and Kirra that the sense of arrival and the first impression that visitors obtain on arrival is highly favourable. For the most part this relates to the visual amenity and aesthetics of a place but can also relate to smell, the feeling of being safe and comfortable, noises etc.

Ed McMahon, an American architect and researcher, claims the image of a community is fundamentally important to its economic well-being. From a tourism point of view, the more you enhance the areas image by focussing on its distinctiveness and its uniqueness (natural, architectural, cultural, artistic etc.) the more people and tourists will come to visit the area. This is supported by Barrie Barton, a presenter and CEO of Right Angle Studio, who in July 2018 suggests younger Chinese tourists are looking to holiday in places that are distinctly characterised by local sense of place and character; they want to experience the local way of life.

By concentrating on improving first impressions and place image, the greater the competitive advantage Coolangatta and Kirra has in attracting better tourism economy.

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### FLAGSHIP EVENTS OF COOLANGATTA AND KIRRA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COOLY ROCKS ON</td>
<td>$7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSL TOUR EVENTS</td>
<td>$13m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLEACH FESTIVAL</td>
<td>$3.7m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( across the Gold Coast)

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### KEY ECONOMIC ATTRACTORS

#### UNIVERSITY
Coolangatta is well located to take advantage of a university planning to double in size in the near future.

#### BEACH / SURF
Has been the staple for tourism and the economy of the area since the beginning.

#### AIRPORT
The airport is undertaking a master plan which Coolangatta and Kirra can take full advantage of.

#### TWEED HOSPITAL
Located 5min from Coolangatta, the hospital has more than 30,000 patients admitted every year.
3.5 Physical elements and infrastructure

A lot of Coolangatta and Kirra’s underground infrastructure was installed during the 1950s, 60s and 70s which predates the 1980s development boom. Some upgrading has occurred over the past two decades however, a lot of the ageing infrastructure is still functioning and serving the area in its original condition. The majority of potable water and sewer pipes were originally made from asbestos cement.

A constraint to major streetscape improvements in parts of Griffith Street relates back to stormwater control conditions where the centre level of the road is higher than the finished floor level of some adjacent shop fronts. Any major changes to the streetscape/footpath levels will require amendments to the stormwater infrastructure composition and configuration, requiring large-scale funding. This will likely occur when the system is upgraded to Q100.

During community engagement, Kirra locals raised concerns about isolated flooding events near Winston Street and Lord Street which happens in major storm events. Other concerns include how the ageing infrastructure will cope with significant population growth and associated development within the area.

Fortunately, most Energex power is underground within the main business centre of Coolangatta, but overhead powerlines still exist in Chalk Street, McLean Street and Warner Street. Kirra’s business centre on Musgrave Street is also without overhead powerlines however, all north/south running streets leading to Musgrave Street contain overhead powerlines.
Physical elements – walls, seats, bike racks, shade, artwork, flag poles, lighting types