



Our Waterways Future



April 2026

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**DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND**



**Queensland
Government**

Acknowledgement of Country

The Gold Coast Waterways Authority acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians, the Yugambah peoples of South East Queensland, including the Kombumerri, Mununjali, Wangerriburra, Bullongin and other clans, and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise their unique and ongoing spiritual and cultural connection with the land and waters of the Gold Coast area.

Message from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads

The Gold Coast is defined by its waterways. They are central to our identity, our lifestyle, and our economy. As Queensland continues to grow, the pressures on these unique natural assets are also increasing. Ensuring they remain safe, accessible and sustainable is both a responsibility and an opportunity.

Our Waterways Future sets out a clear vision for how we can safeguard these places while unlocking their potential. It reflects the voices of the community, the insights of industry, and the commitment of government to deliver a thriving waterways city.

This framework builds on strong foundations. It recognises the cultural significance of these waterways to Traditional Owners and acknowledges their enduring connection to Country. It balances environmental protection with economic growth and makes clear that decisions must reflect the values and aspirations of the people who live, work and play on these waterways.

The Crisafulli Government is committed to working with the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to deliver this strategy. Together, we will safeguard the health of our waterways, create new opportunities for recreation and tourism and strengthen the marine economy.

I commend the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, its Board, and its Chief Executive Officer for their leadership, and I thank the many people who contributed their ideas through consultation. This strategy is stronger because of you.

Hon. Brent Mickelberg MP

Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

The Gold Coast's waterways are central to our identity, shaping our lifestyle, supporting our economy and connecting our communities. As our city continues to grow, so too does the responsibility to ensure these waterways remain safe, accessible and resilient for future generations.

Our Waterways Future sets a clear direction for how this will be achieved. It builds on the strong foundations outlined by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and reflects a shared commitment to balancing environmental management with economic opportunity. This balance is critical to sustaining the unique character of the Gold Coast while enabling the city to evolve and thrive.

This framework recognises that our waterways are living systems – dynamic, valued and under increasing pressure. It reinforces the importance of active management, clear priorities and strong partnerships to ensure they continue to support recreation, tourism, marine industry and cultural connection.

It sets out a clear vision for the future. It is a commitment to ensuring our waterways remain well cared for, responsibly used and able to meet the needs of a growing region.

We will continue working closely with government and the community to deliver this framework through a coordinated effort and shared commitment to the future of our waterways. Together, we will ensure the Gold Coast's waterways remain a defining feature of our city while protecting and enhancing the access, connection, destination and amenity they provide for future generations.

On behalf of the Board, we thank all those who contributed their insights and perspectives. Your input has helped shape a framework that reflects both the values of our community and the opportunities ahead.

Deanna Nott
Board Chair
Gold Coast Waterways
Authority

Chris Derksema
Chief Executive Officer
Gold Coast Waterways
Authority

Executive Summary

The Gold Coast Waterways Authority has developed **Our Waterways Future**, a strategic framework designed to ensure the city’s waterways remain accessible, sustainable, and well-managed amid ongoing growth.

This framework outlines a clear direction for how people connect with and enjoy the waterways, while responding to the increasing pressures of population growth, economic development and environmental change. It aligns with the Gold Coast Waterways Management Strategy 2021–2030 and broader government and city initiatives.

Our Waterways Future balances economic growth with environmental values and community needs, setting a strong foundation for long term success. It reinforces the importance of active management, ensuring waterways remain safe, accessible and well cared for as demand continues to increase. It promotes collaborative planning involving government, local communities, cultural leaders, and industry partners, recognising that effective waterway management requires shared responsibility and clear, coordinated action.

The framework builds on the vision of a vibrant waterways city that enhances the Gold Coast’s lifestyle and economy. It is centred around three core themes:

- **Access:** Improving entry points such as boat ramps, jetties, and pontoons to support equitable and reliable access to the waterways.
- **Connection:** Maintaining safer and navigable waterways through active channel management and supporting infrastructure that keeps pace with demand.
- **Destinations:** Managing key locations to support recreation, tourism, industry, and events, while maintaining their condition, amenity and character.

Local Waterway Plans and transformative project ideas will target four key outcomes: improved access and connection, strengthened economy, enhanced destinations and use management, and a nurtured environment.

By integrating expert insights and a broad range of stakeholder and community inputs, **Our Waterways Future** provides a framework for confident, transparent and responsive waterway management.

This approach safeguards these assets as vibrant recreational and economic contributors, while preserving their vital role in the Gold Coast’s lifestyle, identity and reputation.





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SECTION

1

Strategic Context



The Role of GCWA

Who we are

Gold Coast Waterways Authority (GCWA) is a statutory authority established by the *Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012*, responsible for planning, managing and protecting the Gold Coast's iconic waterways.

GCWA is led by a decision-making board and Chief Executive Officer appointed by, and accountable to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations.

Our area of responsibility includes all Gold Coast waterways, as well as interests in the associated land reserves of Doug Jennings Park, Wave Break Island and the southern tip of South Stradbroke Island. We are also responsible for managing the Gold Coast Sand Bypass System, which plays a critical role in coastal management and maintaining safe navigational access to the Seaway, The Broadwater and waterways beyond.

Under the *Implementation of the Spit Master Plan Act 2020* we are also responsible for delivering a series of community capital works projects that will transform the public realm areas at The Spit.

To guide the responsible and sustainable management of the waterways and our land-based reserves, we are required to prepare a 10-year Waterways Management Strategy, a 4-year rolling Waterways Management Program and a 4-year Spit Works Program. GCWA is currently implementing its second 10-year Strategy for 2021-2030.

What we do

The main purpose of the *Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012* is to deliver the best possible management of the Gold Coast waterways at reasonable cost to the community and government, while keeping government regulation to a minimum.

Under the *Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012* we are tasked to:

- plan for and facilitate the development of the Gold Coast waterways over the long term in a way that is sustainable and considers the impact of development on the environment;
- improve and maintain navigational access to the Gold Coast waterways;
- develop and improve public marine facilities relating to the Gold Coast waterways;
- promote and manage the sustainable use of the Gold Coast waterways for marine industries, tourism and recreation;
- facilitate the implementation of the Spit master plan through the development and delivery of a program of community infrastructure and public realm works.

To achieve the purposes, this Act establishes the GCWA to:

- strategically plan for, facilitate and manage the development and use of the Gold Coast waterways; and
- develop and deliver a program of community infrastructure and public realm works for the Spit master plan area.

The Gold Coast Waterways Management Strategy 2021-2030 (the Strategy) is designed to align with broader state and local government initiatives to ensure sustainable and integrated management of the region's waterways. The Strategy emphasises place-based management, resilient waterways, and community engagement, which are key priorities in Queensland's environmental and infrastructure planning.





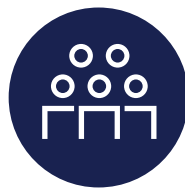
Why is this Framework Important?

Enhancing our unique coastal lifestyle, while supporting a growing and maturing city, remains our biggest challenge.

As the Gold Coast continues to grow, so too does the pressure on our waterways. This is placing increasing demand on access, safety, infrastructure and the overall condition of the system, reinforcing the need for strong and confident management.

Our Waterways Future sets a clear direction to respond to these challenges. It focuses on ensuring waterways are safer, accessible and well cared for, supported by responsible long-term planning as demand continues to grow.

The five key factors influencing this future are:



Population
Growth



Economic
development



Environment &
Sustainability



Community Use
& Access



Place &
Landscape

Our Waterways Future Vision:

**A Waterways City -
Vibrant waterways
that enhance our Gold
Coast lifestyle and
economy**

Just as the City of Gold Coast plans for the future use of the land in the city, GCWA needs to plan for the future use and management of its waterways.



Population Growth

The Gold Coast is booming. By 2046, its population is set to hit one million, with six million people calling South East Queensland home. What's fuelling this growth? A lifestyle defined by stunning waterways, open spaces, and unrivalled recreational access. But with popularity comes pressure. More people using our rivers, creeks, and estuaries (including the Broadwater) means more boats, more demand for infrastructure, and more potential for conflict on the water. If we want to protect what makes the region special, smart, long-term planning is non-negotiable.

The challenges are clear:

- Growing recreational and commercial demand
- Shifting demographics
- Changing land use and catchment dynamics

Effective management must address:

- Infrastructure provision to support accessibility and safety
- Regulation and planning to guide sustainable and equitable use
- Environmental values of natural ecosystems and changing catchment characteristics

Targetted investments including boat ramps, moorings, and waterway access are essential. But infrastructure alone won't solve congestion or prevent conflicts, especially in high-use hotspots.

To truly meet future demand and ensure fair access for all, we must go further:

- Enhance and better connect foreshore parks and reserves
- Ensure equitable access across to our waterways across the city
- Enhance the transport and accessibility connections for the community to the waterways

These actions won't just manage growth, they'll unlock opportunity. They'll boost tourism, support local business, and help every resident (no matter their postcode or income) enjoy the lifestyle that makes the Gold Coast shine.



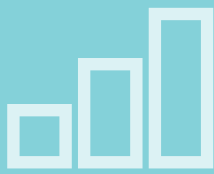
In 2046, the Gold Coast population is projected to reach 1 million



In 2024, the Gold Coast welcomed more than 12 million visitors



Almost 72% of people believe that population growth and pollution are the greatest threats to the health of the Gold Coast waterways



Economic Development

The Gold Coast’s iconic waterways are loved by locals and are powerful magnets for Australian and international visitors. With demand set to soar ahead of global events like the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we have an exciting opportunity to plan and invest now to create an exceptional visitor experience that delivers lasting legacy benefits for decades to come.

As the city’s economy evolves, new opportunities and pressures emerge in the waterway and marine sector. Demand for moorings, storage, and waterway access already exceeds supply. Without strategic, future-focused investment, we risk bottlenecks that could stall growth across recreation, tourism, and the marine industry.

We are working hard to stay ahead. The marine sector is a major economic engine for the Gold Coast, generating \$557 million in direct Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2022, with a total impact of \$1.6 billion when indirect and ecosystem services are included. With 336 hectares of marine industry land, 93 marinas (15 of them commercial), and over 200 aquatic events each year, we are perfectly positioned to capitalise on the expanding nature-based tourism market and unlock even greater potential in the years ahead.

Improving marine infrastructure is critical. It unlocks innovation, supports skilled jobs, and keeps our city competitive—not just nationally, but globally. Smart planning and bold investment will ensure our

waterways serve the needs of both recreational users and a thriving marine manufacturing and services sector.

New waterfront destinations, smarter event spaces, and new and improved infrastructure will supercharge the visitor experience and elevate the Gold Coast’s global profile. Through vibrant public spaces, seamless urban integration, and next-generation infrastructure, the city can cement its reputation as a world-class lifestyle, tourism and nature-based destination.

None of this happens in isolation. Strong collaboration across government, industry, and community is essential. Together, we can build a resilient, innovative marine economy that grows with the region and secures a thriving future for the Gold Coast’s most valuable natural asset—its waterways and surrounding natural environments.



The Gold Coast is the largest economy of any non-capital city in Australia - valued at more than \$45 billion Gross Regional Product (GRP)



In 2022, the marine sector generated \$557 million in direct Gross Regional Product (GRP)



The influx of residents is expected to continue, driven by factors such as lifestyle appeal and economic opportunities, particularly ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games



Environment & Sustainability

The Gold Coast's iconic waterways are beautifully scenic and are what truly set our city apart. They support rich biodiversity, shape our natural environment, and play a vital role in the Gold Coast's character and resilience. Protecting and enhancing their environmental integrity is essential to the city's long-term sustainability and enduring appeal.

As the city grows, so too do the environmental pressures. Changes in catchments around our waterways are increasing the amount of sediment flowing into our rivers and creeks. These challenges, combined with sea level rise, coastal erosion, and intensifying storm events, mean the risks are real, and growing. Our waterways are also vital buffers, offering natural relief from urban heat and channelling coastal breezes through the city.

Yet the Gold Coast has been a leader in adapting to climate hazards—from sea level rise and flooding to erosion and storm damage. With its floodplain geography and dynamic coastline, the city is no stranger to these challenges, but their scale and frequency continue to evolve. Standing still isn't an option.

The Gold Coast's waterways include five river systems, two major creeks, and a network of beautiful estuaries with the catchment extending across 6,000 km². These ecosystems support recreation, protect property, and power biodiversity and marine life - underpinning a growing appreciation of the city's unique natural environment.

Through active monitoring and collaboration between council, state agencies, and community organisations, GCWA is looking to continually improve the health and resilience of our waterways. Further information on the changing coastal environment is available in Appendix 1.



The Gold Coast is home to 6 declared Fish Habitat Areas which are vital for conserving marine biodiversity and supporting sustainable fishing practices



The Gold Coast is home to more than 480 km of rivers and streams



More than 12,600 hectares of the Gold Coast's coastal wetlands and islands are Ramsar-listed wetlands of international significance



Community Use & Access

Our towns, local economies and vibrant communities have been shaped by the Gold Coast’s iconic waterways for generations. From historic trade routes where Indigenous peoples and early settlers navigated these waters for transport and commerce, to today’s thriving marine industries, many of our settlements owe their very existence to the water. Our identities remain deeply and proudly tied to these vital lifelines.

These connections run deep. Our iconic network of canals, rivers, channels, and lakes isn’t just a marvel of engineering, it’s a vital part of our lifestyle, our local economy, and our resilience. It supports everything from recreation and tourism to flood management and liveability.

Today, over 170 km of navigation channels provide safe and navigable passages for boats. More than 400 km of man made canals and lakes, representing around 90% of all canals in Australia, connect people across the Gold Coast. These waters are shared spaces that link neighbourhoods and shape a city identity unmatched anywhere else in Australia.

With ongoing population growth and a shift toward higher-density housing, demand for community open spaces —including waterways – is set to increase. This trend highlights the importance of thoughtfully integrating recreational use, environmental management, and urban development. Seamless access to waterways, alongside a renewed focus on foreshore connectivity, is essential to preserving the Gold Coast’s coastal lifestyle and city identity.

Ensuring that residents and visitors can easily arrive at waterways and experience both on-land and on-water environments will enhance accessibility, strengthen cultural connections, and support sustainable growth. The community clearly values this connection too with 96% of locals agreeing that waterways contribute to their personal health and wellbeing.

Looking ahead, smart planning must continue to balance recreation, environmental health, and development. By honouring the cultural and historical identity of each waterway, we can create places that reflect their unique character, while supporting thriving communities and resilient industries.

Together, we can safeguard these precious waterways for generations to come, preserving the spirit of the Gold Coast that flows through every channel and creek.

Further information on the recent history of Gold Coast waterways is available in appendix 2.



Approximately 31 million recreational activities are undertaken adjacent to, on, or in Gold Coast waterways each year



96% agreed that waterways contribute to their personal health and wellbeing



More than 400km of man made canals and lakes (approximately 90% of all canals in Australia)



Place & Landscape

Integrating heritage conservation and education into waterway management will help keep the Gold Coast's cultural identity connected to its landscapes as the city grows and changes. Our waterways are more than environmental assets; they are living cultural places shaped by generations of stories, industries and community traditions.

There are clear opportunities to acknowledge First Nations people's insights to strengthen community and visitor connections, identify and celebrate cultural heritage sites within and alongside waterways, and highlight the positive role heritage can play in responding to today's urban and environmental challenges. Thoughtful planning and design can preserve, restore and respectfully adapt heritage places so they remain accessible, meaningful and valued by locals and visitors alike.

Protecting these places, ensuring new development adds to rather than diminishes their value, and embedding cultural narratives into the visitor experience will create a more distinctive and connected city. The Gold Coast's identity is defined by its natural landscapes, cultural values and community character. Its coastline, rivers, canals and natural edges form the spiritual and visual heart of this identity, strengthened by the emotional and cultural bonds people hold with these places.

As the city has urbanised, new businesses and visitor services have grown alongside these landscapes, offering not just natural beauty, but opportunities for authentic connection to stories, culture and community.



For more than 6000 years the area now known as the Gold Coast has been the traditional lands and waters of the Kombumerri 'Salt Water' people, one of the clan groups of the Yugambah peoples of South East Queensland



Southport's original timber pier was replaced with concrete in 1913. A theatre followed in 1926. Both were demolished in 1969, with a new pier built in 2009 as part of the Broadwater Parklands renewal.



Construction of Wave Break Island, Doug Jennings Park and the Gold Coast Seaway was completed in 1986 and they are now much loved community places



Logan River

LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

Southern Moreton Bay

Pimpama River

Coomera River

Coombabah Lake

The Broadwater

Albert River

CITY OF GOLD COAST

GOLD COAST WATERWAYS

Nerang River

Hinze Dam

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Tallebudgera Creek

Currumbin Creek

Key Outcomes

Our Waterways Future sets a balanced course for growth, sustainability and accessibility, ensuring the Gold Coast’s waterways remain thriving, functional and environmentally resilient. Community feedback clearly highlighted how deeply people value the natural environment, and the need to get the balance right between access, economic activity and environmental protection.

The development of Local Waterway Plans and our BIG project ideas are based on four key outcomes:

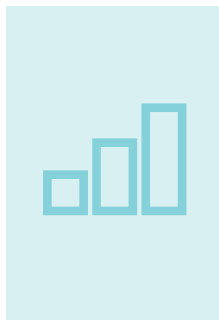
1. Improved access and connection
2. Strengthened economy
3. Enhanced destinations and use management
4. Nurtured environment

By aligning waterway planning and projects with these outcomes, decision-making becomes more strategic and adaptive. This approach integrates community priorities, infrastructure needs and the strong environmental values highlighted through feedback.



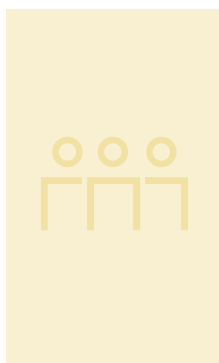
1. Improved Access and Connection

This outcome identifies how our community and visitors access, enjoy and connect with a waterway location. This includes physical access infrastructure such as boat ramps, jetties and pathways, as well as connection to significant cultural and community values. The Local Waterway Plans will outline ways to improve access and connection in the short, medium and long term.



2. Strengthened Economy

This outcome identifies economic values and investment opportunities within a waterway place. This may include opportunities to better connect commercial, tourism or private interfaces with the waterway and support improved amenity and tourism opportunities. The Local Waterway Plans will also consider opportunities to manage demand to support the ongoing growth of the Gold Coast economy, including our valuable high-skilled marine industry and screen production sectors.



3. Enhanced Destinations and Use Management

This outcome addresses use priority considerations on water to help manage the way different user groups enjoy our waterways and destinations. The Local Waterway Plans will determine how priority may be given to topics such as navigation and travel (such as navigation channels), anchorages, non-motorised water activities (such as swimming, kayaking and snorkeling), or events. Key destinations, along with their management approaches and expected investment outcomes, will be identified. This will include clear timelines for delivery and the assignment of responsibilities.



4. Nurtured Environment

This outcome identifies environmental values, and management strategies to address or resolve potential threats and impacts. These values may overlap with recognised waterway use and destinations. They may also include areas to manage impact through offsets and beneficial reuse of resources, delivery of enhanced infrastructure investments and increasing resilience within a waterway location.

What Our Communities Told Us

Between 2024 and 2025, GCWA undertook two major phases of engagement to understand community values, aspirations and priorities for the future of our waterways. Across both phases, people spoke to a strong and consistent connection to the waterways as places for recreation, sources of livelihood and a defining part of the Gold Coast's identity.

Phase 1 (2024): More than 1800 people contributed through workshops, online activities and via targeted sessions with community organisations, local businesses, tourism operators, councils, State agencies, environmental groups and recreational users. Traditional Owners, Custodians and Historical Societies were also engaged to ensure cultural values and connections were recognised and respected.

These early discussions provided a clear and consistent picture of what matters most - protecting the natural environment, improving access, and managing growth carefully to preserve the unique character of the waterways.

Phase 2 (2025): Following release of the draft strategy, more than 350 people provided feedback through surveys, submissions and targeted discussions with community organisations and industry bodies. These conversations explored key priorities in more depth, refining earlier themes and identifying practical actions for implementation.

Together, both phases revealed not just what people value, but why — showing a shared commitment to clean, healthy waterways that balance enjoyment, environmental care and cultural respect.

A shared vision

Across both phases, the message was clear. The community supports a long-term vision that protects environmental values, improves safety and access, and ensures waterways continue to underpin lifestyle, tourism and the local economy.

There is also a strong expectation for visible action, regular reporting and decision-making that balances growth with protecting what makes the Gold Coast's waterways unique. Transparency and collaboration are critical, with communities wanting to see how their input shapes outcomes and how progress is tracked over time

These insights directly shaped the final strategy, informing its focus on:

- Prioritising development and delivery of Local Waterway Plans to guide investment access and connectivity across key sites
- Taking a balanced, evidence-based approach to Wave Break Island that reflects environmental and community values.
- Committing to regular State of the Waterways reporting to track progress and share outcomes.
- Embedding cultural values and Traditional Owners perspectives in planning, design and management.
- Strengthening environmental outcomes to support long-term waterway health.

What we heard

Five key priorities emerged across all engagement activities:

- **Clean, natural waterways:** Strong support for protecting water quality, habitats and the overall health of the Gold Coast waterways and surrounding systems.
- **Management and regulation:** Desire for clearer rules, stronger compliance and fair enforcement to keep waterways safe and equitable for all users.
- **Access and facilities:** Calls for more ramps, jetties, anchorages and facilities, particularly to support families, small watercraft users and people without cars.
- **Lifestyle and character:** Support for managing growth in a way that preserves natural amenity, recreation opportunities and community wellbeing.
- **Clarity, communication and collaboration:** Requests for plain language, transparent reporting and ongoing engagement with councils and community groups.



Clean, natural waterways

Consistently identified as the top priority. People want waterways to be clean, free of wrecks and rubbish, and sensitive habitats protected. Sustainable development and long-term investment in water quality is also strongly supported.



Management and regulation

A major area of focus, with calls for stronger and more visible compliance. Communities want clearer rules and active enforcement on vessel speed, pollution, anchoring, and permanently moored or live-aboard vessels to ensure waterways remain safe and fair for all users.



Access and facilities

Participants highlighted the need for more ramps, jetties, fishing platforms, anchorages and toilet facilities. Better access for families, small watercraft users (such as kayaks and paddleboards), and people without cars was emphasised.



Lifestyle and character

Feedback centred on protecting the lifestyle and character that make the Gold Coast waterways unique. People want growth managed in a way that preserves natural amenity, recreation opportunities and community wellbeing.



Clarity, communication and collaboration

People called for plain, accessible language and transparent reporting on waterway health and management. Stronger collaboration with councils, citizen science groups and community organisations was also encouraged.

Looking ahead

A consistent message underpins all engagement. The waterways are central to the Gold Coast's identity, lifestyle and economy. This shared value underpins GCWA's commitment to act with care, transparency and partnership, ensuring the city's waterways remain clean, well-managed, accessible and treasured for generations to come.

SECTION

2

Local Waterway Plans





Where can I go kayaking?

Where can I access a waterway?

Where are great destinations and what is planned for their future?

Is there room for new marinas?

How will waterway congestion be managed?

Where can I moor my boat?

What is planned for a local waterway near me?

Where is best for swimming and snorkelling?

Pimpama River

Coomabah Lake

Nerang River

Hinze Dam



Securing the Future of the Gold Coast's Waterways

Technical studies confirm what locals already know—that Gold Coast waterways vary widely in character, with distinct environmental, social, and cultural characteristics. Each waterway has its own rhythm, shaped by both its natural environment and the way people interact with it. While some areas are ideal for recreational pursuits such as boating and fishing, others provide tranquil settings for nature appreciation and quiet reflection.

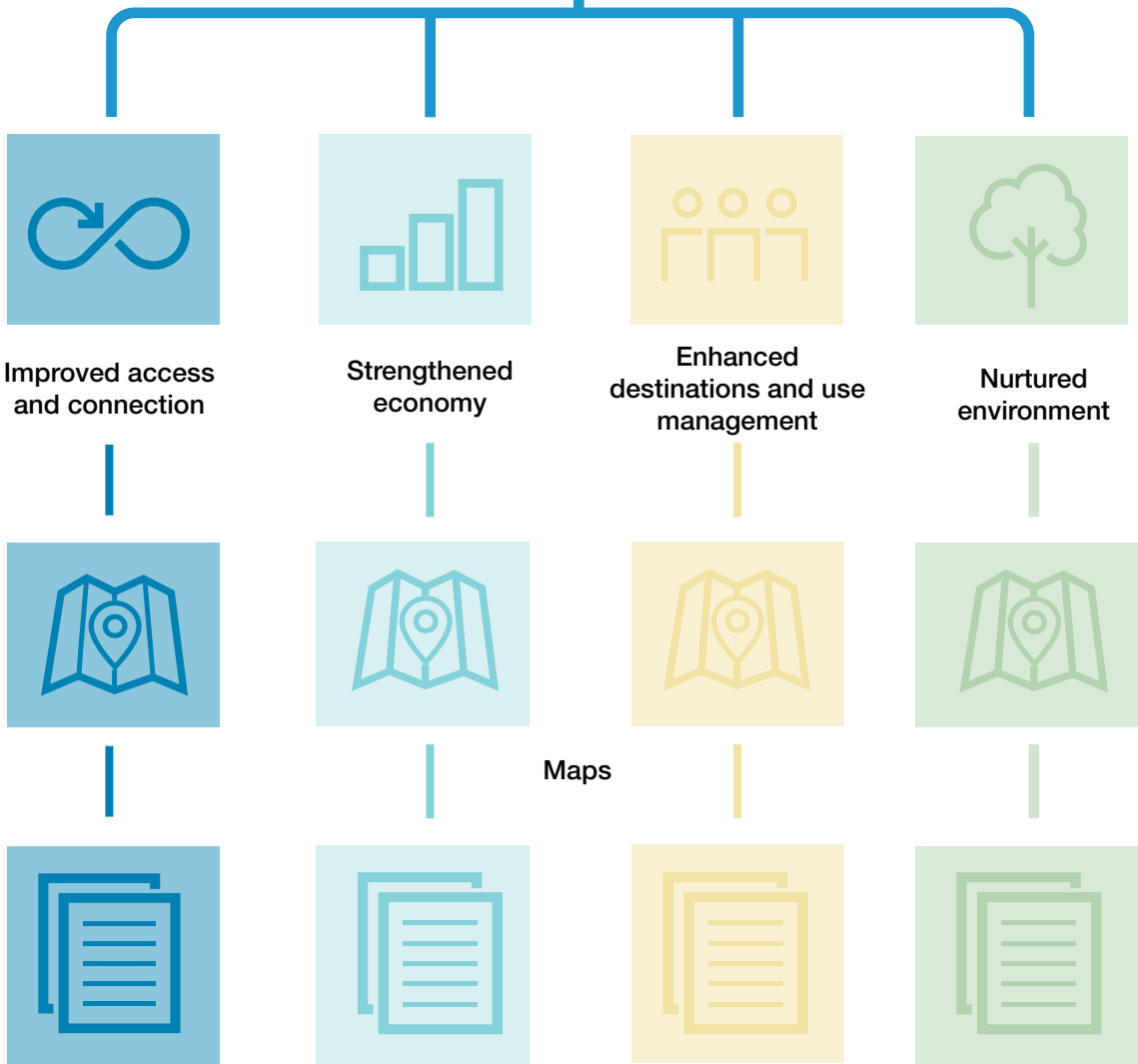
Our Waterways Future provides an overarching framework for the future of the Gold Coast waterways while also acknowledging the local variability through the development of Local Waterway Plans. These plans offer:

- **Integrated planning:** Aligning waterway planning and management with broader urban and environmental strategies.
- **Proactive solutions:** That find balance with growth, environmental stewardship and accessibility.
- **Evidence-based decision-making:** The strategy is grounded in a comprehensive body of technical studies, strategic plans, engagement reports and government frameworks. Together, these provide the evidence base for ***Our Waterways Future*** and ensure alignment with broader state and national policy directions. For further information on the supporting documents, see Appendix 3.
- **Long term investment:** Ensuring coordinated investment with our partners such that each waterway retains its unique identity while evolving with the city.

By anticipating future trends, listening to local needs, and identifying environmental strategies, Local Waterway Plans will ensure Gold Coast's waterways remain places of beauty, adventure, and connection—for everyone, now and into the future.



**Local Waterway
Vision**



**Improved access
and connection**

**Strengthened
economy**

**Enhanced
destinations and use
management**

**Nurtured
environment**

Maps

**Actions
(Short/medium/long term)**

What is a Local Waterway Plan?

Guided by research and extensive community engagement, we have identified six key local waterway locations across the Gold Coast — each with distinct characteristics that highlight the unique qualities and importance of these sites. These locations are popular with many different people who use the waterways for a variety of purposes, both from the foreshore and within the water itself.

These plans will reflect a shared vision among government, industry, and residents. Local Waterway Plans aren't just about managing waterways—they're about creating vibrant, sustainable spaces where people connect, nature flourishes, and communities thrive. These plans will:

- identify how people use and access the waterways, from boating and fishing to kayaking and swimming.
- guide investment based on local demand and environmental priorities to ensure our waterways are managed and prioritised over time.
- holistically consider our foreshores, public reserves, waterway users and shared-use spaces—designed to enhance waterway access, destinations and address demand pressures.
- ensure each waterway remains functional, thriving, and well-integrated into the Gold Coast's landscape
- be developed through collaboration, bringing together local knowledge, industry expertise, and scientific research.

The proposed local waterway planning approach has been modelled off contemporary planning and place frameworks, including the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Road's Movement and Place Policy and Guidelines (2024).

Where are the key locations?

Local Waterway Plans are being developed for six key locations across the city, each tailored to reflect the unique character of its waterways and the needs of its communities. The plans will guide future management and investment, with community and stakeholder engagement playing a central role in shaping priorities and outcomes.

- Northern Gold Coast
- Broadwater North
- Broadwater
- Upper Coomera River
- Upper Nerang River
- Southern Creeks (Tallebudgera and Currumbin Creeks)

Local Waterway Plans aren't just about managing waterways — they're about creating vibrant, sustainable spaces where people connect, nature flourishes, and communities thrive.



Why these locations?

Each of these locations is connected by a network of navigation channels and access infrastructure that underpins waterway use across the city. The Local Waterway Plans focus on tidal waterways within these areas, where the intensity and diversity of activity is greatest.

The scope extends beyond the water itself. Adjacent foreshores, marina and commercial areas, and public reserves are critical, as they provide the infrastructure that enables access to the waterways. Pathways, jetties, ramps and supporting facilities shape how people access, use and experience these areas.

Focusing on these locations ensures the plans respond to areas of highest demand, environmental value and growth pressure. They also provide the best opportunity to coordinate investment across government, industry and community to improve access, amenity, environmental outcomes and economic activity.

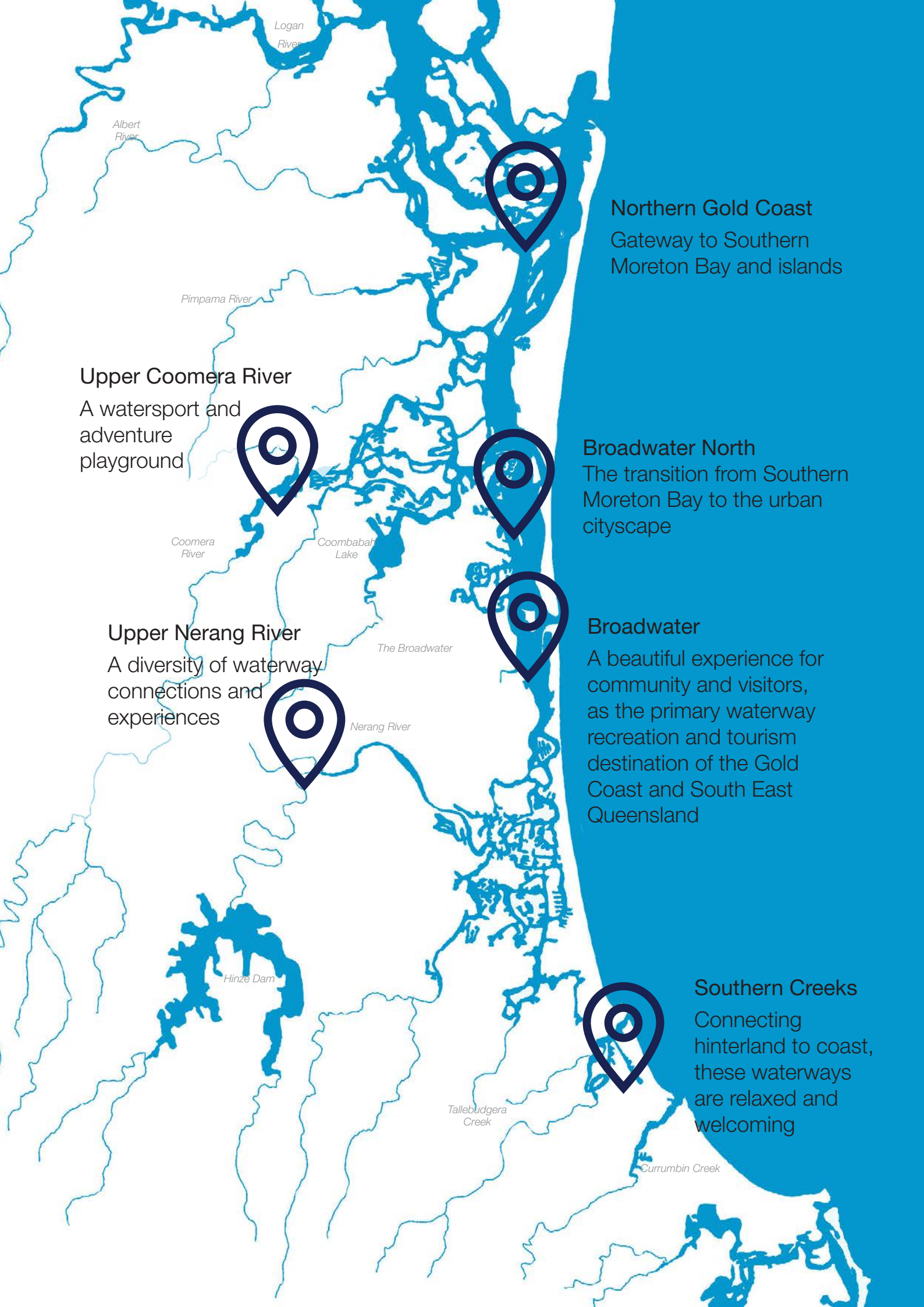
Community feedback through the **Our Waterways Future** engagement process reinforced these locations as the priority areas for Local Waterway Plans.

While the locations are established, detailed boundaries and place-based visions may be refined through further consultation. We will take an adaptive approach to preparing each local waterway plan guided by the degree and currency of technical information and engagement insights available at the time.

The plans will set out actions over a ten year horizon, with a longer term view to twenty years to ensure decisions remain relevant as population, climate conditions and community expectations continue to evolve. In many instances, GCWA may not be the lead stakeholder for delivering identified actions as our waterways and adjoining shorelines are multi-jurisdictional spaces.

As implementation plans are finalised, engagement will continue with government and industry stakeholders, communities and Traditional Owners to refine priorities and actions. Potential investments and further investigations may be required to ensure each plan delivers both local and long-term outcomes.

Local Waterway Plans recognise that waterway attributes and characteristics vary across the network and therefore propose tailored visions for each location.



Northern Gold Coast
Gateway to Southern
Moreton Bay and islands

Upper Coomera River
A watersport and
adventure
playground

Broadwater North
The transition from Southern
Moreton Bay to the urban
cityscape

Upper Nerang River
A diversity of waterway
connections and
experiences

Broadwater
A beautiful experience for
community and visitors,
as the primary waterway
recreation and tourism
destination of the Gold
Coast and South East
Queensland

Southern Creeks
Connecting
hinterland to coast,
these waterways
are relaxed and
welcoming



Northern Gold Coast Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

The gateway to Southern Moreton Bay's pristine estuaries and island destinations.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

From Cabbage Tree Point and Tabby Tabby Island in the north, extending south past the Northern Marine Precinct to Jacobs Well and Calypso Bay, and east to Tipplers on South Stradbroke Island.

Draft local waterway profile

The Northern Gold Coast waterway is characterised by the bayside village communities of Cabbage Tree Point, Jacobs Well and Calypso Bay that are located alongside a myriad of islands and estuaries that form Southern Moreton Bay and the Southern Moreton Bay Islands National Park.

The area already contains substantial waterway access infrastructure, with two boat ramp facilities (Jacobs Well and Cabbage Tree Point), supporting pontoons and jetty infrastructure, foreshore parklands, and marinas at Horizon Shores, Rudy Maas and Calypso Bay. The public access facilities already experience significant demand for access to the Northern Gold Coast waterways. Key destinations include the sheltered estuaries of Southern Moreton Bay, Slipping Sands, Jumpinpin, anchorages and points of interest at South Stradbroke Island.

These bayside communities continue to grow and master planning is underway by the City of Gold Coast for the emerging Northern Marine Precinct at Steiglitz. The precinct presents a significant

regional opportunity to plan for new waterway access infrastructure and services. The location is convenient to the northern Gold Coast and South East Queensland. The precinct provides the opportunity for planning long term sand management for the northern navigation channel network that connects our Gold Coast waterways to Moreton Bay.

The local waterway area is characterised by significant environmental values that are protected and managed by the Moreton Bay Marine Park (a Ramsar wetland), Fish Habitat Areas, conservation reserves, and the Southern Moreton Bay Islands National Park. Destination improvements or demand management initiatives must carefully consider these values with key stakeholders that manage these areas.

Local waterway planning will need to consider longer-term climate changes that may impact the natural habitats and attributes enjoyed by our community and visitors today.



Broadwater North Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

The transition from the natural Southern Moreton Bay to the urban cityscape of the Gold Coast.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

Extending north of Wave Break Island, Broadwater North is framed by Biggera Waters, Runaway Bay and Paradise Point to the west, Sovereign Islands and Browns Inlet to the north, and South Stradbroke Island (including the village and campgrounds waterway interfaces at Currigee) to the east.

Draft local waterway profile

Broadwater North is the primary transition location between highly urbanised and natural environmental areas of the northern Gold Coast.

The western extent is characterised by a series of canal estates and access channels, marinas, managed foreshores and revetment infrastructure, and substantial island developments (Sovereign Island and Ephram Island). There is a diversity of low, medium and high-density residential development that benefits from the Broadwater amenity and extensive waterway views. Over time, it is anticipated that significant new development will occur in the adjacent suburbs of Labrador and Biggera Waters, which will increase the population and demand for waterway access, recreation and appreciation.

The eastern extent is characterised by natural environmental areas within the Moreton Bay Marine Park and includes the adjacent foreshores and reserves of South Stradbroke Island. These foreshores and reserves form key waterway destinations with accommodation and camping facilities. They offer nature based tourism and waterway recreational opportunities both on the Broadwater and beach sides of the island. There are significant areas of declared fish habitat throughout Broadwater North.

The established access infrastructure and destinations within Broadwater North are connected by a network of maintained navigation channels. The dredged sand is beneficially reused to nourish foreshores and beaches within the coastal system. Broadwater North is connected via the Coomera River, to the major resort and waterfront communities of Hope Island and Sanctuary Cove, and the Gold Coast Marine Precinct, Coomera.



Broadwater Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

A beautiful experience for community and visitors, as the primary waterway recreation and tourism destination of the Gold Coast and South East Queensland.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

From the Sundale Bridge to the south, the waterway is framed by Labrador and the Gold Coast central business district at Southport to the west, Main Beach including The Spit to the east, and includes the Gold Coast Seaway and Wave Break Island to the north.

Draft local waterway profile

The Broadwater experiences significant recreational demands from the local community, the broader region and visitors. To the west, the waterway is fringed by the much-loved Southport Broadwater Parklands including the Pier, accessible foreshores and a swimming enclosure. The waterway is also directly accessed by two regional boat ramp facilities and three local boat ramp facilities. These facilities are connected to the Gold Coast navigation channel network that provides access to the ocean via the Gold Coast Seaway, the Nerang and Coomera Rivers, and the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

Much of the eastern foreshore is characterised by existing and emerging developments of The Spit Village Centre Precinct. This precinct is transforming into an expanded and modernised marina, accommodation, retail, cultural and tourism destination, as detailed within The Spit Master Plan. The Broadwater is a key asset supporting the marine, tourism and screen production sectors of the Gold Coast economy.

To the north, Wave Beak Island, the Gold Coast Seaway, Doug Jennings Park and Marine Stadium experience significant recreational demand both within and by the water. Opportunities for new investment and enhancement to the Labrador foreshore have been identified by the City of Gold Coast. The local waterway plan provides a way to consider this work holistically in conjunction with potential future investment into Wave Break Island, and other attributes of the dynamic Broadwater environment.

Demands on this waterway are expected to grow significantly over the next twenty years. We have an opportunity to plan for this growth today, considering ways to enhance and better manage destinations, access and the qualities that make The Broadwater special for our community and visitors.



Upper Coomera River Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

An exciting watersport and adventure playground supported by rehabilitated riverbanks and adjacent waterbodies that meet the needs of our rapidly growing local community.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

Extending upstream from the Coomera Connector to the Coomera River Causeway, the waterway includes adjoining foreshore parks and reserves. The waterway is framed by the communities of Upper Coomera, Oxenford, Coomera and Helensvale (including River Links Estate).

Draft local waterway profile

The Upper Coomera River experiences significant recreational demand from our growing local community. This waterway has been modified by a series of historic gravel quarries and developments that have created large waterbodies within and adjacent to the river. Over time, as these quarries have exhausted the gravel resources, they have been redeveloped with several quarry waterbodies transferred into government ownership.

Access to the river and these waterbodies (including associated foreshore parks and reserves) has been improved to support a broad range of recreational activities both on and by the water. Existing public access into the river is from boat ramps located at John Siganto Reserve, Upper Coomera, and Damian Leeding Memorial Park, Oxenford, that also contains the Regatta Waters Lake, Oxenford, providing a range of recreational paddling and sailing pursuits.

As community demand continues to grow, improvements to waterway access infrastructure and management arrangements will need to be considered alongside the needs of adjacent residents. The Coomera River experiences relatively frequent flooding that also influences the design and planning for future infrastructure investment, riverbank stabilisation and rehabilitation strategies.



Upper Nerang River Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

A new waterway destination offering a diverse range of unique waterway experiences and connections, seamlessly supported by integrated foreshore pathways, parks, and reserves.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

Extending from the Ross Street Bridge up to Weedons Crossing, the Upper Nerang River includes adjacent foreshore parks and reserves. The waterway is framed by the adjoining communities of Nerang, Carrara and Ashmore (including Royal Pines Resort).

Draft local waterway profile

The Upper Nerang River is experiencing recreational demand from our growing local community. As demand increases, improvements to waterway access infrastructure and management arrangements will need to be considered, alongside the needs of adjacent residents and businesses.

The plan area is currently defined by the lower river reaches that are popular for watersport activities such as waterskiing and jet skiing. The upper river reaches of the plan area are more tranquil in nature, supporting fishing and paddle craft activities. Public access into the river in the plan area is via the existing local boat ramp facility at Arthur Earle Park. There are no other existing formed or managed public waterway access points. Future local waterway planning can consider opportunities for additional waterway access points and infrastructure enhancements.

There is a series of foreshore parks and reserves that front the river with varying degrees of formed community access pathways and riverbank conditions. Weedons Crossing Bridge Park enables people to get down close to the river's edge at the transition of the tidal and freshwater reaches of the river. We have the opportunity to plan to integrate the riverfront pathway networks. We can also investigate bank stabilisation and restoration outcomes to support waterway condition improvements.

This waterway is fringed by a series of large development and infrastructure sites that historically did not embrace the riverfront. This includes shopping and retail establishments, transport infrastructure corridors, Carrara Sports Complex and the Royal Pines Resort. These existing facilities present an opportunity to work with key asset owners to explore ways to find a balance between natural values, restoration and community access.



Southern Creeks Local Waterway Plan



Proposed Vision

Connecting hinterland to coast, these magnificent waterways continue to define and nurture the local culture and coastal lifestyle.



Proposed local waterway geographical area/boundary

Tallebudgera Creek extends from the creek mouth to Schuster Park, including foreshores and adjacent reserves. Currumbin Creek from Currumbin Alley to Preston Park, including foreshores and adjacent reserves.

Draft local waterway profile

The creeks form sheltered tidal waterways that provide relatively calm swimming and watersport opportunities when compared to the adjoining ocean beaches. They experience significant demand from our community and visitors including swimming and paddle craft pursuits particularly close to the creek/ocean entrances where parks and reserves provide accessible foreshores and swimming locations.

The creeks are also popular for fishing from boats, paddle craft and the foreshore. Boats also access the ocean via the trained creek entrances that have shallow and dynamic bars. As these locations contain a significant diversity of users it is necessary that all people are mindful and care for each other in a respectful manner, noting the potential safety risks in these popular coastal bar locations.

Existing formal access points include boat ramps at Awoonga Avenue (Burleigh Heads), Murlong Crescent (Tallebudgera) and Thrower Drive (Currumbin) with a range of supporting pontoons, jetties and ramps also providing access for paddle craft. Informal access into these waterways is also gained from sandy foreshores along the many kilometres of adjoining parks and reserves.

There is a broad range of established pathways and boardwalks along these waterways, with opportunity to consider linkages and enhancements through future planning with the City of Gold Coast.

There are significant environmental areas that adjoin Tallebudgera Creek including Burleigh Heads National Park, Tallebudgera Creek Conservation Park, David Fleay Wildlife Park and Elanora Wetlands Reserve. At Currumbin Creek, foreshore parklands of Merv Craig Recreation Park, Preston Park, Lions Park and Tarrabora Reserve contain areas of coastal and wetland habitat. These environmental areas provide native wildlife refuge and habitat corridors along the creeks to other adjoining natural areas in the upper catchments.

The creeks are adjoined by the community facilities of Palm Beach Currumbin State High School, Palm Beach Aquatic and Community Centre, Gold Coast Recreation Precinct, and Tallebudgera Creek Tourist Park. With relatively short and elevated coastal catchments, where significant intensive rainfall can occur, the creeks are also known to experience localised flash flooding.

SECTION

3

Transformative BIG ideas



Key Initiatives Shaping the Future of the Gold Coast Waterways

A number of ideas for the Gold Coast waterways have emerged through extensive community engagement and a careful review of the challenges and opportunities shaping their future.

Some initiatives may be implemented within specific locations through LWPs, while others have broader applicability across multiple waterways and diverse waterway environments throughout the Gold Coast.

Different ideas will be led by various organisations or levels of government, reflecting the unique responsibilities and expertise required for effective implementation.

Collaboration and partnership will be essential, ensuring that efforts are aligned to support long term sustainability, accessibility, and community benefit.

We've identified six BIG ideas to guide the future management of the Gold Coast's waterways. Community and stakeholder engagement will be key to shaping their development.

1



Boat Mooring, Storage and Access Strategy

2



Wave Break Island Destination Upgrades and Management

3



Waterway Trails and Community Hubs

4



Next Generation Waterways Transport

5



Northern Marine Precinct at Steiglitz

6



State of the Waterways Reporting



Project Idea 1: Boat Mooring, Storage and Access Strategy

As the regional community continues to grow there will be a need to plan for more boat mooring and storage solutions to meet future demand to access our Gold Coast waterways. To cater for the diverse size and forms of boats, from dinghies through to superyachts, these solutions can be a range of on-water and beside-the-water storage outcomes.

In addition, major demand catalysts like the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, can be considered. There will also be continued demand pressure for the provision of boat ramps and adjacent parking to meet the access needs of the regional community.

To inform future planning, a demand study is underway to identify expected future needs for a broad range of boat mooring and storage solutions. This will help to ensure future local waterway plans or other major projects (such as the Northern Marine Precinct master plan at Steiglitz) are informed by the type and scale of expected storage, access and mooring solutions required.



Project Idea 2: Wave Break Island Destination Upgrades and Management

Wave Break Island was created in 1986 as part of the Gold Coast Seaway infrastructure development project. The purpose of Wave Break Island was to protect the local communities at Labrador and Southport from potential waves through the Gold Coast Seaway during significant storm events. Wave Break Island is secured by northern and southern rock walls and was planted with coastal vegetation to stabilise the sand pumped out of the Gold Coast Seaway to create the island.

Since its creation, Wave Break Island has become a very popular waterway destination. Over the last 30 years there have been various development proposals over the island, however very little investment has occurred to upgrade or improve the island as a destination for community and visitors. The Spit Master Plan 2019 identifies Wave Break

Island as a place that provides a natural retreat in the heart of The Broadwater, and identifies opportunity for improved day-use facilities, low-impact eco-tourism, and vegetation management outcomes. We are currently considering initial investments to improve Wave Break Island as part of The Spit Master Plan implementation.

As the regional community continues to grow, there are opportunities to plan for long term demand and improve the destination experience of Wave Break Island. These improvements can also help to relieve waterway recreational pressure that may otherwise be placed on environmental reserves, including the Moreton Bay Marine Park and its islands. These long term opportunities will also be considered as part of the Broadwater Local Waterway Plan.



Project Idea 3: Waterway Trails and Community Hubs

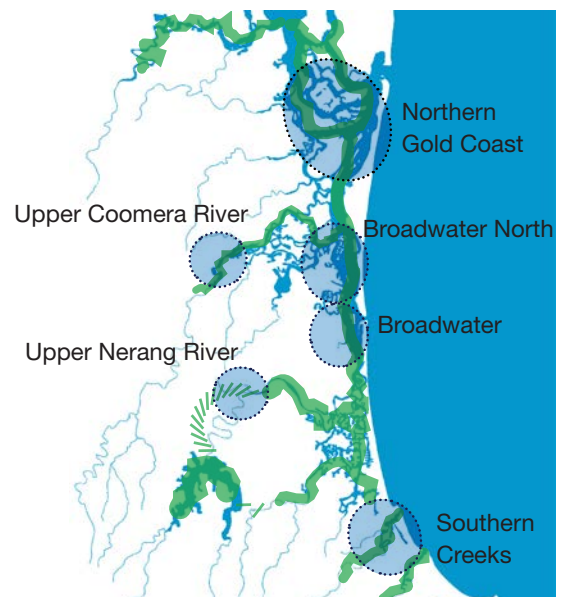
Creating a network of waterway trails that supports nature-based recreation and tourism strengthens accessibility while deepening community engagement with the region's waterways. By integrating community hubs with essential amenities—including paddle craft launch spots, storage, showers, swimming enclosures, and social spaces—this initiative fosters a welcoming and functional environment.

Expanding these trails to key boating destinations with mooring and anchorage infrastructure will allow waterfront establishments to better serve the boating community, reinforcing both economic and recreational connections.

Collaboration with the City of Gold Coast, tourism bodies, and local providers will ensure that implementation aligns with regional needs, sustainability goals, and long term growth strategies.

Strengthening connections between major waterfront facilities and waterways unlocks new recreational opportunities, improves accessibility, and supports next-generation transport initiatives.

By integrating waterway access infrastructure within shopping centres, community venues, and entertainment precincts, destinations can become more inclusive and fully connected to the surrounding waterway network. These efforts will seamlessly support waterway trails, transport solutions, and regional mobility, reinforcing the idea that waterways serve as functional public assets, not just scenic backdrops.





Project Idea 4: Next Generation Waterways Transport

Advancing innovative, low-impact water transport solutions is essential to ensuring that the Gold Coast waterways remain accessible, efficient, and environmentally sustainable.

Bespoke vessel designs—capable of operating at greater speeds while minimising wake impact—will allow for seamless navigation, creating practical and integrated transit options. Championing innovation in vessel design, including low-emission propulsion, sustainable materials, and wake-reducing technologies, will drive eco-friendly transport advancements.

Expanding on-water community transport services will strengthen connectivity, accessibility, and convenience across Gold Coast waterways, reducing reliance on road networks while deepening engagement with the region's aquatic landscape.

By increasing terminals and optimising preferred transport routes, these initiatives can unlock new opportunities for waterway mobility, integrating emerging destinations and community hubs into a cohesive transport framework.

Incorporating these improvements into Local Waterway Plans ensures alignment with long term regional transport needs, fostering a resilient and future-ready waterway network.



Project Idea 5: Northern Marine Precinct at Steiglitz

Working with the City of Gold Coast to finalise the precinct master planning and deliver catalyst investments to ensure the long term success of this regionally significant precinct and gateway to Gold Coast waterways.

The opportunity is to plan for future demand for boat storage, such as marinas and dry stack storage solutions and public waterway access infrastructure, such as boat ramps, jetties and pontoons.

There is also the need to plan navigation channel links and waterway connections, including infrastructure to support the maintenance of the northern navigational channel network, marinas and canals.

The precinct can also provide land to support longer term private sector investment, skilled jobs and services for manufacturing, innovation and maintenance for the Gold Coast marine economy.



Project Idea 6: State of the Waterways Reporting

Establishing monitoring measures and data collection ensures that the Gold Coast's waterways remain healthy, accessible, and responsive to evolving environmental and community needs.

Tracking water quality, habitat extent, riparian restoration, and pollution responses allows for proactive management strategies, reinforcing long term sustainability and resilience. Incorporating wreck and rubbish removal, access enhancements, and citizen science initiatives ensures community engagement, making waterway stewardship a shared responsibility.

By establishing a baseline and conducting trend analysis, decision-makers will be equipped with valuable insights to guide future investments—whether for ecological rehabilitation, infrastructure improvements, or economic development.

SECTION

4

Delivering Our Waterways Future



Next Steps

The *Our Waterways Future* strategy sets a long term direction for managing and enhancing the Gold Coast waterways. Delivering on this vision will require coordinated action across government, industry, community and research partners.

Implementation

- A rolling implementation program will be developed, aligning priority actions with available funding, legislative responsibilities and inter-agency partnerships.
- Detailed delivery plans will be prepared for major initiatives, supported by business cases, risk management frameworks and engagement plans.
- Governance arrangements will be established to oversee implementation, monitor progress and ensure alignment with State and regional priorities.

Collaboration

- Ongoing collaboration with councils, community organisations, Traditional Owners and industry stakeholders will be central to delivery.
- Technical studies and place-based planning processes will continue to inform project design and prioritisation.
- Regular engagement will ensure community values remain at the heart of waterways management.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Progress will be tracked through the Queensland Government's performance management framework, with updates included in relevant plans and reports.
- Key outcomes will be monitored, including waterway health, community access, safety, economic benefits and cultural values.
- Lessons learned will be captured to inform adaptive management and future updates to the strategy.

Review and Renewal

- The strategy will be reviewed at regular intervals to reflect new evidence, community insights and emerging challenges or opportunities.
- These reviews will ensure *Our Waterways Future* remains relevant, resilient and responsive over the next 20 years.

Appendix 1:

Managing Access within a Changing Coastal Environment

Our coastline is dynamic, with the flow of rivers, ocean currents and wave energy constantly moving sand changing our waterways environment.

The Gold Coast is part of an extensive and changing coastline where rivers, ocean currents and wave energy transport sand from New South Wales and South East Queensland, northwards up to K'gari (Fraser Island). This northward flow of sand has created our beautiful beaches, South and North Stradbroke Islands, Moreton Island, Bribie Island and K'gari (Fraser Island). This constant movement of sand and sediment presents challenges for maintaining access to our waterways and protecting our foreshore areas, including beaches, parks, reserves and properties.

Our role at GCWA is to maintain access across the Gold Coast waterways in a sustainable way. For us to provide over 170 kilometres of navigational channels, access points and destinations, we implement the Sand Management Plan. Under this plan, we aim to minimise the amount of dredging and potential impacts to our waterways environment by monitoring channels and working with nature where possible.

When dredging does occur to ensure the navigation channels remain accessible, the clean sand can be added to local beaches. We work closely with the City of Gold Coast to determine the best use of sand resources when we undertake dredging works. This sand acts as a buffer to protect our foreshores and beaches from erosion and increases their amenity.

Our Gold Coast navigation channel network connects to Moreton Bay in the north providing boating access between the Gold Coast and the communities of Logan, Redlands and Brisbane. Our network provides direct access to the ocean through the Gold Coast Seaway. Additionally, there are coastal bars at the entrance at Jumpinpin, and at Tallebudgera Creek and Currumbin Creek.

The creek entrances at Tallebudgera Creek and Currumbin Creek are stabilised with rock armour to provide protection for the foreshore, beaches and

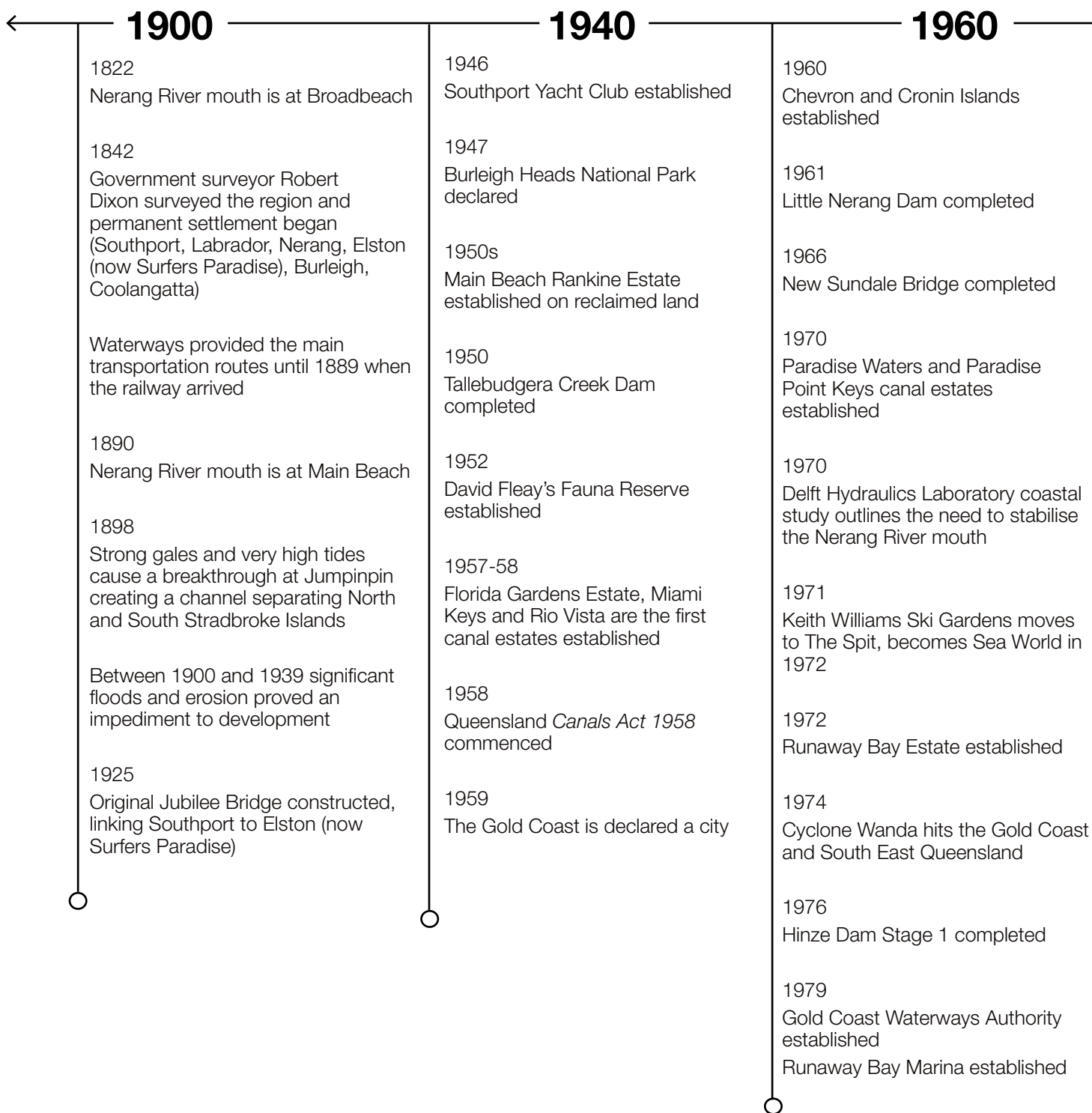
local property from coastal erosion. These changes have enhanced local amenity. In 1986, the Nerang River's connection to the ocean was stabilised through the construction of the Gold Coast Seaway. Previously from 1822 to 1980 the Nerang River entrance migrated north from Broadbeach to its current position at Main Beach. The Seaway construction included the world's first Sand Bypass System. This system supports sand transport from the Spit to South Stradbroke Island, as nature moves on average 500,000 m³ of sand each year north along the Coastline. The establishment of the Seaway resulted in the creation of Doug Jennings Park which has become a favourite place for community gathering and hosting events. Wave Break Island was also constructed to protect the foreshores at Southport and Labrador from wave energy entering through the Seaway. Today we continue to manage the Seaway, the Sand Bypass System, Doug Jennings Park and Wave Break Island.

Sand is constantly moving throughout our waterways. Since 1986, it is estimated approximately 8 million m³ of sand has left the Broadwater through the Seaway out to the ocean. Between the Seaway walls the depth of the channel has increased from 6 metres at construction to be between 15 to 18 metres today. The Sand Bypass System pipeline that was originally buried in the Seaway bed is now a popular dive attraction.

The Seaway, along with Doug Jennings Park at The Top of The Spit, is enjoyed by our community and visitors. We continue to plan for and manage community and visitor demands and opportunities for enhancement to these areas. Our role is to ensure these places can be enjoyed by future generations, whilst balancing demands within a changing coastal environment.

Appendix 2:

Recent History of the Gold Coast Waterways



1980

2000

2020

1980

Tallebudgera Creek and Currumbin Creek training walls completed

1986

Gold Coast Seaway, Wave Break Island and Doug Jennings Park completed

1987

Sanctuary Cove established

1988

Sovereign and Ephraim Islands established

Marina Mirage opens

1989

Hinze Dam Stage 2 completed

1990

Gold Coast Waterways Authority disbanded

1993

Moreton Bay Marine Park declared
South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park gazetted

1994

Tallebudgera Creek Conservation Park gazetted

1998

Gold Coast Harbour Study completed

1999

Emerald Lakes established

2000

Southern Moreton Bay Islands National Park declared

Gold Coast Marine Precinct and Coomera River navigation channel established

2003

Coomera River navigation channel maintenance studies commence
Gold Coast Harbour Vision 2020

2005

Cruise Ship Terminal proposal by Queensland Government at the Seaway (project ended 2007)

Calypso Bay Canal Estate established

2007

River Links Canal Estate established

2009

Q150 project - Broadwater Parklands Stage 1 opens

2010

Broadwater Parklands Stage 2 opens
Navigation access needs study completed

2011

Hinze Dam Stage 3 completed

2012

Gold Coast Waterways Authority re-established under the *Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012*

Broadwater Marine Project/Integrated Resort Development Project, including Cruise Ship Terminal (ended 2017)

2014

Sand Management Plan approved

2016

Broadwater Parklands Stage 3 opens with a new regional boat ramp facility

2019

Coomera Dredged Sediment Management Facility completed
The Spit Master Plan released

2020

The Spit Master Plan Act 2020 enacted and land releases approved for major new investment

The Spit Accessible Promenade and Moondarewa Spit improvements completed

2020 – 2024

Sand Bypass System upgrades including backpassing to Surfers Paradise

2021

Gold Coast Waterways Management Strategy 2021-2030 released

2023

Northern Marine Precinct Master Plan (Steiglitz) studies commence

2024

Tallebudgera Creek training wall, park and boardwalk upgrades completed

Muriel Henschman Park and boat ramp upgrade completed



Aerial view of Ephraim Island (left) and Sovereign Islands, 1992 (City of Gold Coast Libraries Local Studies Collection)



Muriel Henschman Park, The Spit, 2025 (Gold Coast Waterways Authority)

Appendix 3:

References and Supporting Information

The following documents, studies and frameworks have informed the development of *Our Waterways Future*. They provide the evidence base for the strategy, and ensure alignment with broader government objectives, statutory requirements and technical best practice.

Government Policy and Legislative Frameworks

- *Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012*
- Implementation of *the Spit Master Plan Act 2020*
- State Infrastructure Strategy 2022–2042
- State Budget Papers and Capital Statements
- Transport Coordination Plan
- Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads: Movement and Place Policy and Guidelines (2024)
- Queensland Sustainability Report
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands — Wetlands of International Significance
- City of Gold Coast City Plan (latest version)
- Our Coastal Lifestyle Strategy 2050
- Gold Coast Waterways Management Strategy 2021–2030
- GCWA Coastal Adaptation Plan (Final)
- GCWA Climate Change Policy (Final)

Strategic Plans and Masterplans

- The Spit Master Plan 2019
- Spit Masterplan Top of the Spit (Context, Precinct Plans, Stakeholder Engagement Reports, 2023–2024)
- Waterways Place Strategy (2023–2024) – Economic, Social, Cultural and Engagement analyses
- Northern Marine Precinct Master Plan (2023–2024)

- Local Master Planning and Foreshore Renewal Projects (Southport, Labrador, Tallebudgera, Currumbin Creeks)
- Recreation and Open Space Network Plan (2022, Final)
- Economic Development Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Technical Studies and Reports

- Sand Management Plan (2020, updated 2022)
- Hydrodynamic and Sediment Transport Modelling (Seaway, Jumpinpin, Currumbin, Tallebudgera Creeks)
- Marine Stadium studies (2021–2023): water quality, tidal exchange, stakeholder engagement, economic assessment
- Navigation Channel Demand and Vessel Use Studies (various years)
- Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Studies (2010–2017)
- Speed Limits and Behaviour Management Strategy (2018)
- Congestion and Conflicting Use Management Technical and Discussion Reports (2019)
- GCWA Buoy Mooring Strategy (2017, Final)
- Curlew Island and Broadwater ecological investigations (2012 onward)
- Foreshore Stabilisation and Resilience Studies: erosion management and nature-based adaptation



Evidence and Engagement

- GCWA Community Engagement Findings Report (2024)
- Gold Coast Water Community Sentiment and Satisfaction Survey (May 2025)
- Place Strategy 2024: Community Engagement Outcomes
- Waterways Connect precinct planning and engagement (2023)
- **Our Waterways Future** Challenges and Opportunities Summary (2023)
- Gateway Visitor Centre Draft Master Plan for Consultation – David Fleay Wildlife Park Discussion Paper (2013)

Data, Industry and Economic Analysis

- GCWA Spatial Data (Full Database)
- Gold Coast Marine Industry Report (2023)
- Gold Coast Marina Demand (2023, Final)
- Marine Industry Economic Contribution Study (latest update 2022)
- Gold Coast Investment Export Report (2023)
- Tourism Management Programs
- GCH Multi-Modal Corridor Study Report
- Waterways Place Strategy – Economic Analysis (2024)
- Gold Coast Waters Potential Marina Sites (2023)

Historical and Contextual Material

- Gold Coast Waterways History Final Report (June 2024)
- Gold Coast Waterways Illustrated Timeline (July 2023)
- Baseline studies (2003–2014) – sediment quality, cruise ship, seaway stability, sand transport
- Aquatic Activities in Gold Coast Lakes and Waterways
- Shorebird Management Strategy and location data





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