



american river urban design framework

prepared for the kangaroo island council
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a p p e n d i x

A separate document has been prepared as an Appendix to all four frameworks. This document includes:

- Methodology for the project
- Review of previous studies
- Consultation results
- Development Plan Policy Review



introduction

INTRODUCTION

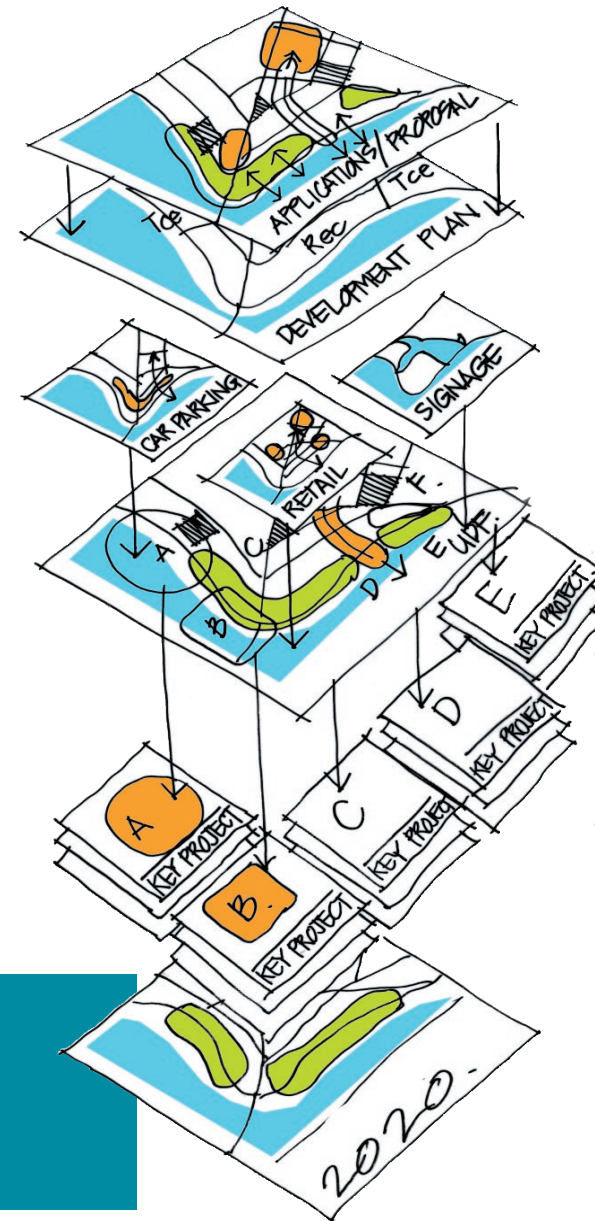
The Kangaroo Island Centres Project involves the preparation of strategic urban design frameworks for the key townships of the Island being Kingscote, Penneshaw, American River and Parndana. The project is aimed at positioning the townships of Kangaroo Island to enhance their charm and character, meet community expectations and deliver on the needs of the tourists who visit the Island.

Urban design frameworks are relatively new instruments for Councils undertaking urban improvement strategies. They focus on collectively addressing the various elements of urban environments, like movement and land use, that bear strong relationships. The output of frameworks include an interpretable vision for how a place should 'look, feel and function'.

The information contained in this framework broadly identifies the directions for American River in both the short and long term. The frameworks have been specifically developed to guide decision making to ensure that the many public and private initiatives, that will inevitably occur over time, will act to achieve the desired outcome for each town.

Consequently the actions arising from the framework target policy changes and capital works. This approach will help to deliver better township environments in the long term, ensuring they are welcoming, economically prosperous, and enjoyable places to live and visit.

To develop a robust long-term series of frameworks for the key townships of Kangaroo Island, position the townships to enhance their charm and character, meet community expectations and deliver on the needs of the tourist.



'An Urban Design Framework is a tool to provide a vision and strategic direction to create more vibrant, attractive and commercially successful places. Such frameworks assist Councils, State Government Agencies, the private sector and the local community to focus resources and effort into areas of strategic importance – to achieve a long term vision or direction.'



american river in context



AMERICAN RIVER IN CONTEXT

Located adjacent to the serene environment of Pelican Lagoon, American River is a quiet residential settlement and holiday retreat. The area has a long history with its name being derived from the American Whalers who visited the area for a short time in 1803.

Tourism and holiday house accommodation has been the focus for development in American River throughout its history. The town is growing in importance as a centre for retirement and aquaculture

Key Assets of American River include

- Coastal village environment
- The outlook to Pelican Lagoon
- Hills backdrop and natural habitat for rare and endangered bird life
- Safe boating and mooring facilities
- Fishing Industry and developing aquaculture industry

Significant issues and pressures facing American River include

- Lack of a town centre and focal point for residents and visitors
- Limited infrastructure to the township, particularly water and sewerage
- Pressure for urban expansion into environmentally and visually sensitive areas
- Impact of any new development on Pelican Lagoon
- A lack of development and investment in the wharf area
- Poor directional signage to key township facilities



vision for american river

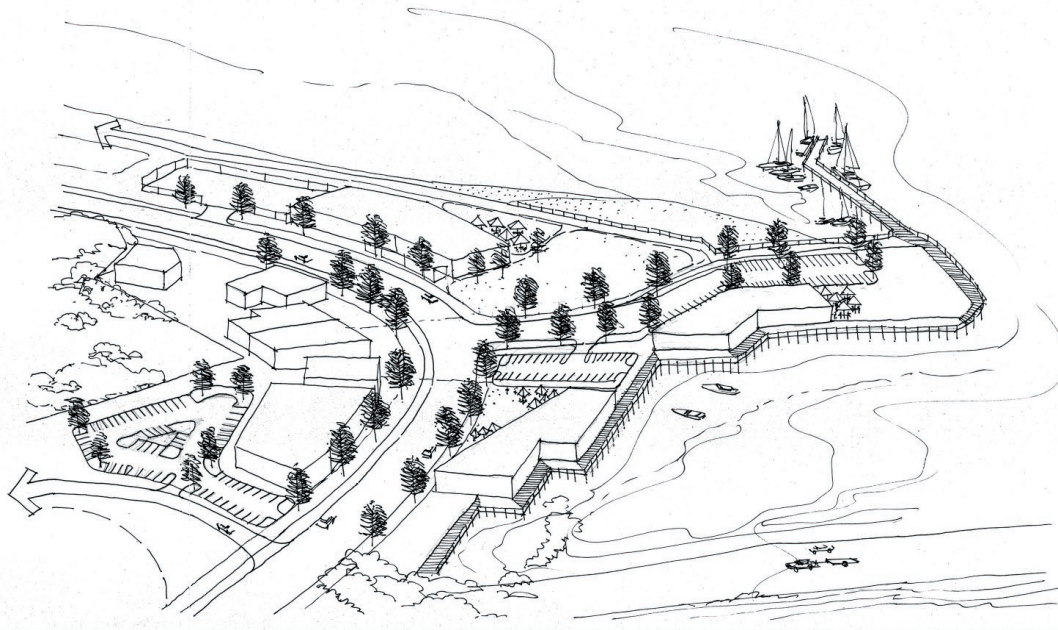
What will American River be in 20 years time? How will we achieve this?

What will drive change?

A 'vision' is something to strive for – it sets a clearly articulated direction of a desired outcome for current and future generations. A vision must also be flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities.

It is about balancing between community, economic and environmental priorities while retaining the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of American River.

The development of a vision for American River has involved extensive community engagement and consultation.



Vision for American River

American River will retain its tourism and coastal village atmosphere, recognising and protecting its sensitive landscape and marine environment.

- Township growth will be limited and managed to reduce adverse visual and environmental impacts
- A small but vibrant commercial and community hub will be developed - located adjacent to the wharf and servicing residents and visitors
- A foreshore walking trail will be established as a major township asset
- The American River wharf will continue to operate as a working wharf, but with a significantly improved tourism focus

DEVELOPING THE VISION

Community Consultation

Community involvement played a large role in the development of the vision and urban design framework for American River. The community and local businesses were invited to participate in workshops to assist in the development of a vision and to identify key issues and priorities for American River.

The community consultation process involved:

- Reviewing past documentation involving extensive community consultation (including previous studies, reports, Development Plan reviews and updates)
- Public and stakeholder meetings
- Media releases, brochures and displays
- Community survey and feedback opportunities

Community Feedback

Keys issues and priorities arising from the American River community consultation included:

- **Lack of acknowledgement of the area's history**
- **Lack of infrastructure**
- **Upgrade of boating and mooring facilities**
- **Retention of the tranquil lifestyle**
- **Development of a town centre**
- **Limiting the impact of new development**





understanding american river



UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN RIVER


A 'layered' approach has been taken to understanding American River – what makes up the town, how does it work, how do the various layers relate?
Such layers include:



Assessing Entrances and Legibility of the township



Investigating Public Space, Open Space and Linkages



Understanding the function, intensity and spatial relationship of the various Land Use components which make up the town



Activity Nodes that provide focal points for the community



Movement within American River

ENTRANCES & LEGIBILITY

Description

The entrance road to American River is flanked by native scrub, Pelican Lagoon and open rural fields which create an attractive gateway to the town. However, this may be compromised if development continues to occur on the elevated slopes above the town. This is because current forms of residential development may create a harsh interface with the undeveloped rural areas on the approach to the town.

The intersection of Tangara and Buick Drives marks the arrival to the town. Legibility at this point is particularly an issue for visitors because of the lack of clear directional and information signage.

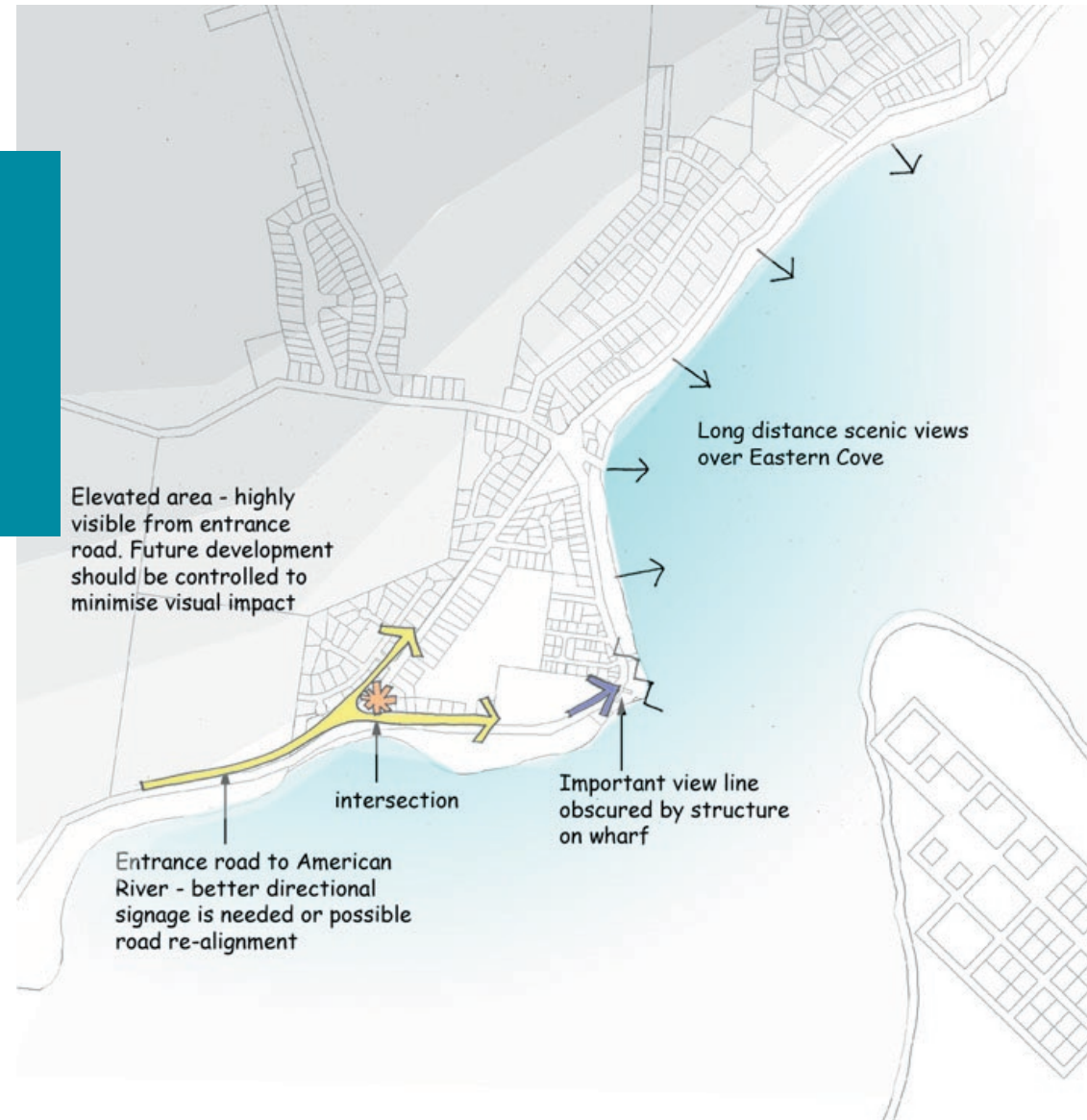
Views to Pelican Lagoon are significant, yet one of the most important views from the entrance road (Tangara Drive) is obscured by development on the wharf. These views create a pleasant environment along the foreshore, yet there is a lack of services and facilities to support activity along this precinct.



ENTRANCES & LEGIBILITY

Key Opportunities

- Develop a more legible entrance to the town at the intersection of Tangara and Buick Drive.
- Protect the open nature of the elevated hills alongside the entrance road to the town or develop strict guidelines for new development.
- Open views to Pelican Lagoon by relocating the general store on the wharf.



OPEN SPACE & LINKAGES

Description

The major components of open space in American River comprise the foreshore area and recreation oval. The strip of foreshore includes several nodes of open space areas, some facilities, the tennis courts, wharf and jetty, playground, boat ramp and camping park. The wharf and jetty provide a focus for boating and fishing activities but the area has greater potential as a recreational asset. The presence and appearance of the oyster sheds does detract from the open space quality of the wharf area.

The recreation oval is not used at present for regular (formal) sporting activities but provides an area for yearly festivals and events.

Key Opportunities

- Develop/complete a linear trail along the foreshore connecting the nodal areas (wharf, open space areas, camping area, etc.)
- Enhance the wharf as a user friendly facility with an emphasis on the area as a public space
- Work with the owners of the oyster sheds to improve the outward appearance of the facility.



Foreshore area – adjoining tennis courts



Wharf – unrealised potential



- 1. Wharf
- 2. Foreshore
- 3. Recreation area

LAND USE

Description

America River's land use character is dominated by its mix of residential/holiday homes. This includes a small, compact shack development, low density residential homes and elevated homes within a bush setting. Residential development is expanding into the rural surrounds of the town and the vegetated hills above the town.

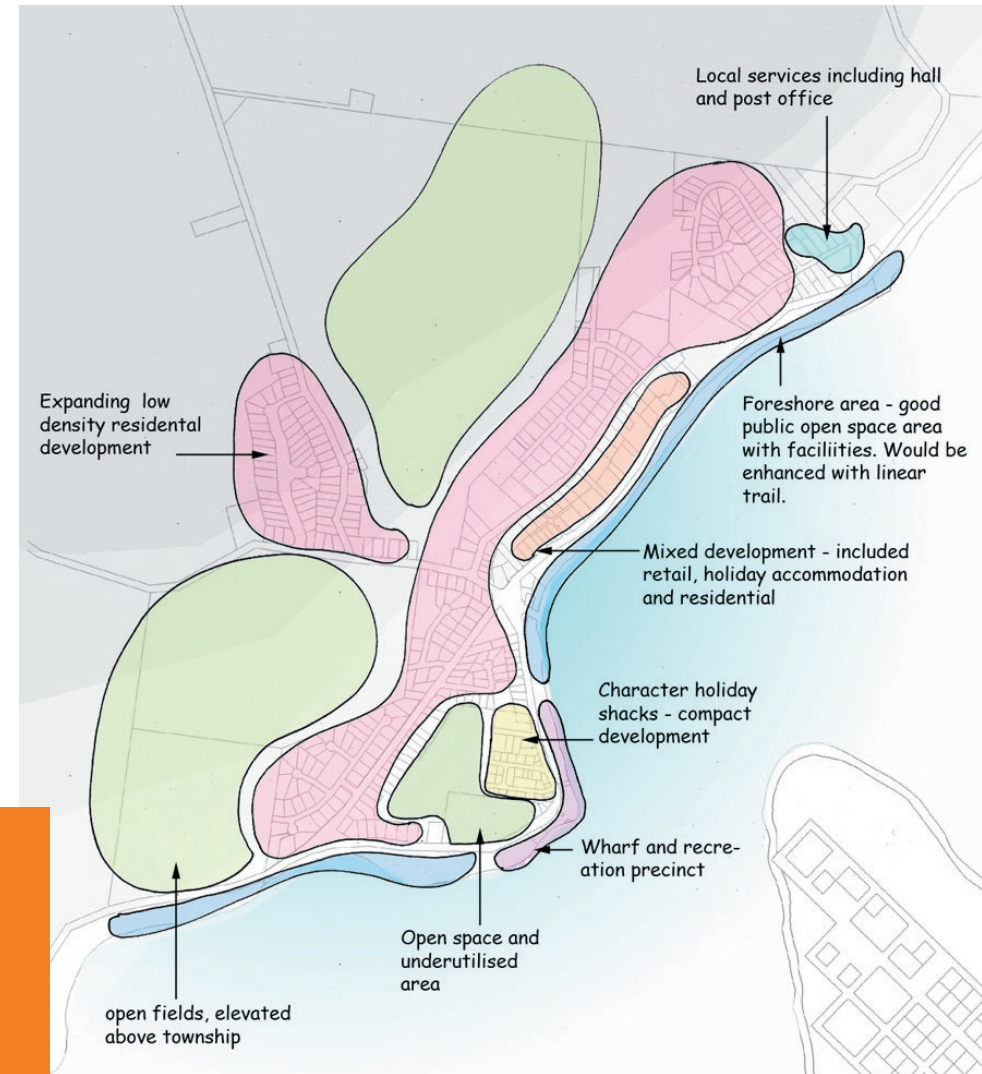
Key Issues

Preservation

- Protection of rural surrounds, particularly at the entrance to the town.
- Retention of the compact holiday shacks adjacent to the wharf area.
- The native vegetation within the town.

Change

- Better utilisation of the open space land surrounding the shack area.
- Development of the wharf to create an area that suitably accommodates a range of activities.

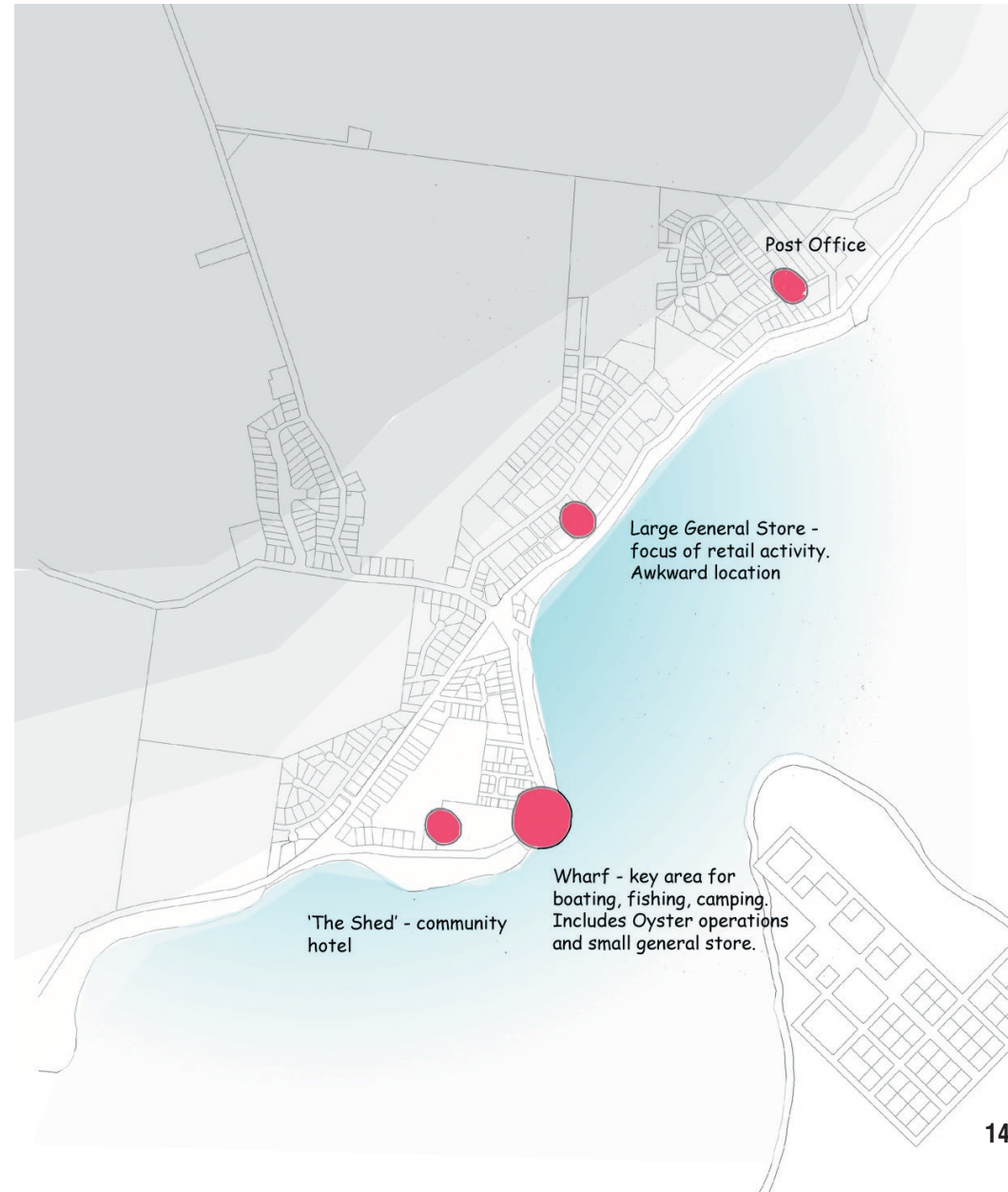


FOCAL POINTS / ACTIVITIES

Description

A significant issue affecting American River is the lack of a clear 'heart' or focal point of the town. There are three areas that offer a relatively small range of services and facilities but none of these areas have developed into a true town centre.

Creating a clear town centre for American River would provide benefits through the convenience of co-located facilities and provide a strong 'activity hub' for visitors. There are however, some issues that exist within the community as to where this centre should be.





ACTIVITY NODES

Options

The wharf area is a natural 'heart' of the town and in many ways is the logical place to locate more services and facilities. It benefits from a scenic outlook and proximity to the water. With the large supply of parking, interest guaranteed by boating and fishing activities, this area is a prominent destination for visitors.

The constraints to developing this area relate to the availability of land for development.



The general store along Scenic Drive provides a large range of convenience goods. However, there is no opportunity for the facility to expand and it is located on a steep site which presents accessibility issues.

There are also safety issues with this facility due to the road separation between the store and parking area.



The post office is located opposite a large council owned site creating opportunity for further expansion. However, it is a long distance from the entrance (which is particularly problematic for visitors) and lacks the scenic appeal of the wharf area.

MOVEMENT

Description

Excessive traffic movement and conflicts associated with congestion are not a concern for American River. The main concerns relate to legibility (people understanding how to get around the town), including the provision of signage, configuration of road intersections and spread of commercial activity.

1. **Junction of Buick/Tangara Drive – lack of signage to wharf area. Inadequate warning of junction.**
2. **Access to Wharf is on the outside of bend which is super elevated. Sight distance is good and speeds are restricted to 50kph.**

No formalized parking on the wharf. Opportunity to locate queuing areas should ferry service be introduced. Possible conflicts with parking adjacent to shop/tours.
3. **General Store – angle parking located on opposite side of the road which generates pedestrian movements across the road. Need to improve signage to alert motorists that pedestrians are crossing and attempt to identify a single point for pedestrians to cross. Could justify traffic control devices to slow traffic speeds**
4. **Lack of signage – not clear to motorists where the town centre is. No clear indication of route to exit Scenic Drive (u-turn or via Ryberg Road).**





american river framework

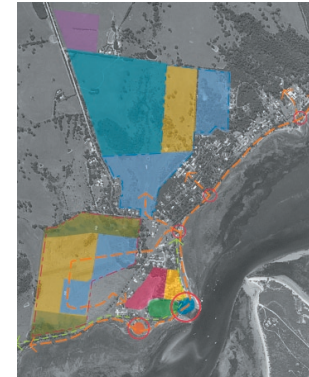
BACKGROUND

The American River Urban Design Framework consists of two separate components:

- Structure Plan
- Place specific concepts (including Main Street Plan, Gateway Concepts, and Residential land development)

The Structure Plan sets the broad framework for the long-term development of American River. This plan relates to the whole town and rural land in the immediate surrounds. By contrast place specific concepts target areas where change is required.

**Structure
Plan**



**Place Specific
Concepts**



AMERICAN RIVER STRUCTURE PLAN

Creating a robust structure is an important component of the Urban Design Framework. The investigations undertaken as part of this framework have focused on identifying general areas of visual significance, setting directions for new growth, creating new linkages and locating a town centre.

Development Plan Implications/Directions

To bring into affect some or all of these changes will require an amendment to the existing Development Plan including further detailed investigation to justify the amendments.

- Develop masterplans for areas identified for future residential development in visually and environmentally sensitive areas and prepare guidelines for development to minimise any adverse impacts.
- Review Residential zone provisions to address diversity between towns and the context of each site (current zone applies to whole Island)
- Introduce policy area to maintain the integrity of the shack area
- Introduce commercial/light industrial zone (subject to detailed investigations of land suitability)
- Update structure plan to reflect location of town centre, recreation oval and area identified for residential expansion (behind reserve).

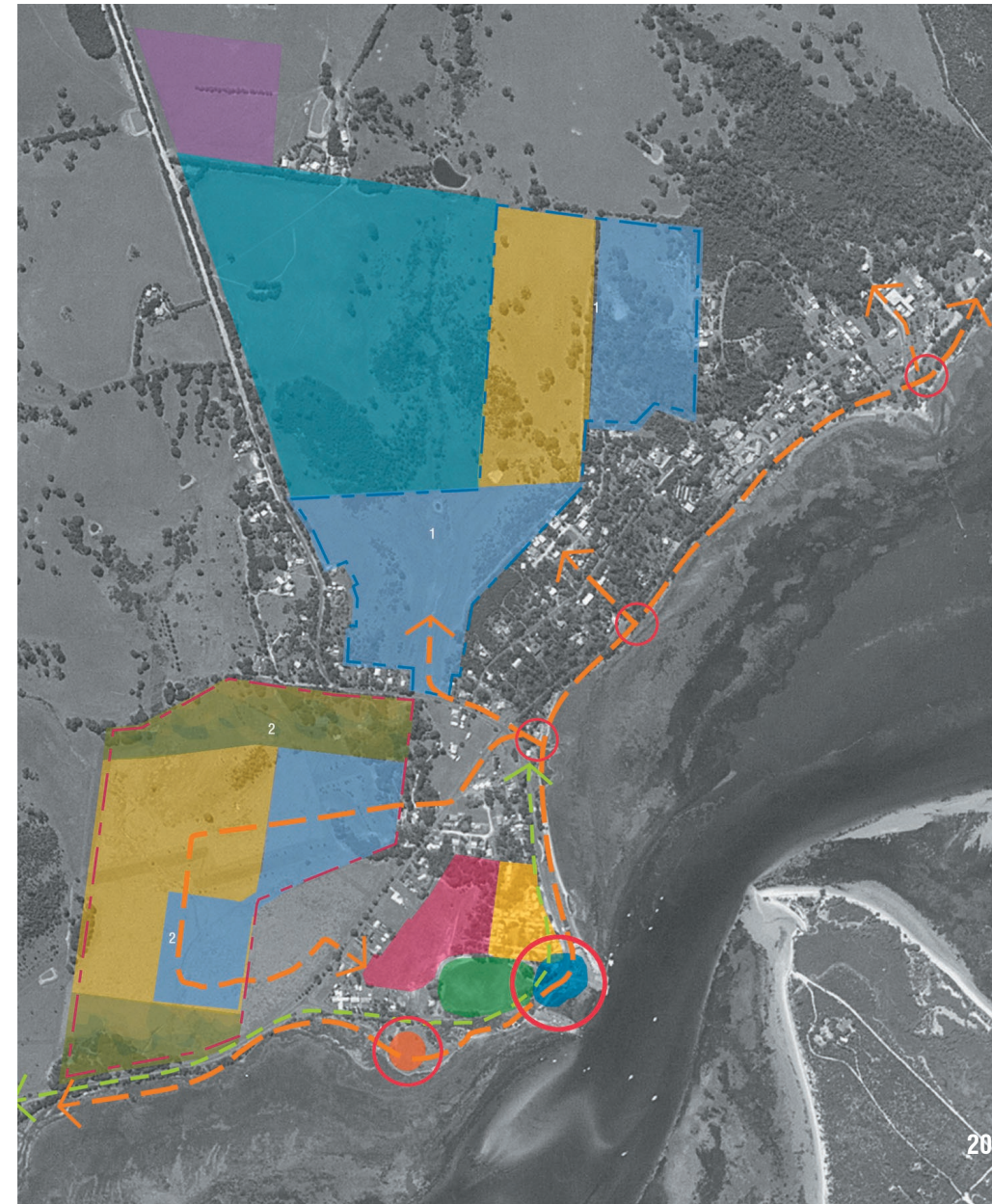
AMERICAN RIVER STRUCTURE PLAN

Area 1

Area including Residential and Deferred Urban land. Requires detailed investigation to determine appropriateness for future expansion, particularly in relation to impact on visual backdrop to the town and environmental issues (including habitat for Glossy Black Cockatoos). Will require master planning if development is deemed appropriate.

Area 2

Area including residential and Deferred Urban land. Site is an important visual gateway to the town and is also situated close to proposed town centre. Requires careful master planning to ensure residential developments are integrated with linkages and to preserve visual attractiveness of entrance with landscape buffers.



CREATING A TOWN CENTRE

Location

The creation of a town centre is a key priority for American River if it is to enhance its capacity to service tourism and create a more convenient destination. While it is acknowledged that there is community debate about the location of a town centre, the wharf has been considered the most appropriate location because it comprises a number of elements that will help to create a successful town centre.



Existing Site

Destination - It is a highly scenic location with interest and activities that visitors naturally gravitate towards.

Exposure - It has exposure from Tangara Drive

Diversity - The variety of activities that add interest (fishing and boating)

Opportunity – Vacant parcels of land (many within Government ownership)

Improving the quality of the wharf environment by defining public areas, enhancing facilities, and formalising parking areas is a key initiative in developing a 'Civic Heart'.

The wharf area is an ideal location because it has the potential to cater for recreational, civic, tourist, commercial, and social activities, which are important ingredients of a successful and vibrant town centre.



Creation of a Town Centre & Civic Heart

CREATING A TOWN CENTRE

The Concept

1. Develop a coastal linear trail that provides pedestrian access along the foreshore utilising the wharf as a major nodal point.
2. Investigate the possibility of relocating the service / storage area of the oyster farm to the tennis court location – currently underutilised.
3. Important view corridor from entrance road.
4. Introduce street tree planting that is in scale with built form such as *Eucalyptus cneorifolia* (Kangaroo Island Gum).
5. Explore opportunity to exploit tourism potential of oyster farm, i.e. door direct sales, café, seafood restaurant. Would also capitalise on attractive coastal outlook.
6. Reclaim area as public space – would provide good link and interface with swimming area.
7. Improve swimming area which is currently underutilised due to poor appeal.
8. Formalise parking opportunities to make more efficient use of space on wharf area, improve legibility and safety.
9. Boardwalk – important link for coastal linear trail.
10. Possible building sites – subject to further investigations.

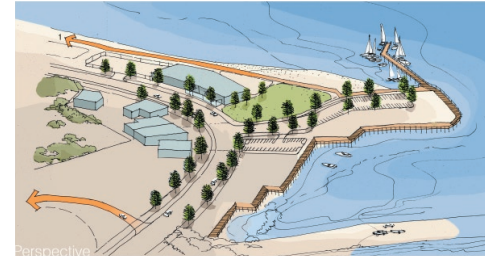
11. Key site for relocation of General Store and integration of other facilities (i.e. medical offices, Interpretative & Information Centre) – site is currently underutilised and not vital to the function of the open space area. Creation of public space in the wharf area would represent greater community recreation value.
12. Fishing jetty to be retained.
13. Retain sporting oval.



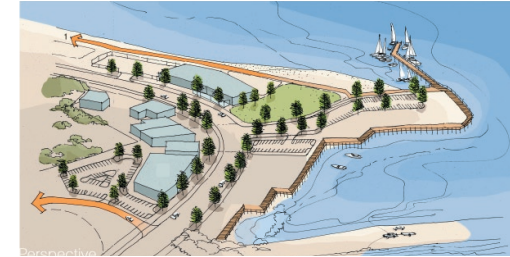
CREATING A TOWN CENTRE

Staged Approach

A staged approach to development of a town centre will be required. Some of the feedback from the community consultation indicated that there was not enough demand to support the growth of a centre. However, there are enough services and facilities currently within the centre that could be consolidated into a single centre. This would create a 'critical mass' and help capture and retain a greater number of visitors. The concept shown opposite demonstrates how a staged approach could be taken and reflects the possibility for a larger centre should the need arise for additional development over time. It recognises the importance of distant views to Pelican lagoon and the connection with the water. While it is recognised that there have been some concerns with development on the wharf there are advantages to be gained by enclosing and defining the public realm and drawing activity to the water's edge.

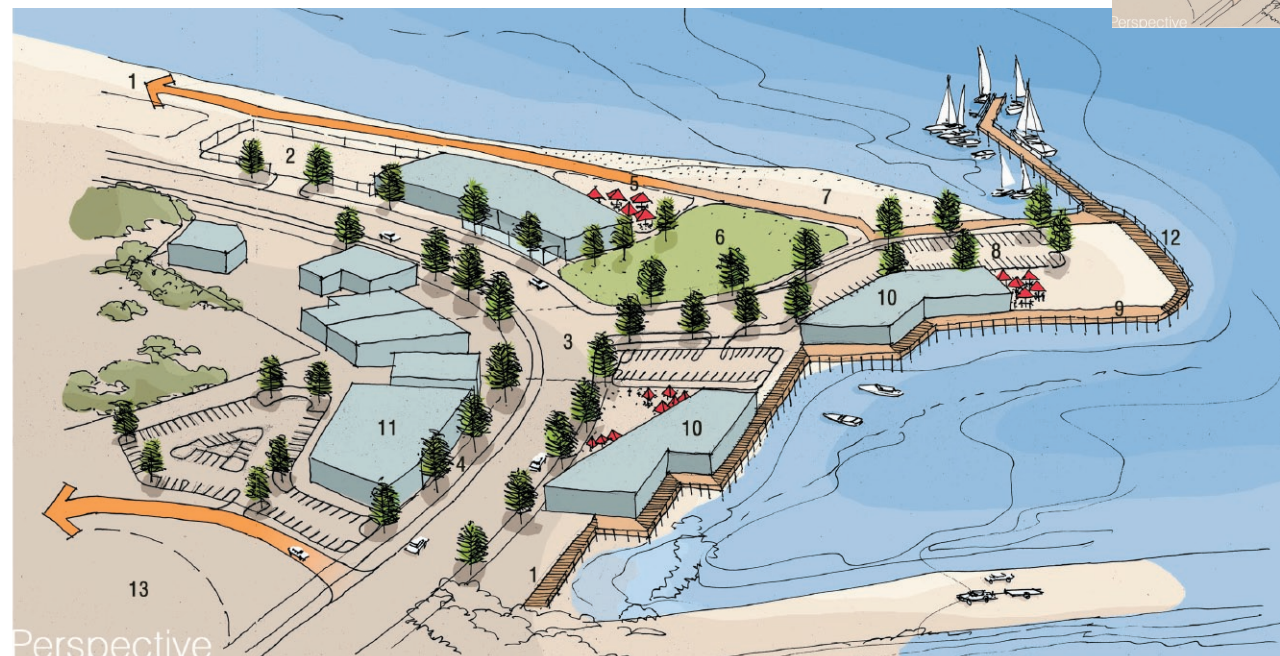
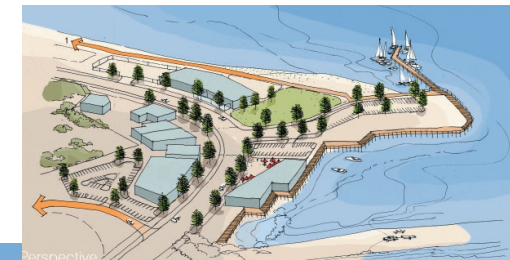


Stage 1 enhance the wharf



Stage 2 consolidate commercial activities

Stage 3 & 4 expand activities to wharf area



CREATING A TOWN CENTRE

While other towns within Kangaroo Island have established town centres usually comprising 'main streets' with defined characters, American River has not. Consequently the guidance for new development cannot be derived from early nineteenth century or post war architecture. In addition the site selected for the town centre is not a strip or 'main street' development so the idea of 'enclosing the street' by building to the front boundary is not completely relevant.

Less prescriptive guidance is needed in American River where sites for future development are uncertain (committing to a masterplan will assist but this needs the support of both the community and Council). A set of guiding principles will provide a means for guiding development that is in accordance with the objective of creating a vibrant town centre and civic heart. These principles can also provide the guidance for protecting important elements such as the connection with the water and the outlook

Principles

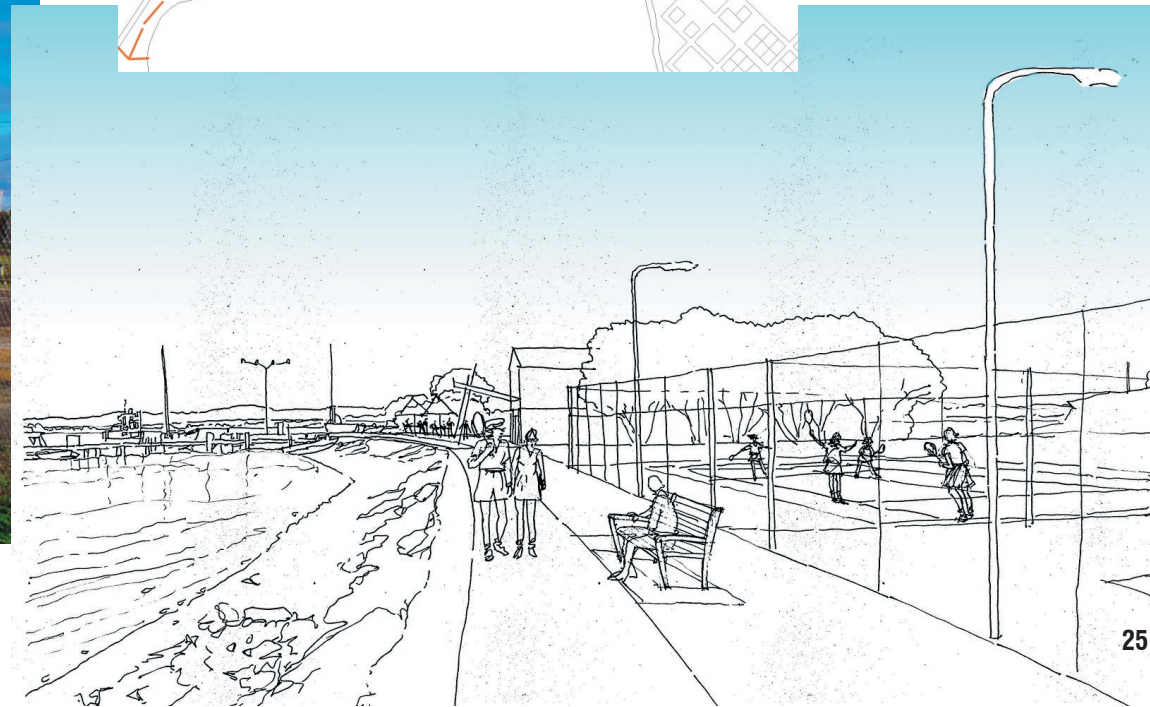
- **Commercial development with frontage to Tangara Drive should address the street front**
- **The design, style, and siting of new development should be respectful of views to Pelican Lagoon and the needs of wharf activities**
- **Height of new development should be limited to avoid development that is out of context with the American River environment**
- **Vehicle parking should be consolidated and located in areas that can be shared by a variety of users (as shown on concept plan)**

- **Development on the wharf should provide frontages to both public areas of the wharf and Pelican Lagoon**
- **Development should not restrict public access to the outer perimeter of the wharf (see concept plan)**
- **Development should be designed to help define and provide good interface with public spaces on the wharf**
- **Land use activities should include a range of services to cater for the needs of both local residents and visitors**
- **Activities on the wharf should be limited to restaurants, cafés, and interpretive information facilities that help draw activity to the area and provide surveillance in the evening.**

A FORESHORE LINEAR TRAIL

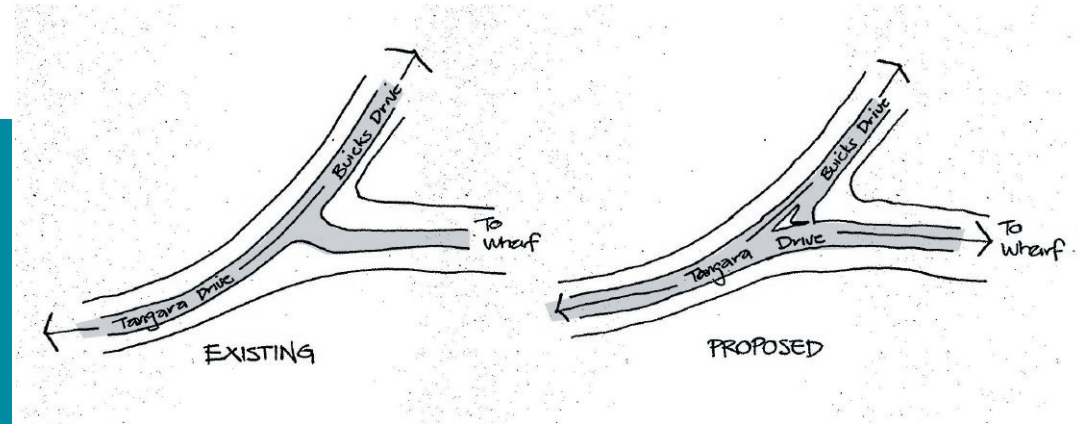
Developing a foreshore linear trail will provide a great asset for the town and stimulate activity along the foreshore. Creating a formal trail for pedestrians and cyclists will provide better access to the highly scenic foreshore area. Should the Town centre develop around the wharf, the trail would provide a safe connection for a large number of residents within the town.

Development of the trail would need to occur in a staged manner and comprise sections of boardwalk and pavement. Further detailed analysis and concepts will need to be developed and complemented by work undertaken by residents of the town.



MOVEMENT

The location of a town centre around the wharf area should be supported by the re-alignment of Tangara Drive at the intersection with Buick Drive. The intersection should be redesigned to direct traffic through to the wharf area. At present many visitors by-pass the wharf area because of the priority movement to Buick Drive and because of the lack of directional signage.



Existing



Proposed

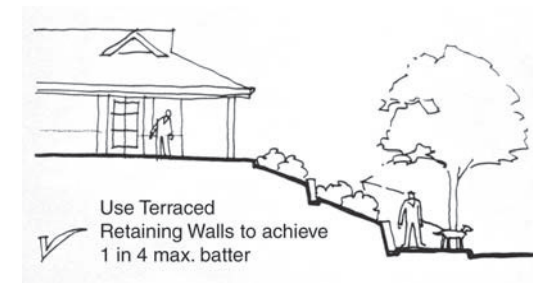
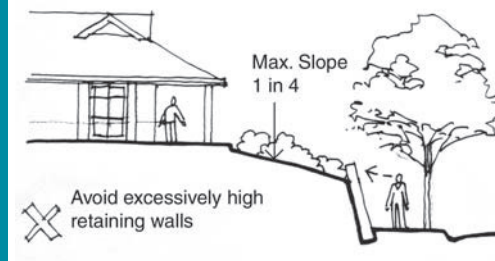
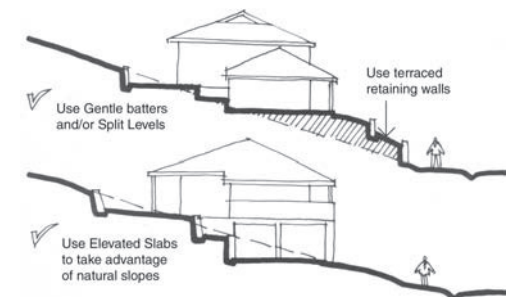
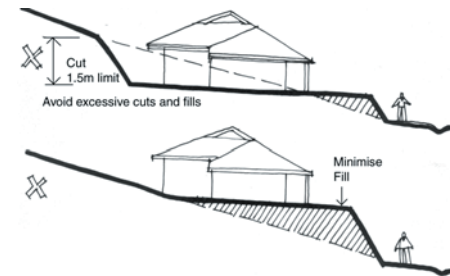
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development of the visually sensitive areas that form an elevated backdrop to the town will have a significant impact on the appearance of the town. These areas comprise rural fields and stands of native vegetation. Masterplans and design guidelines are needed to ensure future development does not erode the important environmental qualities of the town.

The masterplans are needed to ensure future development integrates well with the town. This means having a permeable road network with links between existing and future developments, a network of pedestrian connections, subdivision patterns that deal with the slope of the land, and protection for important stands of vegetation.

The design guidelines are required to ensure a good standard of development that minimises visual impact by;

- providing standards for cutting and filling sites,
- terracing retaining walls,
- splitting floor levels,
- establishing height limits,
- specifying requirements for fencing types,
- creating a list of appropriate plant and tree species for landscaping
- developing a list of appropriate materials and colours.





implementation plan

Item	Action	Design Development	Capital Works	PAR	Responsibility	Priority
Structure Plan / Land Use	Prepare master plans for areas designated for future residential development including investigations of:			✓	Council / Planning SA	Immediate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual sensitivity of elevated areas. - Possible design guidance to facilitate appropriate development. - Vehicle and pedestrian connections. - Open space areas. - Protection of habitats for local fauna. - Areas of significant flora. 				DEH (fauna & EPBC) Native Vegetation Council	
	Confirm location for commercial/light industrial area to be incorporated in Development Plan.			✓	Council / Planning SA	Current
	Seek expert advice to develop a STEDs scheme for the town (ie. Ecological Engineering).	✓	✓		Council	
Movement	Investigate potential to expand camping facilities including appropriate locations (see framework plan pg's 18 & 19).	✓	✓			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate potential to redirect traffic entering the town at the intersection of Buicks and Tangara Drive. 	✓	✓		Council	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek funding from Planning SA to prepare a linear open space and trail concept plan for the towns foreshore area. Including the design of key node points – to be linked with initiative already being undertaken by locals. 	✓	✓		Council / Planning SA	Medium

Item	Action	Design Development	Capital Works	PAR	Responsibility	Priority
Town Centre	- While it is noted that further work is required for agreement on location of a town centre a feasibility study should be undertaken to confirm the appropriateness of commercial growth and amalgamation opportunities (this may resolve issue).			✓	Council / Planning SA	Immediate / High
	- Prepare concept plan to improve visual appearance and functionality of wharf as public space, fishing area and boat mooring area – should include discussions with oyster farm operator.	✓	✓		Council / Planning SA	High
Economic Development	Prepare a 'local tourism audit and plan' (see Peter Kenyon's recommendations).		✓		Council / Economic Development Board / Tourism SA	Medium
	Implement a 'Life in the Past Lane' project (see Peter Kenyon's recommendations).				Council / Economic Development Board / Tourism SA	Medium
	Develop an aged-care strategy to build on the potential for American River to enhance its function as a retirement centre.				Council	Medium
Heritage	Investigate future of unique shack area and consider creating separate policy area to protect character (see heritage report for details).			✓	Council / Heritage SA / Planning SA	Medium