



Central Coast Council

Public Hearings: Plan of Management Update –
Community Land Categorisation & Recategorisation

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Public Hearing Summary

Background and Purpose

Central Coast Council manages around 2,500 lots of community land, which are categorised based on core land management objectives in line with requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1993. A Plan of Management (POM) ensures the land is used appropriately by the public, and any development or lease on this land must align with the POM.

In 2023, a comprehensive POM was adopted, replacing older plans from the former Gosford City and Wyong Shire areas. This new POM covers approximately 2,300 lots. Some 10% of these lots received community feedback, and while most feedback did not indicate immediate risks, it was suggested that the categorisation of these lots be reviewed later.

The POM is now being updated to include 160 lots categorised for the first time, and a further 112 lots recategorised as a result of early engagement with multiple external and internal stakeholders. In September 2024 the final list and maps of these proposed changes were put up for public exhibition.

As part of the public exhibition, the public was invited to attend public hearings and provide comments/ask questions in regard to the proposed categorisation or recategorisation of Council owned Community land. A total of 3 hearings were conducted. This Report summarises the three public hearings, and records site specific comments.

The three hearings, held across three different locations, covered 272 lots from the suburbs listed below:

Wyong Hearing		Wamberal Hearing	Gosford Hearing
Bateau Bay	Killarney Vale	Avoca Beach	Blackwall
Berkeley Vale	Lake Haven	Bensville	East Gosford
Blue Haven	Mardi	Copacabana	Green Point
Budgewoi	Noraville	Daleys Point	Kariong
Buff Point	Ourimbah	Davistown	Lisarow
Charmhaven	Summerland Point	Empire Bay	Narara
Chittaway Bay	Tuggerah	Erina	Niagara Park
Doyalson	Tumbi Umbi	Forresters Beach	Pearl Beach
Glenning Valley	Wadalba	Holgate	Point Clare
Gorokan	Warnervale	Killcare	Somersby
Gwandalan	Watanobbi	Macmasters Beach	Springfield
Hamlyn Terrace	Woongarra	Matcham	Umina Beach
Jilliby	Wyong	Terrigal	Woy Woy
Kanwal		Wamberal	

The public hearings were facilitated by Micromex Research (Independent Chair), with technical and expert support provided by Council. The table overleaf provides the attendance summary.

This updated report includes feedback received from Central Coast Council.

Disclaimer: Comments made by public hearing participants do not necessarily reflect the views of Central Coast Council.



Table 1: Public Hearing Attendance

Hearing	Location Date	Facilitated by/ Recorded by	Council Assistance	Community Attendees
1	Wyong Golf Club 14 November 2024	Mark Mitchell Laura Beard	Chris Barrett Bronwyn Daley Tiffany Spee	8
2	Breakers Country Club 18 November 2024	Mark Mitchell Laura Beard	Chris Barrett Bronwyn Daley Tiffany Spee	9
3	Gosford Golf Club 21 November 2024	Mark Mitchell Laura Beard	Chris Barrett Bronwyn Daley Tiffany Spee	13

The agenda for all three Hearings followed the structure set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Public Hearing Agenda

Agenda Item	Speaker
1. Open meeting and introduction	Chair
2. Acknowledgement of Country	Chair
3. Public Hearing guidelines	Chair
4. Presentation of land classification, POM categorisation and POM update	Council
5. Community feedback/discussion/ questions on specific sites	Community and Council
6. General discussion about POM's, community land, etc	Community and Council
7. Summary and close	Chair



Response Summary

A range of feedback was provided by community participants. On the one hand, some mentioned that they were generally pleased with recategorisations that Council had undertaken. On the other hand, concerns were raised about specific lots and use of community land more generally.

In summary, across all three hearings there was a wide range of concerns and issues raised – the five most common issues discussed were:

- Land categorisation (some in support and some against)
- Lack of cultural significance
- Concern for endangered ecological communities
- Sites to have individual Plans of Management
- Feedback and concerns for the process and information

Speakers expressed concerns regarding land categorisation, and a preference for accurate, site-specific plans (rather than one general POM) that reflect the unique environmental, cultural, and community values of the Central Coast.

Key issues include the overuse of broad categories like "General Community Use," which in their opinion risks allowing inappropriate development, and insufficient recognition of culturally significant and ecologically sensitive areas, such as Aboriginal heritage sites and endangered ecological communities.

The next three Sections explore each of the individual public hearings and the key issues that arose at each. Comments made by community participants in relation to individual sites are summarised under the respective hearing. Comments made by community participants in relation to overall processes and public land management generally are recorded in the "General comments" section.

The fourth and final section provides a summary of general, non-site specific comments made throughout the hearings (note: this section is not split by hearing location as some comments were repeated across sessions).



Section 1 - Public Hearing 1 (Wyong)

Summary

Public Hearing 1, held at Wyong Golf Club on Thursday, 14 November, commenced at 6:00 PM and sought to discuss 92 parcels of land across 27 different suburbs. Eight community members attended, but no one registered to speak on any of the specific lots. Section 4 of this report provides general comments covering all three hearings, please refer to this section for comments captured at this hearing.

Public Hearing 2 (Wamberal)

Summary

Public Hearing 2, held at Breakers Country Club (Wamberal) on Monday, 18 November, commenced at 6:00 PM and focused on discussing 93 parcels of land across 14 different suburbs. Eight community members attended, with 6 formal registrations to comment on multiple sites. Please refer to Section 4 of this report for general comments.

A summary of site-specific comments is provided below:

535 Empire Bay Drive, Bensville (Lot 28 DP 1204440)

Speaker Comment: Land categorisation and maintenance

Speaker is concerned that adjoining land lacks required protections, such as asset protection zones, which they must maintain on their properties.

Example: "We had to go to a great deal of trouble to protect our houses. And we had this block of land right beside us that doesn't appear to have an asset protection zone."

Speaker Comment: Environmental concerns

Poor stormwater management from neighbouring land is causing flooding, debris, and erosion on private properties.

Example: "There's great torrents of water coming out of the area that affects our property. Debris comes down the waterway."

Speaker Comment: Access and usage

Unmonitored use of the land by motorbikes and 4WDs poses safety and environmental issues for neighbouring properties.

Example: "4WDs were travelling through that land. Kids use the area... but it's not monitored or controlled."



233A and 235A Del Monte Pl, Copacabana (Lot 1 DP 519882 and Lot 208 DP 26194)

Speaker Comment: Land categorisation

Speaker opposed categorising the natural foreshore and culturally significant areas as "General Community Use", fearing it will allow development that compromises the land's character.

Example: "The natural area foreshore... is a natural area with dunes, sand, beachfront, and Aboriginal heritage... the General Community Use category allows for built structures, licenses, leases or construction on that land."

Speaker Comment: Cultural significance

Disappointment raised for the lack of recognition for cultural significance.

Example: "Copacabana has culturally significant sites on that foreshore...the traditional custodians meet in that area in new moons and have smoking ceremonies... to not identify that as culturally significant and to think the Central Coast has no culturally significant sites is gobsmacking."

Speaker Comment: Endangered ecological communities

Endangered ecological communities are at risk due to insufficient protections and misuse, such as mountain biking through the natural area.

Example: " Copacabana has endangered ecological communities... Umina Coastal Sand-plain Woodland, with less than 5% left in the world."

Speaker Comment: Individual Plan of Management

Concerns raised that the two parcels of land are very disparate with various structures and should not be under one POM, especially with the Surf Club and the wetlands.

Example: "These two lots can be removed from the current Plan of Management and be readdressed as a separate issue after a period of time."

"Can I suggest that Allagai Bay, which is MacMasters Beach and Copacabana, and to Cockrone Lagoon should have its own POM for that bay?"



Speaker Comment: Process/Transparency/Information

Speaker expressed frustration with feeling their input has been ignored in the decision-making process.

Example: "We've responded to every survey, every question, every meeting... To see this back here again is extremely disappointing."

12 Pueblo Street, Copacabana (Lot 378 DP 29262)

Speaker Comment: Endangered ecological communities

Concern raised for endangered ecological communities on the land.

Example: "That's also got the Umina Coastal Sand-plain Woodland and another Endangered Ecological Community there. The Council actually cleared into it and residents had to object so that the mature trees that were there were not cleared."

Speaker Comment: Individual Plan of Management

Speaker believes this land needs to have its own POM.

Example: "It's also got wetlands or waterfalls in there. It needs its own Plan of Management, which you'll get because there's more than one use in there."

Avoca Beach (General)

Whilst there was one lot-specific comment about Avoca Beach (see first theme below), other comments were more general (see overleaf).

Speaker Comment: Support for re-categorisation

Speaker expressed satisfaction with recent recategorisations that aligned with earlier submissions.

Example: "There are 4 lots in the Schedule... Good news is we're happy with the recategorisations, which align with our earlier submissions."



Speaker Comment: Adding to the Schedule for long-term security

Concerns were raised about securing land at risk of being sold or classified as operational, ensuring it remains community land.

Example: "There are 2 lots, forming a parcel, in Warren Avenue in Avoca Beach, which were at the site of the look out. And Council has a parallel process of exhibition this time, seeking public comment, about what's to happen with the reconstruction of that lookout, which has some structural failure. We just think it's a complete anomaly to have a public lookout sitting on operational land. We want that site secured for the long term."

Speaker Comment: Process/Transparency/Information

Speaker found inconsistencies in responses and unclear justifications for categorisation decisions.

Example: "...the overuse of the General Community Use category... we were really disappointed when the process of 2023 with Council led to zero changes... what's happened with those?"

114 Willoughby Road, Wamberal (Lots 334, 338, 339 DP 1976)

Speaker Comment: Individual Plan of Management

Land with diverse uses, such as sports grounds and wetlands, requires detailed plans to prevent broad categorisations that could leave the land vulnerable to misuse.

Example: "It's a golf course, but only part, it really should have multiple listings, not just sports grounds. It should have just been general community use. It does have natural area wetlands... So maybe an alternate is to have it as natural area wetlands and, sports grounds maybe...that then creates a separate plan of management because of the natural vegetation that appears to be taken care of. If you take that off and don't include that, they suddenly disappear."

"I'm very cautious of general community use...How you can put it on a lease for such a long period of time and make it commercial. That's why it needs a plan of management for the entire site with all the lots and include the natural area wetlands and sportsgrounds because there's obviously a bowling club there as well... if it is classified as just one category then it means Council doesn't have to have an individual plan of management which leaves it far to open for abuse. Maybe not by yourselves, but by others in the future."



Public Hearing 3 (Gosford)

Summary

Session 3, held at Gosford Golf Club on Thursday, 21 November, commenced at 6:00 PM and focused on discussing 87 parcels of land across 13 different suburbs. Twelve community members attended, with 5 formal registrations to comment on multiple sites. Please refer to Section 4 of this report for general comments.

A summary of site-specific discussions (formal and informal) is provided below:

Welwyn Grove, Point Clare (Lot 1-10 DP 977084)

Speaker Comment: Cultural significance

Belief that this parcel of land has cultural significance associated with it.

Example: *"I believe that the Point Clare land has cultural significance over it."*

Other discussions in relation to Point Clare were out of scope as they were addressing Crown Land. It was mentioned this Crown Land should be 'bushland' not 'park' [referencing areas around Goodaywang Reserve]. Council advised that was out of scope for discussion and to make a submission.

Clarence Road, Springfield (Lot 1, 20-22 DP 977284)

Speaker Comment: Land categorisation

Speaker believes part of the classification is incorrect and requests the Coastal Open Space System stays on the agenda for this land.

Example: *"I believe that this is Coastal Open Space System."*

"I believe that there's some Operational land that should be classified as Community classification. That's the old Springfield Quarry, and it was purchased with COSS funds.... I'm just drawing attention to that, being in COSS and making sure that COSS stays on the agenda rather than just being community Operational land."



75/79 Wells Street, East Gosford (Lot 2 DP 1027281, Lots 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 DP 135256)

Speaker Comment: Individual Plan of Management

Concern raised for distrust if Council were to not include the Preschool in the POM and that the East Gosford Community Reserve be treated separately to the land with the Preschool to maintain service delivery.

Example: "It is all one site area, which includes the preschool. And what we don't want to happen is to keep that as Natural Area - Bushland and not have the preschool included because it's very convenient for council to sell that off, if it isn't all included in that as a plan of management. It's not in the register. It's not on the list tonight for re relisting, but it should have a plan of management for it."

"We want to maintain that the grass areas are mown... I want to make sure when it's been done, that we don't miss out on things because it's going to Natural Area...I certainly don't want it as General Community Use... It also has a watercourse. So, definitely, Natural Area Bushland is what we like, as long as we can maintain what we've got now."

2A Caroline St, East Gosford (Caroline Bay) (Lot 40-46 DP 8209)

Speaker Comment: Cultural significance

Speaker believes the land should be recognised with cultural significance.

Example: "I believe that it should be an area of Cultural significance... surely Council knows that there's a huge midden there with a huge numbers of shells."

113 The Esplanade, Umina Beach (Lot 682 DP 10570)

Speaker Comment: Support for re-categorisation

Example: "It was always a foreshore...Should never have been Community Use, and it's good to see Council is actually listening."



109 McEvoy Oval, Umina Beach (Lot 2 DP 258685)

Speaker Comment: Support for recategorisation

Example: *"It's got General Community Use on it. It's always been a sportsground, so I can understand."*

167 Veron Road, Woy Woy (Lot 18 DP 833218)

Speaker Comment: Process concerns/Endangered ecological community

Speaker highlighted the importance of accurately identifying and documenting endangered ecological communities within Council's system to ensure proper protection and management. There was also concern raised for the encroachment of the nursing home on this site.

Example: *"It's got uncategorised. That is a section of the UCSW (Umina Coastal Sandplain Woodland), which is an Endangered Ecological Community. You're categorising it as Natural Area Bushland... That's the nursing home which was placed right in the middle of the Endangered Ecological Community... It's currently getting overgrown by weeds."*

"My point is that council should have already had it documented. I'm happy it's going to be Natural Bushland, that's good. But are we duplicating the process?"

171 Veron Road, Woy Woy (Lot 23 DP 251992)

Speaker Comment: Land recategorisation

Speaker expressed confusion over the decision to categorise the land as Natural Area Watercourse.

Example: *"I'm asking the clarification of where is Lot 171?... It's not actually a watercourse."*



2 Eagle Close, Lisarow (Lot 23 DP 251992)

Speaker Comment: Process/Transparency/Information

Speaker expressed confusion over the location.

Example: "I've just noted that 2 Eagle Close, Lisarow, is down as a park. Well, actually, on real estate.com, it's a house."

8 & 23 Mowbray Place, Kariong (Lot 23 DP 1034646 and Lot 41 DP 810573)

Speaker Comment: Process/Transparency/Information

Speaker expressed confusion over the need to recategorise the land and what the difference is.

Example: "They are currently classified as Parks and you want to classify them as Bushland. In reality, I'm really failing to see the difference because they are Bushland so why were they ever classified as Parks?"

"What is going to be the difference? It's not maintained now. It never has been maintained. It's full of weeds. Full of pampas grass, so what's the difference?"



Section 4 -General Comments

Across the three hearings attendees were able to raise general, non-site-specific comments in regard to the Plan of Management and propose changes to the categorisation of community land.

Key focus areas included concerns over cultural significance, the management of endangered flora and fauna, and the need for clearer and more transparent processes. Attendees also praised Council's responsiveness to community feedback while suggesting further improvements. These comments illustrate a mix of constructive criticism, specific concerns, and positive acknowledgment of progress, offering a comprehensive snapshot of community perspectives.

Key areas of comment included:

1. Cultural Significance

- Concerns about consulting Indigenous groups on culturally significant areas and a suggestion to consult with other councils on how they deal with areas of cultural significance.
- Lack of recognition for Indigenous sites and community classified land with cultural value.
- Need for acknowledgment of historical and cultural significance in land categorisations – including European cultural heritage.

2. Endangered Flora and Fauna

- Questions about how endangered species and habitats are managed, with reference to if there was a resolution at Davistown Park [birds].
- Need for clear plans and considerations for nearly endangered species in land management.

3. Information/Process Clarity

- Difficulty in accessing clear and transparent information from council websites (e.g., consultation statuses, missing maps, unclear categorisations).
- Concerns over maintenance responsibilities depending on land categorisation (e.g., levels of maintenance for parks vs. bushland).
- Lack of proper community notification and consultation methods (e.g., no letterbox drops for directly affected areas or accessible maps).
- Suggestions for improved categorisation and management plans (e.g., site-specific plans of management for land that has multi-use/categories).
- Issues with website functionality, such as survey links not working.
- Queries about categorisation processes, maintenance, and potential reclassification of land. For example, questions were raised for what happens next and what happens if the desired outcome is not achieved.
- Desire for precise terms and transparent definitions for land categories (e.g., "foreshore" vs. "park" – what is the difference, how can the land be treated differently under each).
- Concerns about errors in classification (e.g., Operational Land or Community Land cannot be a road but there is a road in Green Point off Sun Valley Road that is currently classed as Community Land).

- Council spent time in Sessions 2 and 3 showing how to access information on the Your Voice Our Coast website – and offered to send links to participants.

4. Representation and Engagement

- Gender imbalance at community consultations, with more men than women attending, possibly due to timing or accessibility.
- Suggestions to adjust event timing to ensure broader representation.

5. Positive Feedback

- Appreciation for council's responsiveness to community feedback.
- Recognition of council's positive steps in addressing environmental concerns and listening to the community.

6. Other Suggestions

- Clarification of roles and titles (e.g., commercial property manager's responsibilities should include community-classified land).

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