

### 3.0 The Moonee Hamlets

#### 3.1 Statutory Background

##### Background

Coal mining at Catherine Hill Bay commenced in 1873. The land at Catherine Hill Bay is a mixture of high value bushland and areas that have been despoiled by mining activity. Mining, a coal washery, reject disposal, coal stockpiling and coal transport operated at the site until 2002.

The land straddles the boundary between Lake Macquarie and Wyong and the two parcels have been the subject of previous DA applications.

##### Relationship to Other Planning Instruments

The Concept Plan for The Moonee Hamlets has been prepared with reference to:

- Lower Hunter Regional Strategy
- Lake Macquarie LEP 2004
- Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989
- SEPP Major Projects
- SEPP 11 Traffic Generating Developments
- SEPP 14 Coastal Wetlands
- SEPP 55 Remediation of Land
- SEPP 71 Coastal Protection
- SEPP Building Sustainability Index (BASIX)
- The Wyong LEP 1991 (land in the Wyong LGA)
- Draft Central Coast Regional Strategy

Other relevant policy documents include:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- NSW Coastal Policy
- NSW Coastal Design Guidelines
- Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) DCP 1
- Lake Macquarie Coastline Management Plan
- Wyong Shire Council DCP
- Independent Assessment Panel Concept Plan for Catherine Hill Bay and Gwandalan Interim Report to the Planning Minister
- Mine Closure Plan

##### Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The Regional Strategy sets the strategic framework for urban growth in the Lower Hunter region. The Moonee Hamlets precinct covered by the Concept Plan is shown as a proposed urban area in the Regional Strategy.

The identified growth area covered by this section of the Concept Plan formerly housed a coal washery and loading facility as well as other industrial structures and also includes previously inhabited and developed sections of the village at Catherine Hill Bay, former subdivisions as well as the Mine Manager's Residence and Jetty Master's Cottage.

##### Draft Central Coast Regional Strategy

The Moonee Hamlets site is also identified in the Draft Central Coast Regional Strategy as being part of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area. The Structure Plan will identify land that is suitable and not suitable, for future development and future land uses that may be appropriate.

##### Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into between the Minister for Planning, the Minister for the Environment and the landowners. The MoU sets out the process for rezoning of the growth areas, limits the extent of growth areas and provides for the dedication of land by the owners for environmental conservation and public foreshore. The MoU also defines the development densities. A maximum of 600 dwellings is allowed within the development area in both the Wyong and Lake Macquarie LGAs.

##### Mine Closure Plan

The former mine site at Catherine Hill Bay and Moonee is undergoing a statutory mine closure process. The process provides for remediation of the site to recreation standards. The remediation is based on the findings of environmental site assessments. The Concept Plan will vary the Mine Closure Plan in the following respects:

- Concrete in the area of the former coal preparation plant will be left in place until development works commence to secure current drainage patterns.
- The Bin Building will remain in place for adaptive reuse.



Figure 3.1.1. Lower Hunter Regional Strategy Map (NSW Department of Planning, 2006).



## 3.2 Historical Context

### European Occupation

Interest in exploiting the 'Wallah' coal seam can be traced to 1865 when Jacob Montefiore and Thomas Hale took out a mining lease on 265 acres, completing purchase of the allotment ten years later. At the same time, Robert Saddington and Charles Parbury acquired a total of 635 acres in the area. All portions were in the Parish of Wallarah.

- 1867 Catherine Hill Bay acquired its European name following the wreck the Catherine Hill on 21 June 1867.
- 1873 Mine operations commence.
- 1874 The 'Town of Cowper', now known as Catherine Hill Bay, contained 20 houses<sup>1</sup>.
- 1894 The towns population was 440<sup>2</sup>.
- 1900 The main township of Catherine Hill Bay contained 60 households<sup>3</sup>.
- 1921 The town contained the following<sup>4</sup>:
  - Mine Manager's Residence, including garages and stables
  - Clerk's House
  - Office
  - Wharfinger's House
  - Doctor's House
  - Three Shops
- 1947 The town's population stood at 736 and was served by a post office, a hotel, churches and a school in Middle Camp<sup>5</sup>.
- 1964 101 cottages on mine land (including Middle Camp)<sup>6</sup>.
- 2002 Mining activities ceased and only 42 cottages and one hotel remain in the town. A significant number of existing cottages are rented for holiday accommodation.



Figure 3.2.1. 1925 Parish Map (Montefiore and Clarke Street dashed). Source: Courtesy EJE



Figure 3.2.2. 1875 - The proposed Town of Cowper (now Catherine Hill Bay). Source: Courtesy EJE



Figure 3.2.3. 1920s photo of looking South at the township of Catherine Hill Bay. Source: Courtesy EJE



Figure 3.2.4. Existing view looking up Clarke Street. Source: Courtesy EJE



Figure 3.2.5. Catherine Hill Bay Post Office circa 1940. Source: Courtesy EJE

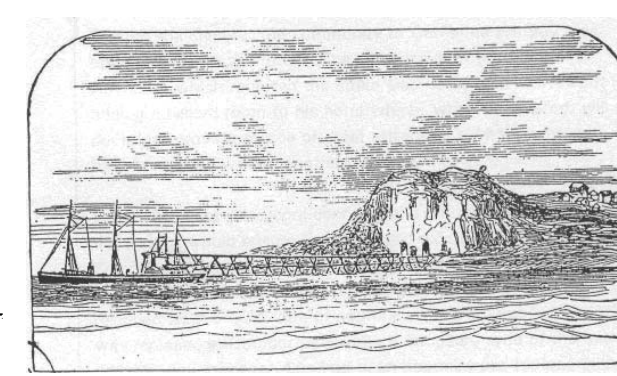


Figure 3.2.6. Catherine Hill Bay circa 1875. Source: Sydney Mail, courtesy EJE

1. Miners Advocate, 10 June 1874.  
 2. Hunter History Consultants 2005, *History of Wallarah Colliery*, 2005.  
 3. M. Martin, *Catherine Hill Bay, A Development History*, 1996.  
 4. Hunter History Consultants 2005, *History of Wallarah Colliery*, 2005.  
 5. Hunter History Consultants 2005, *History of Wallarah Colliery*, 2005.  
 6. Hunter History Consultants 2005, *History of Wallarah Colliery*, 2005.



### 3.3 Site Analysis

#### Geology

The geology around the Moonee Colliery is defined as being part of the following soil groups:

- Narrabeen Group-Munmorah Conglomerate Formation: conglomerate pebbly sandstone, grey green and grey siltstone and claystone.
- Newcastle Coal Measures-Moon Island, Booleroo and Adamstown Subgroups: conglomerate sandstone, tuff, siltstone, claystone and black coal.

Bore logs undertaken by HLA Envirosiences indicate that the local site soils (Moonee Colliery soils) are sandy clays and sandy clay loams. (Yellow podzolic soils with sloth soils on drainage lines).

The site also contains a substantial amount of coal chitter fill.

#### Fauna and Flora

Assessment of the Fauna and Flora has been undertaken by Wildthing Environmental Consultants (Refer to Environmental Assessment Report).

The original site vegetation includes Coastal Heathlands, remnant Rainforest species and Wet Gully vegetation. The existing vegetation on the site, much of which is recent mining revegetation over fill areas in the North eastern corner of the site and at the edges of the coal dump, is heavily invaded by weeds such as bitou bush.

Remaining natural vegetation, which retains a reasonable natural structure and habitat value, is located mostly on the perimeter of the site. These areas will be retained in the development where possible. (Refer Figure 3.3.1.)

A number of single stands of Eucalypt trees and Norfolk Island Pine *Aracaria heterophylla* are located to the North of Montefiore Street.

The vast majority of the natural habitat in the development zone has been lost to mining activities.

The conservation and habitat values of the proposed development areas of the site, consistent with its use, history and extent of disturbance, were found to be low.

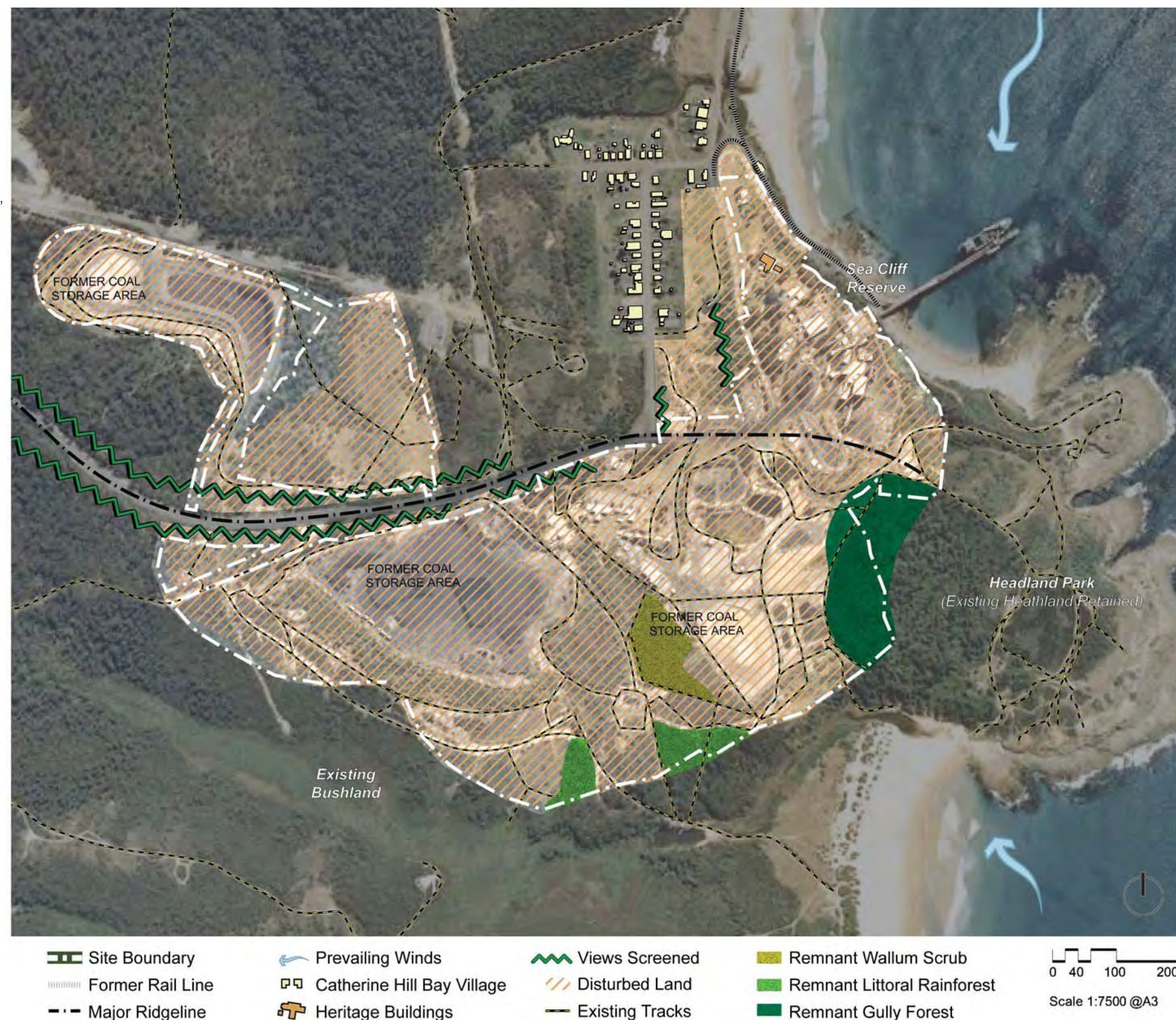


Figure 3.3.1. The Moonee Hamlets Site Analysis.



### Topography and Drainage

The site is divided by a central ridgeline defined by the length of Montefiore Street, with slopes falling directly to the North and South on either side of the street. The ridge terminates at a high point (RL 50) at the local ocean headland. The indented headland separates Catherine Hill Bay from Moonee Beach.

The topography of the development site (Diagram 3.3.2) has been extensively modified by mining activities. Most of the development site has been cleared and disturbed by fill, excavation and paving resulting in levelled areas around the mine maintenance buildings and the former coal storage areas to the East of the maintenance facility.

The steeper slopes, found to the North and South of Montefiore Street (greater than 1:10) are generally the result of earth moving on site. The fill and mine reject emplacement is over 11 metres deep in some locations. A geotechnical report has been prepared (Refer to Environmental Assessment Report).

The site will be regraded for development.

The natural drainage of the site has been heavily modified by development and fill/reject emplacement. South of Montefiore Street, the site drains to Moonee Creek which runs into the ocean at the northern end of Moonee Beach.

The existing mine site drainage system protects the SEPP 14 wetland to the South of the site and controls the quality of water running off the mine areas and coal storage pad through a series of detention ponds.

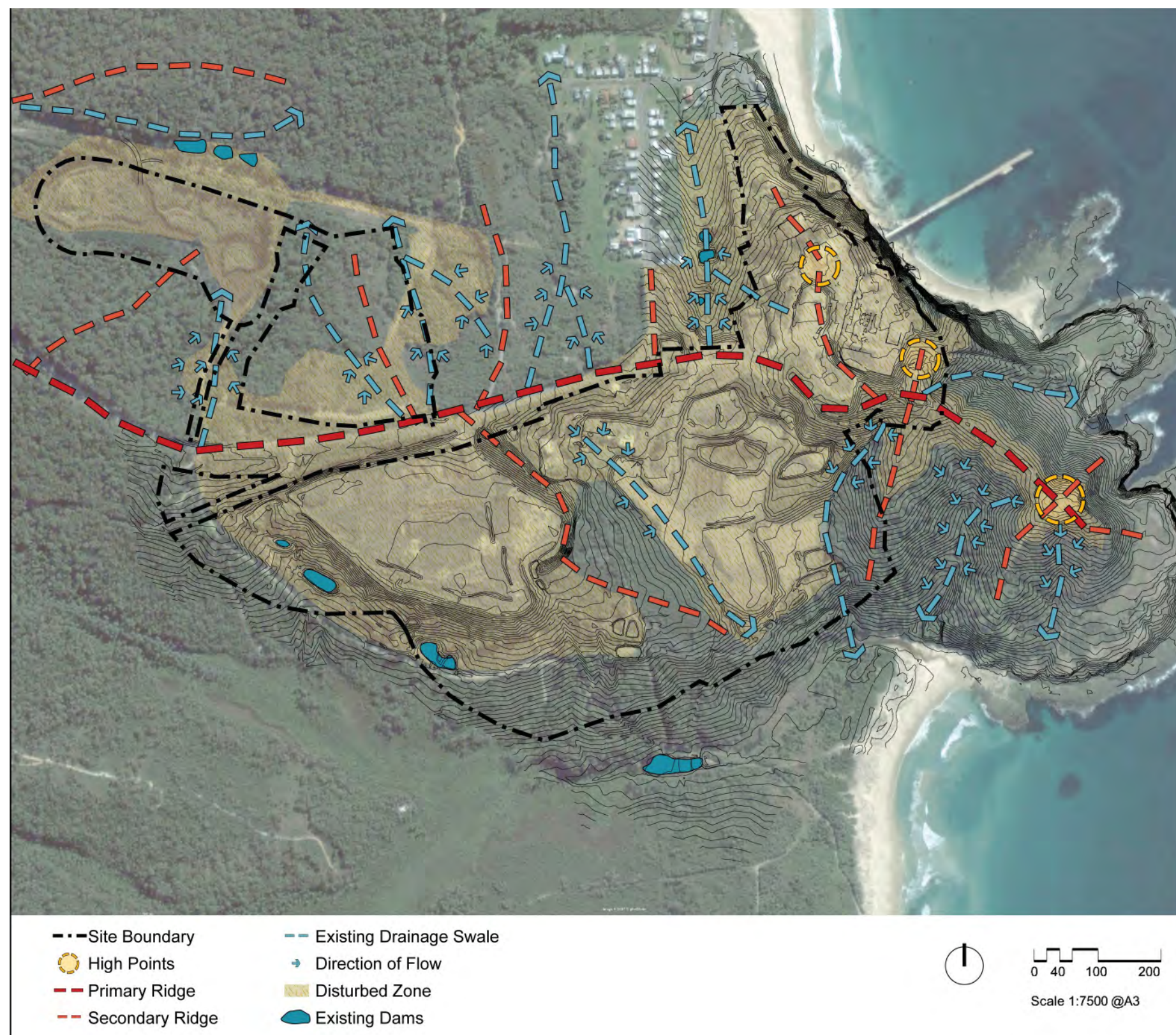


Figure 3.3.2. The Moonee Hamlets Topography and Drainage.



### Visual Analysis

A Visual Impact Assessment for the development has been prepared by CONTEXT and CM<sup>+</sup> (Refer to Environmental Assessment Report).

The subject site is located in an area surrounded by bushland and is one of a number of landscape units located within the visual catchment of Catherine Hill Bay Village.

The village is located prominently within an adjoining landscape unit to the north. Most of the mine site is hidden from the village by the existing topography, the Montefiore Street ridgeline and the screen planting to the mine. The visual sensitivity is considered to be moderate and the visual quality is moderate, due to the degraded condition of the mined site.

The most sensitive views of the site are from Middle Camp Beach and Moonee Beach. The two catchments are separated by the Montefiore Street ridgeline.

Looking south from Middle Camp Beach, the most prominent landscape features within this visual catchment include the headland, cliff edge, jetty, ridgeline and Catherine Hill Bay Village. Looking north from Moonee Beach, the site is part of a visual catchment extending from the coastal headland to the east and Munmorah State Conservation Area to the west. The disturbed and unrehabilitated areas of the mine are partially screened by the existing vegetation on the lower slopes

Two areas on the disturbed slopes to the north of Montefiore Street, to be developed as Hamlets 5 and 6, are not visible from Catherine Hill Bay Village or Moonee Beach.

The Visual Impact Assessment identifies and describes the existing visual landscape environment and the likely impact of the development on the visual and landscape quality of the site. It also incorporates recommendations to ameliorate potential adverse impacts from the key viewpoints.

The development will incorporate considerable re-vegetation works in formerly disturbed and degraded areas to screen the development and 'nestle' buildings into the slopes. Vegetation buffers will also be established within the Asset Protection Zones (APZ) and bushland corridors to provide further screening and open space buffers between hamlets.

As a result of the review and adoption of the previous recommendations in the current design, the scenic quality of the site will be protected, viewer access increased and in a range of situations the scenic quality will be enhanced throughout the site

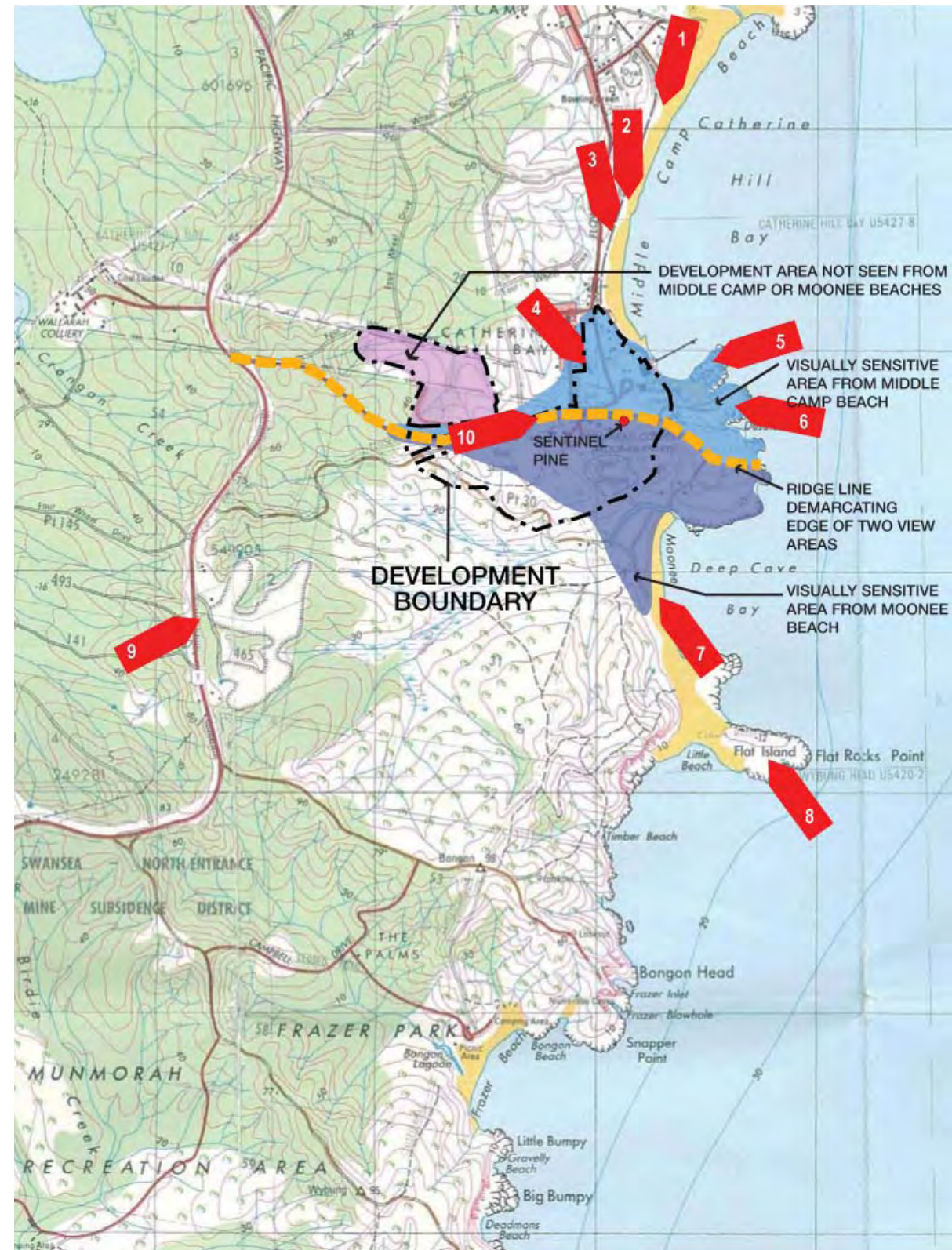


Figure 3.3.3. The Moonee Hamlets Views and Vistas.





Figure 3.3.4. VIEW 1: View from North end of Middle Camp Beach.



Figure 3.3.5. VIEW 2: View from Middle Camp Beach.



Figure 3.3.6. VIEW 3: View from Middle Camp Beach.



Figure 3.3.7. VIEW 4: View to former Colliery area.



Figure 3.3.8. VIEW 5: View from Headland towards cliffs, Jetty and Bin Building.



Figure 3.3.9. VIEW 6: Existing view from end of walking trail on headland.





Figure 3.3.10. VIEW 7: View from Moonee Beach.



Figure 3.3.11. VIEW 8: View from Flat Rock Point.



Figure 3.3.12. VIEW 9: View from Pacific Highway looking East.

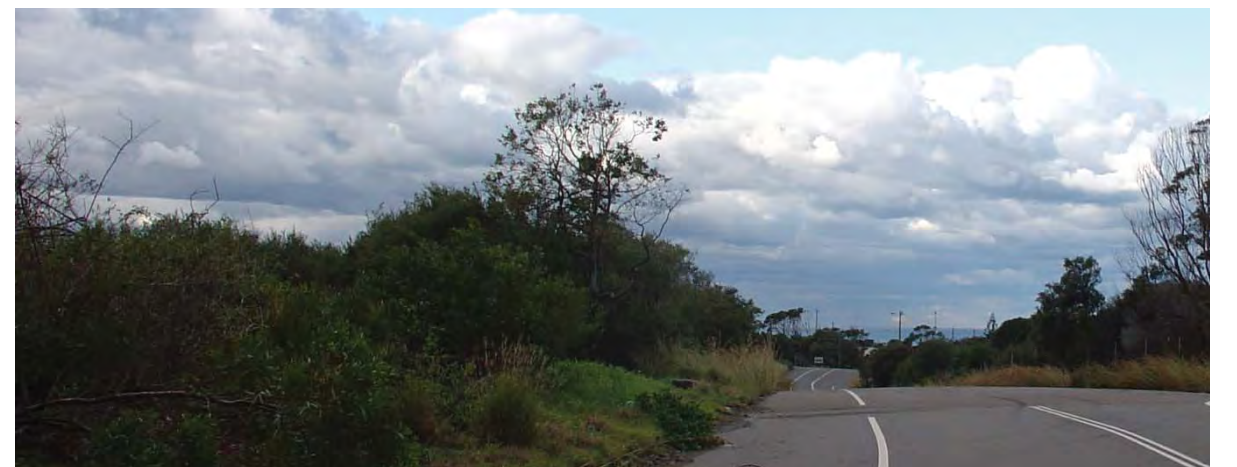


Figure 3.3.13. VIEW 10: View from Montefiore Street looking East.

### 3.4 Site Planning Objectives

The Moonee Hamlets site is a new coastal settlement, situated on the redundant Moonee Colliery site. The Concept Plan aims to:

- ensure that new development lies within a landscape dominated setting as a series of individual hamlets;
- ensure the retention and enhancement of significant views to and from the existing Catherine Hill Bay Village;
- protect the headland, natural shoreline rock outcrops, original vegetation and the natural and 'wild' character of Catherine Hill Bay and Moonee Beach;
- provide close visual and physical boundaries between the natural and built environments;
- establish a population density appropriate to sustainable conservation of the surrounding Moonee Beach and Catherine Hill Bay environment;
- improve community access to parkland, Middle Camp Beach, the headland and, surrounding bushland through defined trails that do not adversely affect the characteristic qualities of the coastal foreshore or wilderness;
- conserve existing heritage listed items with compatible uses and ensure adjacent development is of sympathetic scale and character;
- establish a community within a coastal village that extends the principles of traditional neighbourhoods;
- create an effective network of pathways throughout the hamlets to encourage walking and cycling to reduce the reliance on vehicular transport.
- ensure the built environment and public domain are of high urban design quality and combine to form harmonious views of the Village from the street and the surrounds;
- provide a series of gathering places with different characters and functions, such as The Moonee Hamlets Community Hall, Village Green, Hamlet Commons, Bush Corridors and neighbourhood parks;
- provide community access to convenience shopping and neighbourhood facilities in a Village Centre.
- Provide convenient access to public transport for Catherine Hill Bay residents and The Moonee Hamlets residents;
- provide convenient parking for residents, employees and visitors;
- enhance the landscape setting of Montefiore Street by relandscaping it as Montefiore Parkway; and
- establish community access to Moonee Beach.



Figure 3.4.1. The Moonee Hamlets Site Planning Principles Plan.



### 3.5 Development Principles

Land use principles of The Moonee Hamlets have been developed to ensure new development does not impose on the visual character of the existing village and its setting and provides a consistent design image through all hamlets. A review of the NSW Coastal Planning Guidelines (SEPP 71) was undertaken and the principles of these guidelines have been incorporated. The key land use principles are:

#### Village Centre Hamlet (Hamlet 1)

The Village Centre Hamlet will include neighbourhood shops and shoptop residential accommodation accessible to the greater Catherine Hill Bay community. Development located within the Village Centre will be primarily outside the visual catchment of the existing village, but will be consistent with the bulk and scale of the existing housing stock while allowing sufficient scale to provide for a small but lively village atmosphere.

The Village Centre will contain up to 1800m<sup>2</sup> of retail and commercial floor space with no more than 200m<sup>2</sup> internal floor space in any individual shop. There will also be 69 dwellings in this precinct offering a range of housing types.

#### Hamlet Residential (Hamlets 2-7)

The Moonee Hamlets is a new residential community planned to equitably reconcile traditional local amenity aspirations and State urban consolidation policies. Residential accommodation is to be provided through a mix of dwelling types that maintain the scale and character of a coastal village.

#### Heritage/Adaptive Reuse

A distinct precinct has been identified to include Wallarah House, which is a heritage structure and the Jetty Master's Cottage. Any use or development of these items will take into consideration their significance in the development of Catherine Hill Bay and views from the existing village, beachfront and water. Ongoing development within this precinct, will be consistent with the adaptive reuse of Wallarah House and be guided by an appropriate Conservation Management Plan. In order to preserve the open view from Catherine Hill Bay Village to the sea, no new buildings will be located between Wallarah House and the Jetty Master's Cottage. Any new structures in this area will be kept below 1.8 metres above existing grade.

#### Munmorah State Conservation Area Public Open Space Transition

The area between the Hamlets and the Munmorah State Conservation Area will be managed for bushfire protection and to enable public access to the surrounding bushland and associated walking trails.

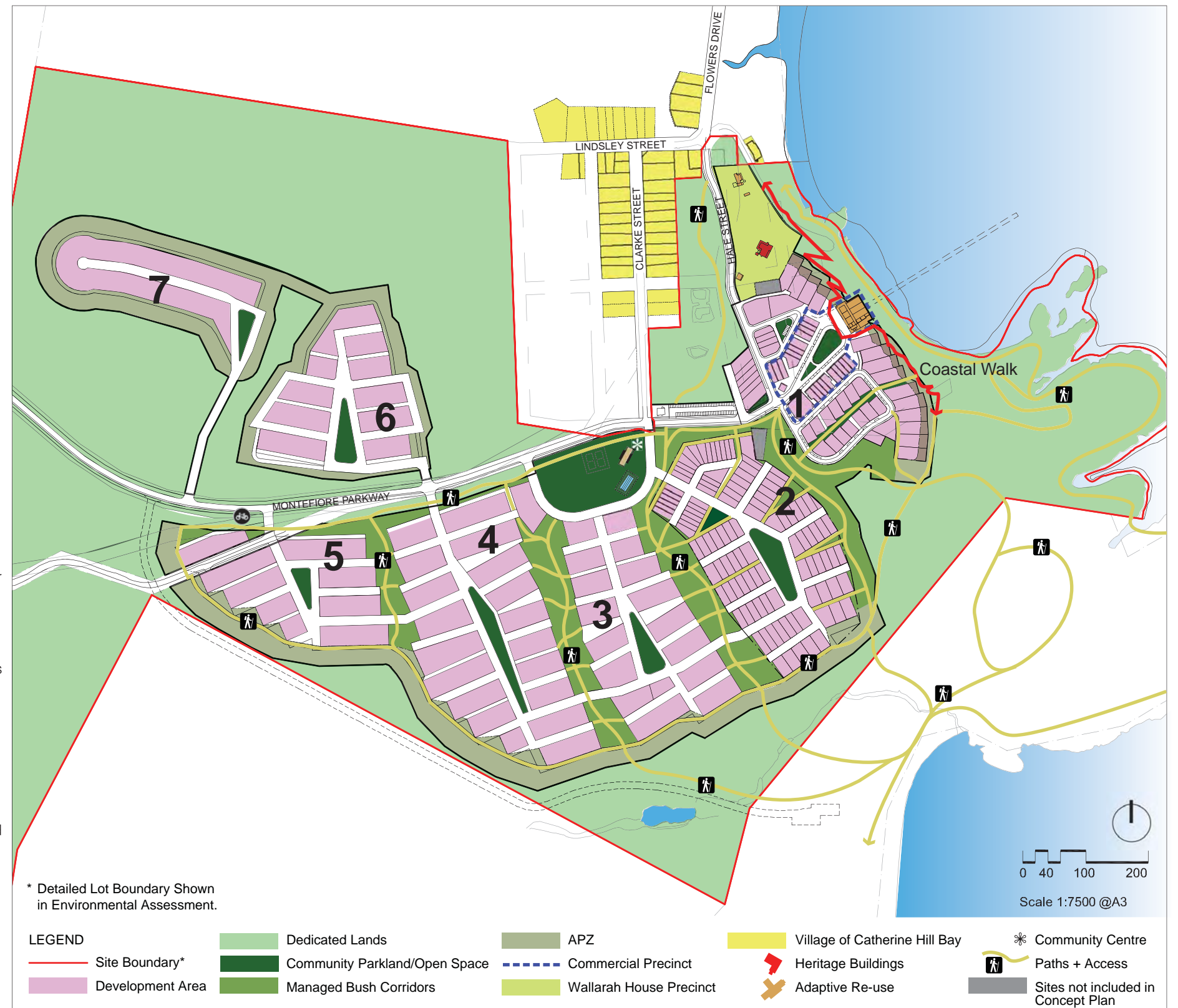


Figure 3.5.1. The Moonee Hamlets Land Use Principles Plan.



### Major Public Open Spaces

There are three designated major public open spaces.

- The Sea Cliff Reserve will incorporate a Coastal Walk linking Catherine Hill Bay, the Headland and Moonee Beach.
- The Village Park will provide a 'green lung' between the existing Catherine Hill Bay Village and The Moonee Hamlets and maintain the open space relationship between the Village and Wallarah House.
- The Headland Reserve will be free from development and the existing bush tracks retained and enhanced for public enjoyment.

### Community Recreation and Associated Activities

The Moonee Hamlets Community Centre will cater for outdoor recreation uses including an informal playing field, children's playground, swimming pool and tennis courts in a landscaped open space. The space will also ensure convenient community pedestrian access and permeability.

### Community Open Space

Passive open space will be provided within The Moonee Hamlets to provide a curtilage to the existing village and green links between the existing urban development and the coastal foreshore. The desired character of the space will be dominated by landscape offering vantage points to the sea.

Although not all precincts are fully designed, plans for the first two hamlets, the Village Centre (Hamlet 1) and Hamlet 2 are designed in detail. The plans have been included to provide an indication of the Architectural and Urban Design themes proposed for these areas.



Figure 3.5.2. View of Village Centre Common.





Figure 3.5.3. View of Typical Hamlet Common.



### Village Centre Hamlet (Hamlet 1)

The Village Centre Hamlet is the focus of The Moonee Hamlets development and provides a place for some limited commercial activity for the community, visitors and the residents of the existing village. The role of the Village Centre is to provide for the daily needs of the residents and visitors alike in a central location. It is envisaged that the Village Centre will accommodate the likes of a general store, pharmacy, hairdresser, cafe, gift shop, fish and chip shop and bakery etc.

The Village Centre Hamlet structure comprises an extension of Montefiore Parkway forming a 'Main Street' link to the Bin Building, a northern residential area and a southern residential area. At the centre of the hamlet the Main Street widens out as it reaches the Bin Building defining a small village common and framing the view out toward the sea. Small scale commercial 'shoptop' buildings line this space further defining the wedge shaped public space and providing a mix of commercial and residential uses. A variety of building forms including two storey gabled building forms, an individual single storey pavilion and a small stone house provide the setting for village life.

The highest level of the top of the Bin Building will be reserved for a public terrace overlooking the sea and providing expansive views along the coast. A lightweight shelter is located on this terrace providing some shelter from sun and wind. This place forms the logical termination of Montefiore Parkway at the Village Centre while referring to some of the original colliery infrastructure of the Moonee Colliery.

The northern residential area provides a mix of dwelling types and access to the rear of the northern row of shoptop houses. Some visitor parking is provided within this area.

The southern residential area, nestled below the primary ridge of the site also provides a mix of housing types and access to the rear of the southern row of shoptop houses. A loop road provides access to dwellings and some visitor parking is provided at the rear of the shoptop houses. Within the loop road a group of courtyard houses is centred on a landscaped corridor linking the site to the coastal walk and providing a place for neighbourhood gathering and interaction.

A series of houses, well setback from the cliff face, form a consistent edge to the eastern edge of the precinct and allow views of the sea between the houses. At the northern end of the precinct, these houses are oriented in the same direction as Wallarah House and, as one moves to the south, change orientation in a stepped arrangement to minimise the visual impact of the Village Centre as seen from the beach and to allow views from the houses to the North and East.



#### Village Centre Hamlet Elements

- 1 Village Centre Common
- 2 'Main' Street
- 3 Bin Building
- 4 Shoptop Housing
- 5 Courtyard House Precinct
- 6 Single Dwelling Residential
- 7 Stone House

#### Surrounding Elements

- 8 Wallarah House
- 9 Middle Camp Beach
- 10 Village Park
- 11 Village of Catherine Hill Bay
- 12 Manager's Residence
- 13 Parking Area
- 14 Managed Bush Corridor
- 15 Coastal Walk
- 16 Headland Reserve

..... Village Centre Hamlet Boundary

0 20 40 60 80 100m

Figure 3.5.4. Village Centre Hamlet Plan and Surroundings