

# MAITLAND PLACE ACTIVATION STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2016







*"I would love to see flashes of colour  
around the city"*  
*Community engagement participant*



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## ARTSCAPE®

Maitland Place Activation Strategy by:  
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in collaboration with  
The Design Partnership



### *Message from the Mayor*

*We're painting a new picture of Maitland. The canvas will be the streets, laneways, parks and gateways that lead to our city. It will be expressed in diverse ways, through art, food, play, performance and other renewal activities. These may be conventional – they may be experimental – they may be collaborations.*

*These new sights, sounds, experiences and memories will help residents and visitors see Maitland's 'people places' in a new fun and exciting light - that leads to an appetite for more. The momentum will draw more people. More people - especially at night - will boost public safety, boost business success and perhaps lead to supporting infrastructure projects - all ultimately enriching Maitland's quality of life.*





# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 THE EVOLUTION OF PLACE ACTIVATION IN MAITLAND

The people of Maitland have expressed a strong desire to create a vibrant place that celebrates the unique people and places that make up Maitland. There is pride in Maitland's heritage and a desire to welcome new populations that will enrich the area. Council is committed to retaining a sense of place, with Central Maitland at the heart.

One way these aspirations can be achieved is by creating an enabling environment for place activation across the community. By activating key public spaces and activity centres, Maitland City Council hopes to foster pride in place, transform the way the community interacts with the public domain, support cultural expression and build community connections.

Council has committed one million dollars over seven years (commencing 2014/2015 financial year) for Place Activation initiatives to assist with the activation of key spaces in the City.

In 2015, a full time Place Activation Officer was employed by Council to develop and implement a place activation program.

In the 2015/16 financial year the project delivered a series of pilot place activation initiatives around Central Maitland. The purpose of the pilot projects has been to gauge community interest, test existing systems and processes, and initiate relationships with stakeholders before the introduction of the Maitland Place Activation Strategy (MPAS).

In April 2016, Maitland City Council engaged ARTSCAPE to prepare a Place Activation Strategy for the local government area of Maitland.

ARTSCAPE engaged the services of The Design Partnership to provide additional strategy and urban design advice to build an integrated approach to place activation in Maitland.



## 1.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The delivery of place activation initiatives will be supported by a number of Council's strategic documents, as follows:

- The Community Strategic Plan Maitland +10 identifies arts and cultural activities and their role in sustaining creative and connected communities – and the City Centre being a vibrant place to visit during the day or night. Within the Community Strategic Plan, two themes 'Proud people, great lifestyle' and 'A prosperous and vibrant city' particularly resonate with this strategy.
- The Central Maitland Structure Plan considers place based approaches and suggests a number of initiatives that would assist in activating public spaces and improving Maitland's connection to the Hunter River.
- The Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan uses a series of projects to activate three key nodes across Central Maitland to create a sense of belonging, improve tourism and generate urban renewal.
- Maitland City Council's Community Leisure & Levee Concept Study (2016) included a telephone questionnaire of 400 participants. It asked participants about important things to consider when planning leisure activities and the importance of choice when selecting a location to visit. In summary, safe places, good parking and a variety of products were identified as the most important aspects.
- The Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy 2001-2020 provides a flexible plan for future growth of the area. The plan makes recommendations for growth areas.
- The Levee Marketing Activity Plan is a plan for 12 months of marketing activity for the 2016/17 financial year. The document recognises that activities will focus on The Levee brand as well as supporting a range of promotional and place activation/events/initiatives.
- The Visitor Economy Marketing Activity Plan is a plan for 12 months of marketing activity. It supports the rollout of the leisure and lifestyle brand strand of Brand Maitland. It also seeks to build awareness of the My Maitland theme.
- Events Marketing Activity Plan is a plan for 12 months of marketing activity in the Maitland Local Government Area for the 2106/17 financial year. The plan focuses on maintaining consistency of Maitland's event brands and is used to maintain and build upon the city's flagship program. Flagship events include:
  - Maitland Aroma Festival
  - Maitland Riverlights Multicultural Festival
  - Bitter and Twisted Boutique Beer Festival
  - New Years Eve
  - Australia Day
  - Maitland Taste
  - Hunter Valley SteamFest
- The Maitland City Events Policy defines Council's event calender, criteria for events and approval process.
- The High Street Masterplan & Laneways Action Plan (2013) is a tool for the activation and renewal of High Street. Its purpose is to guide development on or near High Street. The report also provides recommendations for the activation of laneways connecting to High Street.
- The Maitland City Buskers' Code of Conduct (2015) recognises that busking brings "vibrancy and joy to our city". Busking is considered to be music, dance, street theatre, art and magic performance. The code outlines the standards expected of artists performing in public space and the consequences for buskers if they breach the code.
- Maitland's Public Art Policy (currently under review) identifies guidelines and implementation processes for permanent and temporary projects within the public domain.
- The Maitland Cultural Plan (2016) seeks to provide and facilitate a range of arts and cultural services that sustain a creative and connected community. The aim of the plan is to cultivate a shared vision and path to create a vibrant and equitable culture.



### 1.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAITLAND PLACE ACTIVATION STRATEGY

The MPAS is structured in eight parts. Collectively, each part helps the reader understand place activation, within a Maitland context, and how place activation could be used to improve the quality of life of its community.

The structure of the MPAS works to:

- introduce the project and its background
- define place activation and provide trends and case studies
- explain Council's role and approach to place activation
- provide an understanding of Maitland and its context
- discuss the engagement process and its outcomes for the place activation strategy
- define the type of places in which place activation can occur
- provide place assessments that help Council and the community, better understand the City of Maitland
- establish an overarching framework for place activation in Maitland
- identify methods on how to implement place activations in Maitland
- identify how to evaluate the outcomes of place activation in Maitland.



Figure 1: The structure of the Maitland Place Activation Strategy



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*"I would love to see night markets, art and interactive spaces....a blend of temporary with the fixed buildings"*

*Community engagement participant*



# WHAT IS PLACE ACTIVATION?

Place Activation has the opportunity to create a sense of place, generate social cohesion, improve safety and bring life back to the streets and public places of Maitland.

For the purposes of this strategy, Place Activation is defined as the following:

- Activates a public space and brings people to that space
- In the short term, leads to a creative reinterpretation of a public space – and in the longer term, sees the community adopt that reinterpretation as the norm
- Seeds the Community's imagination and identification with places throughout Maitland
- Improves the safety and wellbeing of its community and visitors by increasing people presence
- Approval to fast track activations
- Assists with the creation of memories associated specifically with Maitland
- Projects can be categorised as either a Quick Win or Long Term.

Quick Win and Long Term projects are defined below:

## QUICK WIN

In Maitland, Quick Win projects:

- have realistic expectations
- are low risk with a potentially high reward
- are temporary initiatives
- are predominantly low cost - without limiting other higher cost projects that might be funded
- are light in nature and designed to test new ideas.

### Guiding Time Frames

**Quick Win's** are projects that can be undertaken immediately using an interim place activation policy or utilising existing Council policies.

## LONG TERM

In Maitland, Long term projects:

- can result in permanent changes in its public spaces
- are more complex and of a larger scale
- have higher costs such as potential light infrastructure requirements.

### Guiding Time Frames

**Long Term** projects may be reliant on the implementation of a specific place activation policy.

A **Long Term** project may be reliant on a series of quick wins to establish a base line to activate a public space.

A **Long Term** project may be reliant on the development of infrastructure such as the construction of a public space.



## 2.1 HOW DOES PLACE ACTIVATION WORK?

The diagrams show a sequence of events that cumulatively could result in a vibrant, activated place, achieved through the use of simple, quick win techniques.

This shows the power of place activation - not only to provide something to see and do but to support local businesses and help them thrive.

This is just one method of place activation however, this technique could be applied to many types of activations.



A food truck is parked in an inactive space. It starts to draw in a few people as there are limited food options in the area.



The food truck starts to provide a few ancillary items to encourage people to get comfortable - chairs, umbrellas. These are inexpensive items.



A local musician 'plugs-in' to the food truck program to add a bit of atmosphere. This in turn attracts more people to the area.



As more and more people start to frequent the area, businesses that normally stay closed, open. This helps support the local businesses which didn't open at this time of day or week as it was not viable.



At this point, the food truck leaves. It has done its job of seeding this place. The businesses are open and it has become known as a destination for good food, music and atmosphere.

Figure 2: The Place Activation Evolutionary Process



## 2.2 PLACE ACTIVATION PRECEDENTS

Place activation is about learning and experimentation - that is, learning from others and their experiences. Although this strategy has expressed the need for a unique approach to Maitland's place activation, inspiration is an essential tool. There is no point reinventing the wheel. The key to using precedent examples is not to copy them but be inspired by them.

The following section seeks to understand place activation through precedents - other's experiments and ideas. From these seeds the strategy for Maitland has been inspired.

This analysis comprises case studies from around the world and Australia.



*Photo 1: PARKing Day - Yoga in the streets*



**CASE STUDY 1 -  
SPLASH ADELAIDE**  
by City of Adelaide

Splash Adelaide is the city's place activation program. Its philosophy is to activate the city's public spaces by bending its own rules - far enough to make good ideas happen.

**AIM**

Its aim was to create temporary projects to inspire members of the community to become involved and transform the city.

**EXAMPLE ACTIVATION PROJECTS**

**Story City**

Discover the hidden history of Adelaide with real-life choose your own adventures. Story City Adelaide is a free, interactive story experience and an exciting way to explore Adelaide while being the hero of your own adventure!

**Feast on Foot**

The Feast on Foot walking food tour is a local foodie tour. The 3 hour walking food and street art tour displays the sights and tastes of the Adelaide CBD.

*Splash Adelaide provides Maitland with good examples of a city wide approach to place activation.*



**CASE STUDY 2-  
COLOUR THE STREET**

Horizon Sunshine Coast is presented by Sunshine Coast Council and supported by the Queensland Government

The Horizon Festival is a free community urban bloc party focused on the iconic cane tram tracks in Nambor's Howard Street.

**AIM**

Its aim was to create a free vibrant community event.

**EXAMPLE ACTIVATION PROJECTS**

Activities during the festival included live music, dance and street theatre, spoken word and slam poetry, hula hoop workshops, children's playshops and chalk art. There was even a circus playground, cane train lantern and roving Steam Punk performers. The evening was celebrated with a lantern parade and a laser light show and a fire spectacular. One of the highlights was 3D chalk art created by local artist Brian Tisdal and supported by visiting national 3D pavement specialists.

*Although this case study is a festival, there are elements that would provide exciting place activations throughout the year in Maitland. In particular, the chalk pavement drawings and the concept of colour is memorable and exciting.*





### CASE STUDY 3 - SYDNEY OPEN by Sydney Living Museums

*"For one weekend a year, Sydney Open unlocks the doors of the city's most important, inspiring and intriguing buildings and spaces"*

#### AIM

To celebrate the history of Sydney's architecture by creating an awareness of the city's cultural fabric. Over 50 buildings are open to the public for exploration, providing a full weekend of activities.

#### EXAMPLE ACTIVATION PROJECTS

There are a range of activities within the Sydney Open program including:

##### Focus Tour and Free Talks

Small tour groups lead by a leading expert providing in depth experience of some of Sydney's most secret and exclusive places. Drop in talks are also held at selected sites throughout the day.

*Maitland has a plethora of regionally significant buildings and spaces. This case study is particularly relevant to Maitland.*



### CASE STUDY 4- PARKing DAY

**PARKing Day is an annual global event, that started in San Francisco in 2005**

PARKing Day is an annual global event, held the 3rd Friday in September, with the intent to temporarily transform metered parking spots into temporary public parks.

#### AIM

The aim of PARK(ing) Day is to recognise the need for more public open space in urban areas. Why? Because the public domain is car oriented and PARKing Day seeks to change this...just for one day. The goal is to improve the quality of our urban spaces and start a conversation.

#### EXAMPLE ACTIVATION PROJECTS

Around the world, a variety of activities have taken place within a parking space on PARKing Day. For instance, some of the activities include:

- wedding
- public reading room and public beach
- free head and neck massage

*PARKing Day is a great example of rethinking public spaces - for the short term and potentially long term. The key is creating activities within parking spaces unique to Maitland's culture and social framework.*



### CASE STUDY 5 - NOODLE MARKETS

Noodle Markets is a feature event of Good Food Month presented by Citi Bank - a month-long celebration of good food in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne

Noodle Markets have become popular in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. These markets have free entry accompanied with a variety of entertainment such as music and dancing.

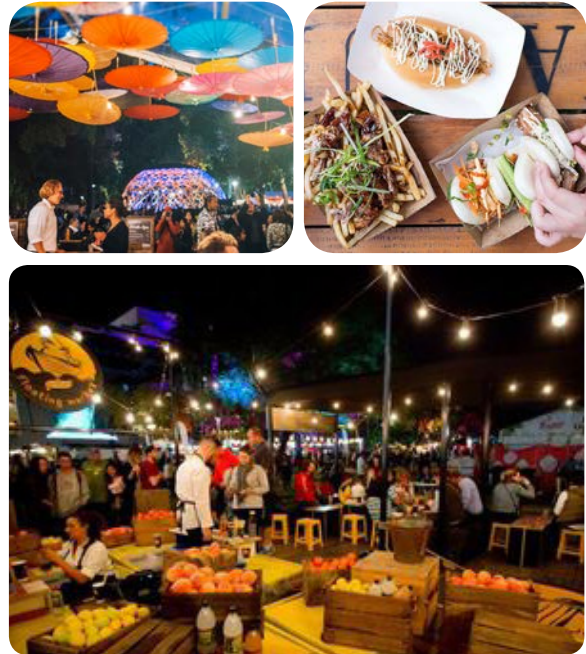
The markets are held in parks and public open spaces. To make the markets more convenient, the markets are cashless, allowing visitors to use their credit cards or debit cards.

#### AIM

Activate the city in the evening and showcase top quality cuisine in a casual atmosphere.

*Maitland's activations could be inspired by this precedent as it present the opportunity to showcase Maitland's multi cultural community and local produce.*

*The opportunity for cashless activities is a great idea as it makes it easier for people to take part spontaneously, as not everyone carries cash.*



### CASE STUDY 6- FOOD TRUCK PARK

The Food Truck Park™ is managed by the Australian Mobile Food Vendors Group (AMFVG) and is Melbourne based

Food Truck Park is a pop up food space using food trucks. As a food truck is a mobile method to provide good food, a place can be activated quickly - as long as the planning and compliance infrastructure is in place in the local government area. Food Truck Parks can be held in a wide range of places from public squares through to vacant lots.

#### AIM

Temporarily activate a public space by providing great food and atmosphere.

#### EXAMPLE ACTIVATION PROJECTS

Food Truck Park has plugged into other events such as New Years, Australia Day and activities such as an outdoor cinema.

*A food truck park could be the product of a series of quick win food truck activities (refer to page 10). These types of places are also useful in Maitland to help 'pre warm' a site before it is transformed into a permanent new use, for instance, prior to construction.*





### **CASE STUDY 7 -**

#### **BRISBANE'S WALKABLE COMIC STRIP**

The works of Queensland artist Aly Faye and Melbourne-based Katie Haughton-Ward

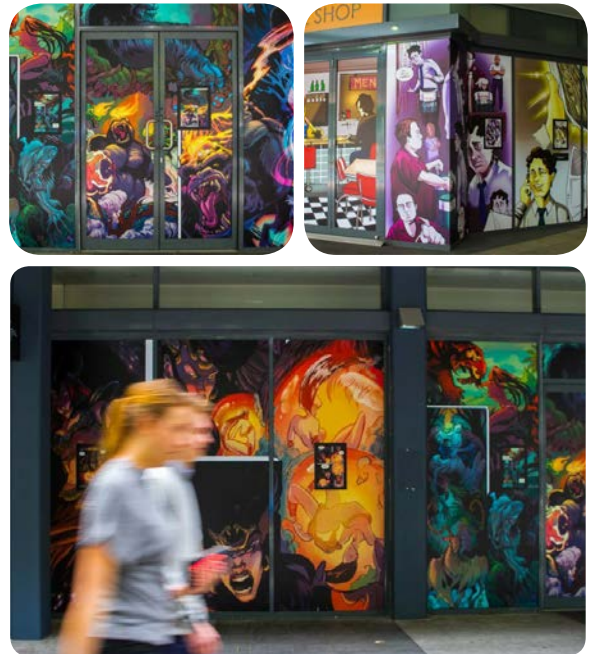
Brisbane's South Bank shop windows are transformed into a life sized comic strip. The comics are created by leading female comic artists. The artworks provide a continuous story along the street. Many people keep walking to finish the story and see the ending.

#### **AIM**

Provide an outdoor gallery while the shop fronts are transformed from vacant tenancies to new shops.

*Maitland has many buildings without long term tenants. This concept could also be appropriate for new leases in transition.*

*The nature of the artwork should be drawn from local art and cultural themes. A correlation between MRAG and the public streets could be established.*



## 2.3 A COMMUNITY OWNED DOCUMENT

This place activation strategy belongs to the community of Maitland. It provides a framework that enables place activation to be undertaken.

This strategy acknowledges that its okay to:

- take risks
- be playful
- experiment
- learn through failure

To achieve this, the following administrative environment is required.

### 2.3.1 Council's role

It is not envisaged that place activation will be solely delivered by Maitland City Council. Rather it will be a partnership with the community.

Council may take the role of provider, enabler and funder. This means that Council will provide the delivery framework and the support that will enable the community to undertake place activations. Council will also take the lead and deliver a range of place activation projects.

### 2.3.2 The communities and local businesses role

This strategy anticipates that a range of projects will be delivered by the community and local businesses.

There will also be a range of projects which are collaborations between Council, businesses and the community or combinations of these three groups.

### 2.3.3 Delivery of place activations

There will need to be changes to Council policy and processes, in order to facilitate place activations quickly and efficiently in Maitland.

Although, some Quick Win place activations may be possible through existing mechanisms, new policies and processes will be required.

## 2.4 COUNCIL'S APPROACH

In the development of the place activation program, Maitland City Council determined that place activation projects would fit broadly within the following four typologies:

1. Street Art
2. After Dark
3. Interpretation
4. Repurpose

Described as 'pillars', these four typologies have been used during a 2015/16 pilot program to assist in distinguishing between the types of initiatives facilitated. These pillars are not strategic themes, but are used to categorise the strategy's deliverable actions.

These typologies help Council and the community arrive at place activation solutions that suit the physical, historical or cultural characteristics of a place.

Regardless of the location, these pillars each have a place - where they can be used to express a message or an idea in the most effective and pleasing way. Many place activations will be a combination of typologies. This is encouraged as it create a richer and more diverse place activations.

The four pillars are defined opposite. In some instances, Maitland City Council has established pilot projects, to test the typologies. These are described on page 18.



The following provides definitions for the 4 Pillars of place activation for Maitland.

## 1 STREET ART

Street Art could be any temporary art form in the public domain. It could be a painted wall, an ephemeral sculptural work that washes away in the rain or even a street performance.



## 2 AFTER DARK

After Dark promotes a night time economy and highlights the natural and built environment. After Dark seeks to turn the lights on and bring back the crowds.



## 3 INTERPRETATION

Interpretation explores interactive and innovative methods for engaging with a place. It includes historical interpretation of a place and considers the different ways a place is used.



## 4 REPURPOSE

Repurpose is the reuse and reinterpretation of a public space or building. These activations could be temporary however, may become permanent over time.



## 2.5 PILOT PROGRAM INSIGHTS

As a result of the 2015/16 Pilot Program place activation projects have begun to sprout throughout Maitland - with a particular emphasis on The Levee precinct. These projects have been delivered under the 4 Pillars:

### STREET ART— ART BY STEALTH

The Art by Stealth Project worked to introduce street art to the city of Maitland. Artists were encouraged to 'secretly' submit their designs and were matched with walls, poles and fences in Central Maitland. The project encouraged surprising interactions with art across the city and encouraged creative ways to re-imagine the environment.

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### AFTER DARK — 'AFTER DARK AT THE LEVEE'

An evening of food trucks, music and street performers was held at the end of summer to bring activity and people into Central Maitland at night.

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### INTERPRETATION — 'LOOK UP'

In December 2015, the Pavement Pioneers Interpretation Project was installed. The project aimed to connect a new audience with Maitland's history by delivering heritage interpretation into the public realm. The project uses a series of unique, footpath stencils to encourage pedestrians to 'Look Up' and recognise some of Maitland's key architectural assets.

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### REPURPOSE — LANEWAY RUG

Maitland's laneways were injected with life during the Aroma Festival. A laneway artwork, tables and chairs brought new life to this space. Drawing on themes of winter warmth, a large rug was painted along the ground of a Maitland laneway.

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*"Walking through Morpeth  
reminds me of my childhood and  
now I enjoy it with friends"*  
Community engagement participant

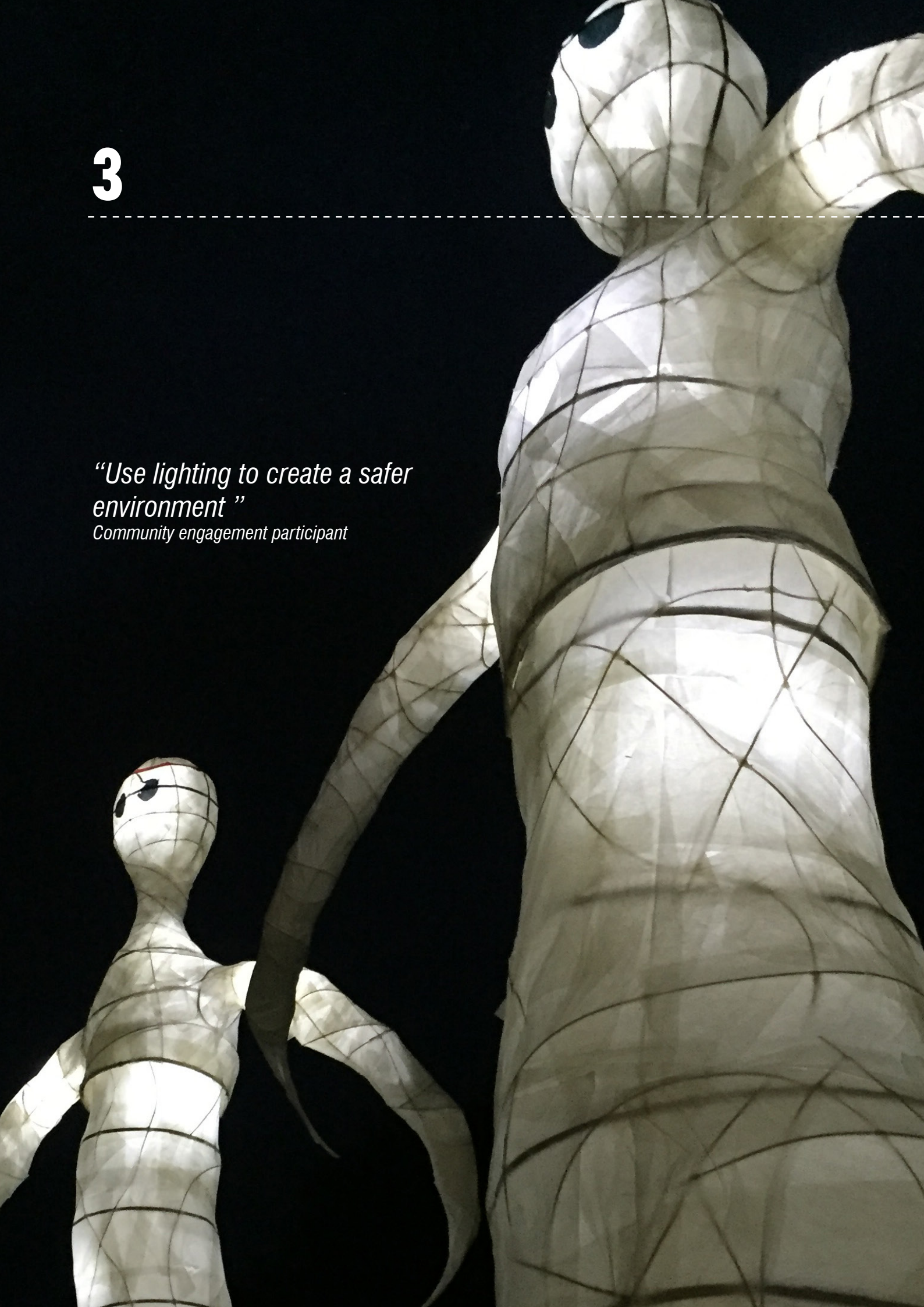




# 3

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*“Use lighting to create a safer environment ”*  
*Community engagement participant*





# MAITLAND'S PLACE ACTIVATION CONTEXT

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In order to determine an appropriate strategy for place activations in Maitland, one needs to understand the local context.

*“Context is the character and setting of the area within which a project scheme will sit. It is its natural as well as its human history; the forms of the settlement, buildings and spaces; its ecology and archaeology; its location, and the routes that pass through it. Context also includes people, the individuals living in or near an area and how communities are organised so that citizens become real participants”*

*Urban Design Compendium 1*

Understanding context is the first step.

There are many types of context and each influence place activations in their own way.

The contextual analysis for Maitland includes:

- Geographical Context
- Historical Context and
- Social and Cultural Context.

### 3.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Maitland's natural and human history provides inspiration for place activation projects. This brief summary provides a general understanding which can be further researched by those undertaking activation projects.

Before Maitland was settled by colonial settlers, the land was heavily vegetated. In particular, the banks of the Hunter River were described as densely vegetated with thick cedar brush. The river itself comprised a series of lagoons filled with fish, yams, roots of ferns, black swans and wild ducks. Only 7% of pre European vegetation still exists. The area was home to the Wonnarua people. These rivers and plains were important places for trade and cultural exchange for clans across the region.

Maitland's urban settlement began on the Wallis Plain as three independent towns in 1818. These towns were Central Maitland (known as West Maitland), East Maitland and Morpeth.

#### 3.1.1 Central Maitland

Both Central Maitland and Morpeth were privately founded towns, which developed as a result of the river. Large ships brought goods up river from Newcastle to Morpeth. From Morpeth, the goods were transported by shallow boats and barges to Central Maitland. Once the goods reached Central Maitland, they were distributed across the Hunter Valley. This is why many of the buildings fronting High Street and the river are warehouse style structures. For 20 years, up until the Victorian Gold rush, Maitland was the second largest town in Australia. This accounts for the quality of its architecture. However, the construction of the rail line in 1850 and increased silting of the Hunter River, lead to the decline of river transportation. Both the river and the rail line have been strong determinates in the urban and psychological morphology of Maitland LGA.

High Street forms the spine of Central Maitland. Its planning and cultural history has been significantly shaped by the floods.



Figure 3: (clockwise) Morpeth main street, Swan Street; High Street of Central Maitland; Flooding of High Street in Central Maitland; Activity in Central Maitland



### 3.1.2 Morpeth

Morpeth was a boom town until the mid 1950's after which it suffered a decline. It experienced a resurgence in the 1980s when it became a popular tourist destination, which focused on its heritage. Queens Wharf was once the site of the wharves that received and passed on goods from Newcastle.

### 3.1.3 East Maitland

Unlike Central Maitland and Morpeth, East Maitland was established by the colonial NSW government. A strong axis is still evident to this day between the Gaol, the Courthouse, the former church site (now occupied by Organic Feast) and Stockade Hill where prisoners were hanged.

### 3.1.4 Other settlements of Maitland

Overtime, other settlements sprang up around the three main centres including, Rutherford, Lorn, Gilleston Heights, Bolwarra, Woodberry, Largs and Telarah. In 1886 Rutherford was synonymous with a landscaped racecourse. The site was also used as a landing ground by aviators Charles Kingsford Smith and Bert Hinkler. Later as a result of World War Two, the racecourse became disused and was sold. A munitions factory was constructed on the grounds, which post war, was converted into a textiles factory.

### 3.1.5 Walka Water Works

The Pump House at Walka Works was constructed in 1882-87 to contain boilers, pumps and coal storage. It was shut in 1929 when the principal pumping station was no longer necessary. By 1945 Walker Works was closed. For a period of time between 1951 and 1978 it was used for electricity production.

The site is listed on the State Heritage Register and is described as:

- one of the largest and most intact 19th Century industrial complexes in the Hunter Valley
- the most comprehensive set of water treatment features surviving in NSW, documenting the growth of the demand for water
- a finely executed polychrome brick structure
- a complex that is an important local cultural landmark.

Beyond the value of the built form the site today has significant value for its outdoor spaces which includes bird habitat and recreational uses including spaces for picnics, a Model Yacht Club, the Walka Miniature Railway and sporting events such as the Maitland Parkrun.

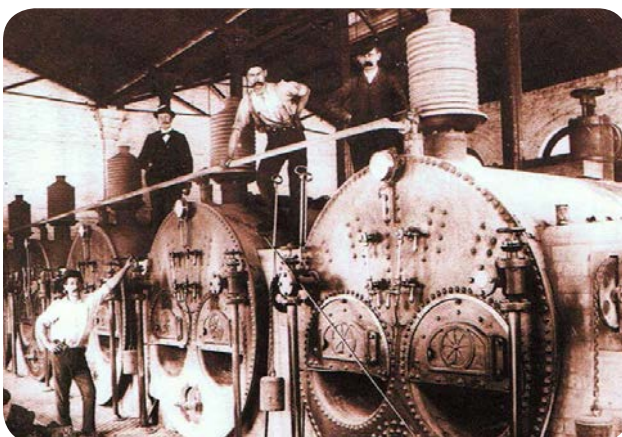


Figure 4: (clockwise) Rutherford Racecourse; East Maitland Architecture; Walka Works Pump House; Original photo from the pump house boilers.

### 3.2 GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Maitland local government area (LGA) is located in the lower Hunter region of New South Wales. It covers 396km<sup>2</sup> from Woodberry in the east, Lochinvar in the west, Tocal to the north and Gilleston Heights to the south. Its nearest major centre is Newcastle, 41km to the east. This is a large geographic area in which it is anticipated that place activation will be focused on key precincts and suburbs.

Its main towns and suburbs comprise Central Maitland, East Maitland, Morpeth, Thornton, Rutherford, Lorn, Metford, Tenambit and Gillieston Heights. The area is also fringed by rural residential and rural areas such as Bolwarra, Bolwarra Heights, Largs, Ashtonfield and Oakhampton.

The Hunter River winds its way down through Maitland to Newcastle. The confluence of the Hunter River and Paterson River is located east of Morpeth. The urban morphology of Maitland is defined by the river's flood plains, which constrain development. This results in a rural curtilage which gives each area its unique visual character.

The New England Highway runs through the Local Government Area (LGA) and is an alternative means to travel to Queensland (as opposed to the Pacific Highway). The New England Highway was bypassed however, in 2014 by the Hunter Expressway.

The Main Northern Rail Line also travels through the LGA, carrying both passenger and freight trains. There are six train stations within the LGA. The North Coast Railway connects to the main line at Telarah. This line is the primary rail route in the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers regions of New South Wales. This makes Maitland an important junction in rail travel and freight transportation.



Figure 5: Maitland local government area (Base map: Google Earth 2016)

#### Legend

	Hunter Expressway
	Northern Rail Line
	North Coast Rail Line
	New England Highway
	Hunter River



### 3.2.1 THE LEVEE'S OF MAITLAND

The river has had a significant impact upon the land and people of Maitland. From its earliest settlement, there have been many projects undertaken to protect the towns from flood waters. This is an understandable reaction as there have been over 200 floods of which 13 have had significant impact. The most notable was the flood of 1955 which attracted world wide attention and lead to a series of planning reforms which resulted in a shrinking of the population of Central Maitland by two thirds. There are various efforts underway to encourage people back into Central Maitland, one of which is this strategy.

Central Maitland has seen considerable change in recent times, with major investment in public domain projects, new retail and hospitality spaces and the recognition of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) as a destination.

The precinct known as The Levee in Central Maitland, located on High Street between Bourke Street and Elgin Street, was formerly closed to vehicular traffic. It was reopened as a shared zone (vehicular and pedestrian) with a range of seating, lighting, signage and paving treatments. This is one of the key locations for place activation in Maitland.



Figure 6: (clockwise) The Levee in Central Maitland, takes its name from the Levee's of the local government area; The Hunter River to the north of High Street Central Maitland. The banks of the levee are steep but available open space for the community; The construction of the Levee of Maitland; The water level during 1950's flood.

### 3.3 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Place activations should appeal to the diverse social and cultural context of Maitland. Activations should strengthen the local community and bring it closer together.

The Maitland local government area has a population of 76,000 people living in 13 distinct areas which include both urban, suburban and rural precincts (2011 census).

By 2023, it is anticipated that Maitland's population will reach about 90,000. This growing population will benefit from place activations in the place they call home.

With 46% of households comprising children, place activations are essential. Providing free or inexpensive entertainment that is fun and educational will not only support parents but will create social bonding and inclusiveness for this next generation.

As this age group grows up, providing opportunities for entertainment and engagement are just as critical. Many local Maitland youth people would like things to do that aren't focused on alcohol. Due to a shortage of activities, these young people generally go to Newcastle for entertainment. Providing local place activations creates 'things to do' but more importantly will give Maitland a strong identity that local youths can be proud of.

Therefore, the key to place activation in Maitland will be to provide a diverse range of activations that cater to all ages, rather than a single age group. This will tie the community together and give it strength.

The economic activities in Maitland can provide insight to the local community from which place activations could be inspired. Economic activities include agriculture, tourism, mining, manufacturing, transport and construction industries.

Providing a mix of activations - some free and some with a small cost - will make Maitland more accessible to the community. For instance, a family trying to entertain children on a daily outing can be expensive. If Maitland can be seen as a destination full of activity and vibrancy which does the simple things well, it will enhance its livability.

Maitland has an emerging arts scene. At its centre is Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG). MRAG has exhibition spaces, creative learning spaces for both adults and children.

#### 3.3.1 Maitland Events

The Maitland event calendar is filled with an assortment of activities and festivities. These events are a combination of Council and community run events - some free, and some ticketed.

Council's flagship events include:

- Maitland Aroma Festival
- Maitland Riverlights Multicultural Festival
- Bitter and Twisted Boutique Beer Festival
- New Years Eve
- Australia Day
- Maitland Taste Festival
- Hunter Valley SteamFest

Some community run events include:

- Morpeth Chapel Jazz
- Morpeth Novelty Teapot Exhibition

Although place activation does not seek to create new events of this nature, it's important to identify the gaps in the annual program. This enables Council and the community to see when 'everyday' activities are needed and at what times of the year.

There are noticeable gaps during winter. This is a great time to hold place activations in Maitland. Furthermore, there is only a single event held each month, which leaves at least 28 days of place activation opportunities.



### 3.4 KEY CONTEXT OBSERVATIONS

The following observations were identified during the analysis of Maitland Context.

- Maitland plays a significant role in Australia's history - which is not well known by the wider community or visitors to the area. There is an opportunity to use place activations to increase awareness about its hidden history.
- Maitland is composed of a wide range of communities - ranging from the suburban through to rural land uses. This creates the opportunity for diversity in place activation project typologies.
- Although the Hunter Expressway has bypassed the area, Maitland still has a strong transportation network which has the opportunity to deliver people into Maitland, to experience what it has to offer.
- The river and its levees have played a significant role in the urban morphology and psyche of Maitland. There is an opportunity to use place activation as a tool to express this history and integrate the river deeper into patterns of everyday life in Maitland.
- There are opportunities to fill the voids in the event calendar with place activations, particularly in winter. As place activations are quicker and cheaper to facilitate, the annual calendar could become more diverse and enriched than it is currently.
- Walka Works is a great opportunity to hold activations. It's an valued community asset, however is under used.
- With 46% of households comprising children in Maitland, there is a need for activities for this age group. In particular, activities that entertain both parents and their children would be beneficial, such as dining spaces with associated play spaces.
- Free or inexpensive activities would encourage the use of Maitland's public spaces.
- The open space on the Maitland side of the river bank is a great space for activations. Although the bank is steep, this is an opportunity to think outside the box and hold activations that take advantage of the slope.

4



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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The value of engagement cannot be overstressed. It ensures a diversity of views of all parties are taken into consideration. It allows us to distil local aspirations, values and history - important data that is not always immediately apparent. Engagement provides a level of understanding that gives the strategy a strong basis to explore new ideas.

## ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

The engagement methodology comprised the following three parts:

- Site walk
- Targeted Workshops
- Open consultation

For those not available to meet at any of the three engagement programs, one on one meetings, phone and email conversations were undertaken with the community and other consultants working in the field.

### 4.1 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The following diagrams highlight the outcomes of the three different parts of the engagement methodology and their rationale.

Throughout the engagement process a total of 1,241 responses were received. In particular, 80 participants were involved in focused workshops and site walks.

The diagrams provide a brief summary of the outcomes of the engagement process, however, this entire document should be read as a product of Council, stakeholders and the communities ideas and aspirations for place activation in Maitland.

A full report of the engagement findings is available.

# SITE WALK

19 May 2016

## Description

Three site walks, each guided by different members from the local community. The walks were held in Central Maitland, East Maitland and Morpeth.

## Key Objectives

The members of the community who participated in the site walk showed the project team:

- points of interest
- passed on their stories
- revealed memories of each place and
- passed on ideas they had for place activation.

## Key Outcomes

- A better understanding of the physical framework and places of Maitland. This was passed on through the project team's own experiences as well as through the eyes of the community
- Understanding of the scale of Maitland
- Getting to know some of the local people of Maitland
- Place Activation ideas for the MPAS

## Discoveries

- There are some areas of Maitland used, while others are almost abandoned
- Maitland was described as a series of island communities. It's necessary to drive between each 'island' but very walkable within each community
- There was a strong demand to activate the River however, it was understood there are a lot of constraints. Lorn Beach was identified as a great place for activations
- There was a call for places for parents and children to enjoy together





# TARGETED WORKSHOPS

23 - 24 May 2016

## Description

Four workshops were held over two days. The first being an internal workshop for Council staff and the remaining three for the wider community, businesses and stakeholders.

## Key Objectives

- to explain Place Activation
- to seek ideas about Place Activation opportunities for Maitland
- seed potential partnerships within the existing community to enable place activation projects

## Key Outcomes

- Opportunity to meet some of the stakeholders involved in Maitland
- Opportunities for stakeholders and business owners to meet and collaborate in the future
- Understanding of some of the current hurdles for Place Activation in Maitland
- Place Activation ideas for the MPAS

## Discoveries

- There are a number of collaborations already occurring in the community. These groups have the opportunity to form the backbone of future place activations
- The fear of litigation and the process of getting insurances has become a stumbling block for stakeholders and the community. There is some concern this will have held back past projects
- The existing policy framework does not accommodate place activations. A series of new policies will be needed to facilitate place activations



# OPEN CONSULTATION

13 - 24 June 2016

## Description

A series of place activations were held by Council including:

- activation Roadshow - I am an Activation
- static Feedback Box Game
- black Dot Conversation Starter Sign
- experience Mapping Activation
- community Workshop
- online social pinpoint and survey

## Key Objectives

- to explain Place Activation
- identify special places across Maitland and places in need of revitalisation

## Key Outcomes

- Opportunity to explain place activation to the wider community – those who will benefit the most from place activations
- Gaining inspiration from the wider community and knowing what they actually want to see in Maitland
- Prioritisation of key areas important to the community and in need of revitalisation
- Immersing the community and using the community to demonstrate place activations using the 'I am an Activation' approach

## Discoveries

- The community showed an enthusiasm for a diversity of activations to further enrich public spaces
- Various types of popups/installations were the most popular ideas. The most popular popup activity was coffee and food vans in public places. Fresh produce markets, live music, events and activities for kids were also very popular
- The precinct that received the most ideas overall was Central Maitland. Other key precincts identified were Morpeth, Rutherford shopping area and East Maitland





## 4.2 ENGAGEMENT EMERGING THEMES

During the engagement process a variety of reoccurring themes appeared. These developing themes are ideas and concepts that re-appeared throughout the engagement phase - time and again. These themes form a baseline for the Place Activation Framework.

A brief summary of these Developing Themes include:

### **The river of life**

The river is a powerful place which the community seeks a greater connection to. Although it has its limitations, there is a strong desire to see the river become more visible and integrated into daily life. The river is part of the urban framework of the entire local government area.

The floods of Maitland were openly discussed during consultation - appearing to form part of the physical and emotional psyche of Maitland and its people. Topics ranged from the impact of the river during flood times through to the benefits of the flood plains - resulting in large areas of rural land that will never be developed thereby maintaining a rural outlook. Most interestingly, the floods are not taboo and are discussed as part of normal daily life.

### **Identity**

Flood prone land limits development resulting in island communities. Each community is unique - but there is a feeling of disconnect with Maitland as a whole. This creates a diverse culture in Maitland, however there is a desire, from the community, to create an over arching identity.

### **Enrich the existing**

The history of Maitland is highly valued by its community. Many strategies and reports prepared for Maitland attest to this. This includes not only the built form and settlement patterns, but extends to the stories of its people. There is a strong desire to see this history well represented through place activation projects.

### **Distance and connections**

Following on from 'identity', there are distances between places that have resulted in a disconnect.

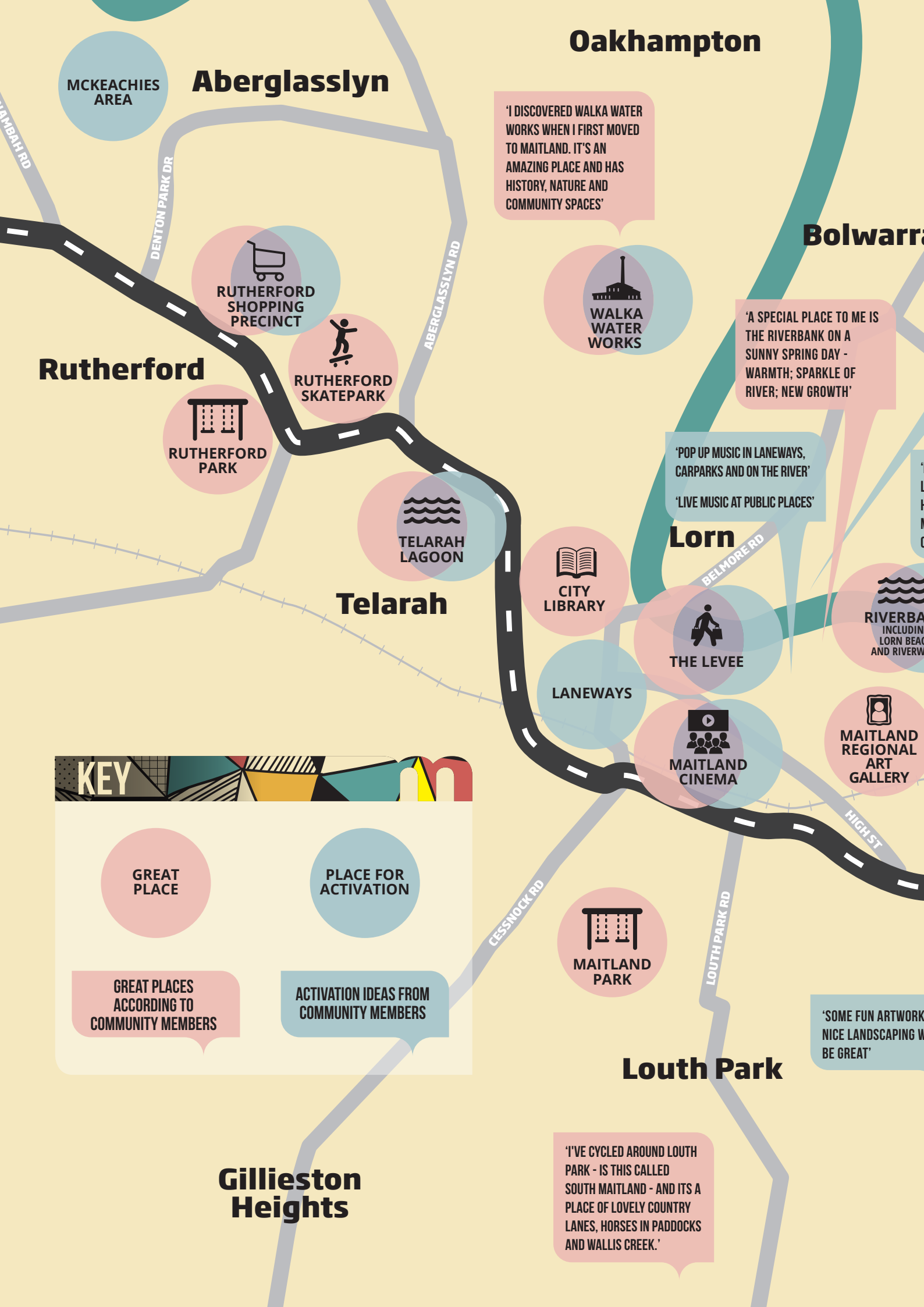
At a smaller place activation scale, there are distance/legibility issues within each of these communities - such as long walking distances between activities which discourage movement and visitation. For example, the lack of activities between Maitland Regional Art Gallery and The Levee, discourage movement. Similarly, the relationship between Maitland Train Station and The Levee shares a similar problem.

### **Business support networks**

The opportunity for place activation to support and help businesses grow, has regularly appeared in research and consultation. There is a strong desire to work with others in the community - this is a key requirement of successful place activation.

### **Creating activations for children and their parents**

Creating activations that appeal to both parents and their children was a common theme. Often, activities are for either the children or the parent - rarely a single activity. Activations should consider mothers groups, grandparent carers and couples as they can often have different needs.





## Bolwarra Heights

## Largs

*Mapping the Priority Areas - This map shows the most popular places identified for activation and special places to residents, gathered during the engagement process. Many places were identified as important places, but also seen to have potential for activations in the future.*

'BEACH CHAIRS, UMBRELLAS AND CANOE RIDES FOR THE KIDS AT LORN BEACH'

IT WOULD ALSO BE GREAT TO LEARN ABOUT THE ABORIGINAL HISTORY OF THE AREA. SO MANY DREAMING STORIES CONNECTED TO THE RIVER'

ANK  
G  
CH  
WALK

## HUNTER RIVER

'I WOULD LOVE TO SEE FLASHES OF COLOUR AROUND THE CITY'

'THE JETTY AT MORPETH AT DUSK. PICTURESQUE, FEELS A LITTLE BIT MAGIC.'

## Phoenix Park

MORPETH RIVER  
QUEENS WHARF/PARK

ILLALUNG  
PARK

MORPETH  
COMMON



## Morpeth

'WALKING THROUGH MORPETH REMINDS ME OF MY CHILDHOOD AND NOW I ENJOY IT WITH FRIENDS'

MORPETH RD

TENAMBIT  
PARK

## Tenambit

EAST  
MAITLAND  
POOL/PARK

MELBOURNE ST

LAWES ST

MAITLAND  
GAOL

## East Maitland

SHOPPING  
PRECINCT  
INCLUDING LAWES ST  
AND HIGH ST

EAST  
MAITLAND  
LIBRARY

'INTERACTIVE SCULPTURES KIDS CAN CLIMB GO THROUGH REST ON AND IN WHILE PARENTS WATCH AND REST'

'FOOD VANS ARE FABULOUS!'

'ACTIVITIES THAT ENGAGE WITH THE NATURAL AND HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT'

METFORD RD

METFORD  
PARK AND  
SKATEPARK

## Metford

5

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*"Anything supporting local"*  
Community engagement participant



# PLACE ASSESSMENTS

To better understand the places and communities of Maitland, this document encompasses place assessments for the local government area. These assessments assist in the identification of potential place activation opportunities for Maitland.

The assessments have been categorised into precincts. The precincts are identified as follows:

- ① Central Maitland
- ② East Maitland
- ③ Morpeth
- ④ Rutherford
- ⑤ Thornton
- ⑥ Rural and outlying village precinct

## PLACE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The Place Assessments utilised two tools in better understanding Maitland:

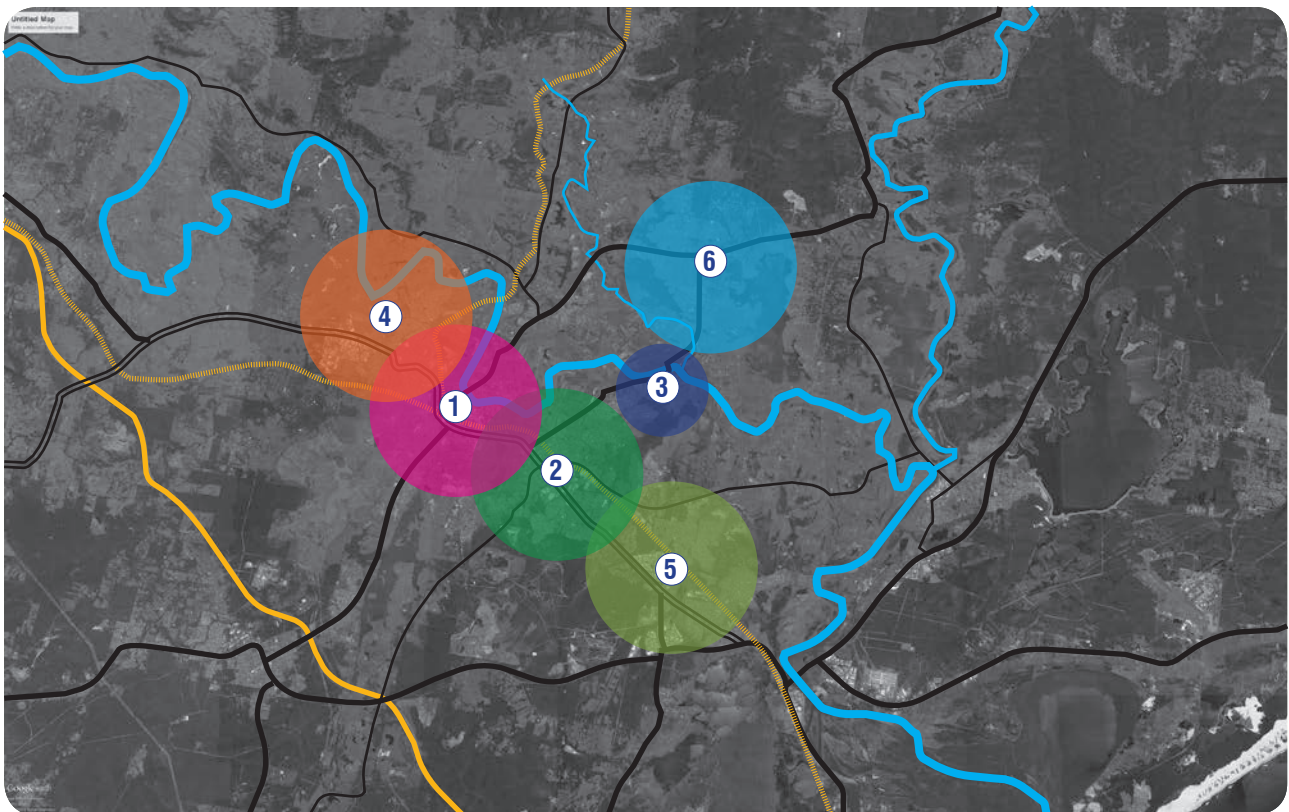
### Place Assessment Tool 1# - 4 Aspect Analysis

This tool uses 4 criteria to assess the success of a place. Shortfalls in any of the criteria present opportunities for place activations.

### Place Assessment Tool 2# - Place Typologies

The public domain can be categorised as a series of types. Each type, unique to the other will present different opportunities for place activation.

The overlap between the 4 Aspect Analysis and Place Typologies will provide a firm basis for the creation of place activations in Maitland.



## PLACE ASSESSMENT TOOL 1#:

### 4 ASPECT ANALYSIS

Successful public places generally have a common theme. The four themes identified below represent qualities needed in public space in order for it to thrive. Place activation can help a place achieve these aspects.



Figure 7: 4 Aspect Analysis Summary (Projects for Public Spaces PPS)



## PLACE ASSESSMENT TOOL 2#:

### PLACE TYPOLOGIES

The public domain is composed of a variety of spaces, each with different functions and qualities. For instance, some places allow for gathering while others are for moving through - on your way somewhere else.

The relationships between place activations and different place types will inform the programming of that activation.

In the right location, place activations can improve the legibility of the public domain.

Each place activation requires an analysis of the site's context before planning and seeking approval for that activation.



#### STREETS

The streets of Maitland are important places for activation, as they are highly visible to the public. The streets of the different towns of Maitland are each unique and can offer a different experience. Most importantly, streets are for people, not just cars.



#### LANEWAYS

Laneways provide an intimate setting for place activation. The benefits of activating a laneway is that it encourages their use, which in turn creates a more permeable town - connecting places and spaces together.



#### PARKS

The best parks are multi-use spaces that accommodate a variety of activities. They act as breathing spaces that buffer urban life.



#### PRIVATE

Private buildings and places form important anchors in the public domain. They often assist with the activation of the public domain by bringing people into Maitland.



#### GATEWAYS

A gateway is a threshold between two places. It lets you know you have arrived at your destination. This is an important tool in wayfinding which can be reinforced by place activation.



#### OPEN SPACE, PATHS & TRAILS

Open space, formal or informal paths and trails are great places for activations. Often these spaces are used for exercise.



#### COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Community buildings provide spaces to hold place activation activities and projects. These buildings may comprise one or more of the following:

- church and town hall
- community hall
- library
- schools

# 1 CENTRAL MAITLAND

*Central Maitland is the historic core of the Maitland area and is known for its beautiful historic buildings. Across the river, Lorn is a residential community complete with historic homes and beautiful streetscapes.*

---

## 4 aspect analysis summary

### Identity

Both Central Maitland and Lorn have strong associations with the Hunter River. The river has shaped the areas topography and its urban form. At the core of Central Maitland is The Levee Shared Zone. Since its transformation, it is developing as a popular place to visit as its perceived as a clean and attractive destination. Central Maitland is still perceived as unsafe to some however, place activations are seen as a way to help change this.

Central Maitland is the subject of ongoing revitalisation including The Levee Development Component Two, which incorporates the Riverlink Building, improvements to the No. 1 Sportsground and Athletics Track and upgrade of the inner city link along Athol D'Ombra Drive.

### Links

The area is perceived to be well connected. However, cars are still perceived to have priority - even in the Levee Shared Zone which is designed to give way to pedestrians. The laneways provide great opportunities to improve linkages.

### Social

There are a number of places to meet and socialise within Central Maitland. In addition to The Levee Shared Zone, the river's edge provides a great place to meet. Maitland Park is an important open space which can accommodate larger scale activations and events.

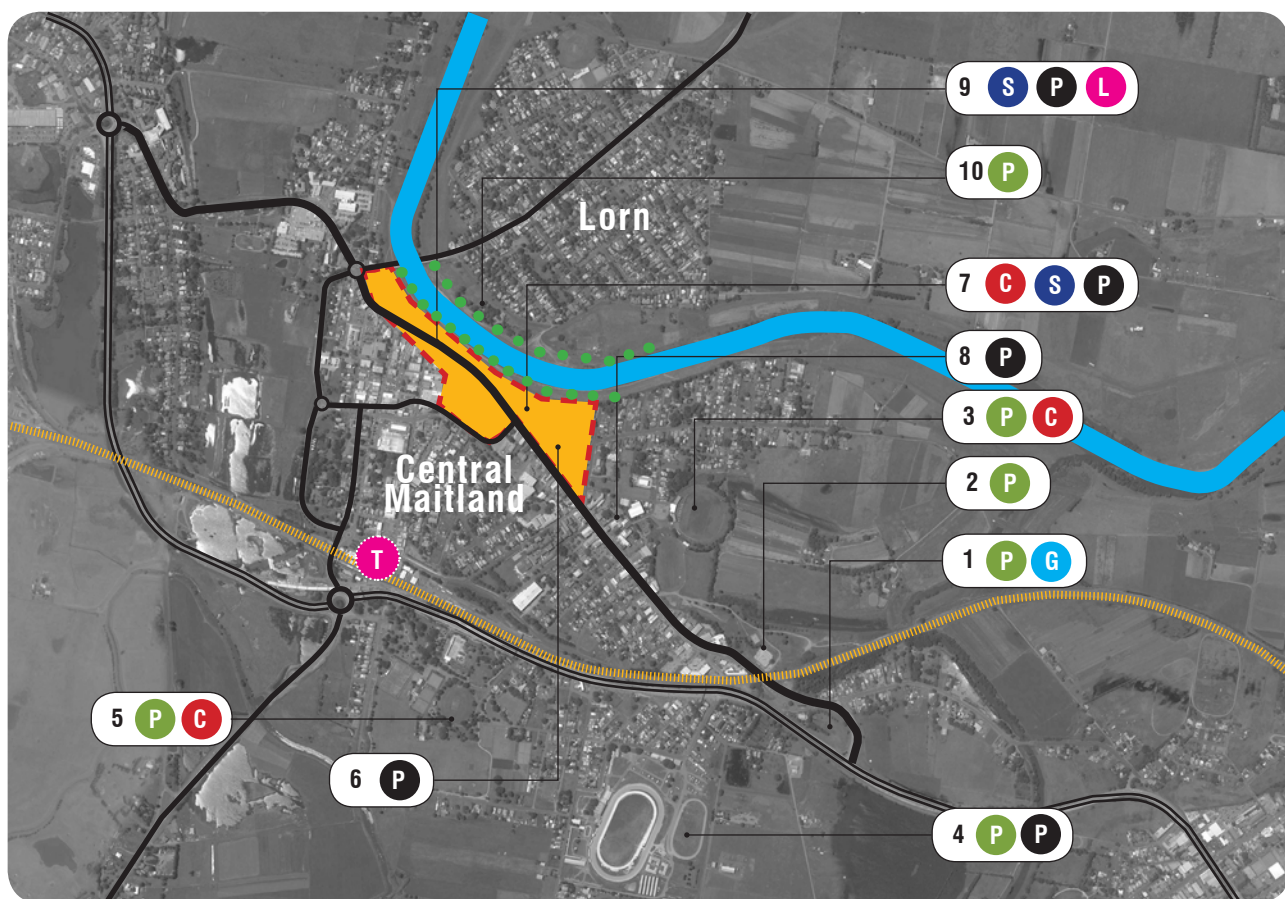
### Activities

Currently activities are predominately related to planned events. However, these events have generally not expanded into evening activation. Maitland Park hosts a variety of activities ranging from swimming to lawn bowls.

A number of pilot place activations have been held in Central Maitland. These activations are identified in Section 2.5 on page 18.







### Key Places in Central Maitland and Lorn

- |   |                               |  |    |  |                                      |
|---|-------------------------------|--|----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | <span>P</span> <span>G</span> | Ministers Park - High Street                               | 6  | <span>P</span>                               | Maitland Repertory Theatre           |
| 2 | <span>P</span>                | Harold Gregson Park - skate park, remote control car track | 7  | <span>C</span> <span>S</span> <span>P</span> | Cathedral Precinct                   |
| 3 | <span>P</span> <span>C</span> | No. 1 Sportsground   | 8  | <span>P</span>                               | Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) |
| 4 | <span>P</span> <span>C</span> | Maitland Showground  | 9  | <span>S</span> <span>L</span> <span>P</span> | The Levee, High Street               |
| 5 | <span>P</span> <span>C</span> | Maitland Park - Pool, Bowling Club                         | 10 | <span>P</span>                               | Lorn Beach                           |

### Legend

- |  |                        |  |                                 |
|--|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|  | Northern Rail Line     |  | Maitland station                |
|  | New England Highway    |  | Riverside Walk and open space   |
|  | Hunter River           |  | Core of the activation precinct |
|  | Retail/Commercial core |  |                                 |

## 2 EAST MAITLAND

*East Maitland offers the first impression of Maitland and comprises a diverse mix of places and activities. It contains some of the areas most significant historic buildings. Tenambit is a low density residential suburb.*

### 4 aspect analysis summary

#### Identity

The area is largely identified with the New England Highway and the businesses that line its edge however, there is an emerging precinct that is developing its own character - Melbourne Street. East Maitland has large expanses of open spaces anchored on the historic landmarks of the Gaol, the Courthouse and St Peter's near Stockade Hill. Through the consultation process it showed however that there are perceptions that East Maitland is unsafe. Tenambit is identified as a residential suburb.

#### Links

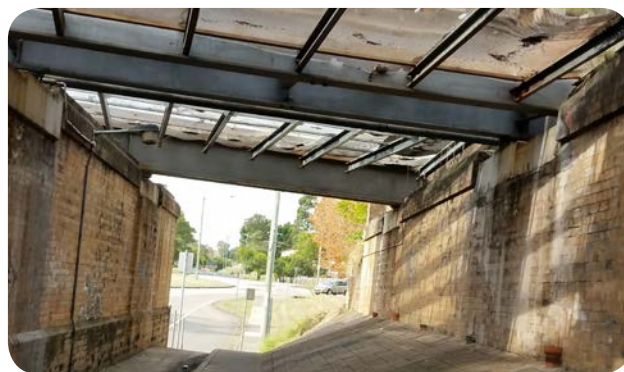
Poor signage makes it difficult to understand East Maitland and find your way around. There is easy access to public transport via the trains and buses however, cycle networks are lacking.

#### Social

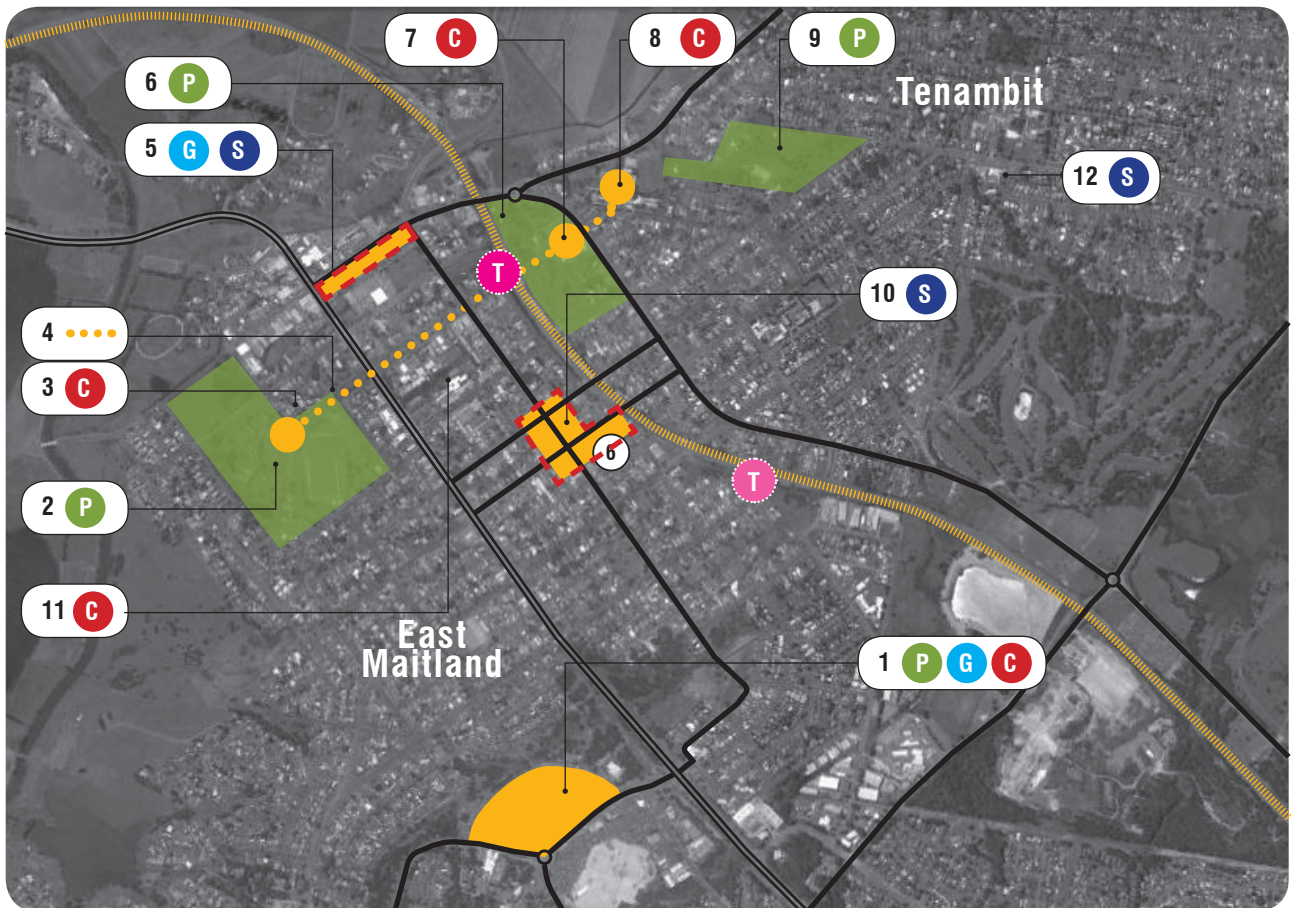
Although new hubs are emerging on Melbourne Street, East Maitland would benefit from an improvement in culture and the development of a unique identity. Although there are a number of pubs, bowling clubs and restaurants, there is the perception that the area is lacking in places to meet and bring visitors. People generally come to East Maitland to catch a train rather than participate in public life.

#### Activities

There are some music festivals and local church groups however. There are few activities in East Maitland, particular for young people. A new skate park, that is soon to be developed in East Maitland, will provide more activities for the community.







### Key Places in East Maitland

1	P G C	Greenhills Shopping Centre	7	C	Maitland Courthouse
2	P	Stockade Hill	8	C	Maitland Gaol
3	C	St Peters Anglican Church	9	P	Park
4	Yellow dotted line	Gaol/Courthouse/Stockade Hill axis	10	S	Lawes Street Commercial/Retail Precinct
5	G S	Melbourne Street Precinct	11	C	School
6	P	Station/Courthouse Open Space	12	S	Tenambit Neighbourhood Shops

### Legend

Orange dotted line	Northern Rail Line	Pink circle with T	East Maitland Station
Black line	New England Highway	Pink circle with T	Victoria Street Station
Green square	Open Space	Red dashed box	Core of the activation precinct
Yellow square	Retail/Commercial core		

## 3 MORPETH

*Morpeth is known as a historic tourism destination filled with antique shops, cafes and boutique clothing, only a short drive from Central Maitland on the Hunter River.*

---

### 4 aspect analysis summary

#### Identity

Clean, attractive and well maintained with a picturesque streetscape composed of heritage buildings. Its parks, which present potential activation spaces, are neat and tidy.

#### Links

Parking can be an issue on weekends due to its popularity as a destination. The laneways are already successful spaces, drawing people deeper and encouraging exploration and discovery. There are opportunities to further activate these laneways.

#### Social

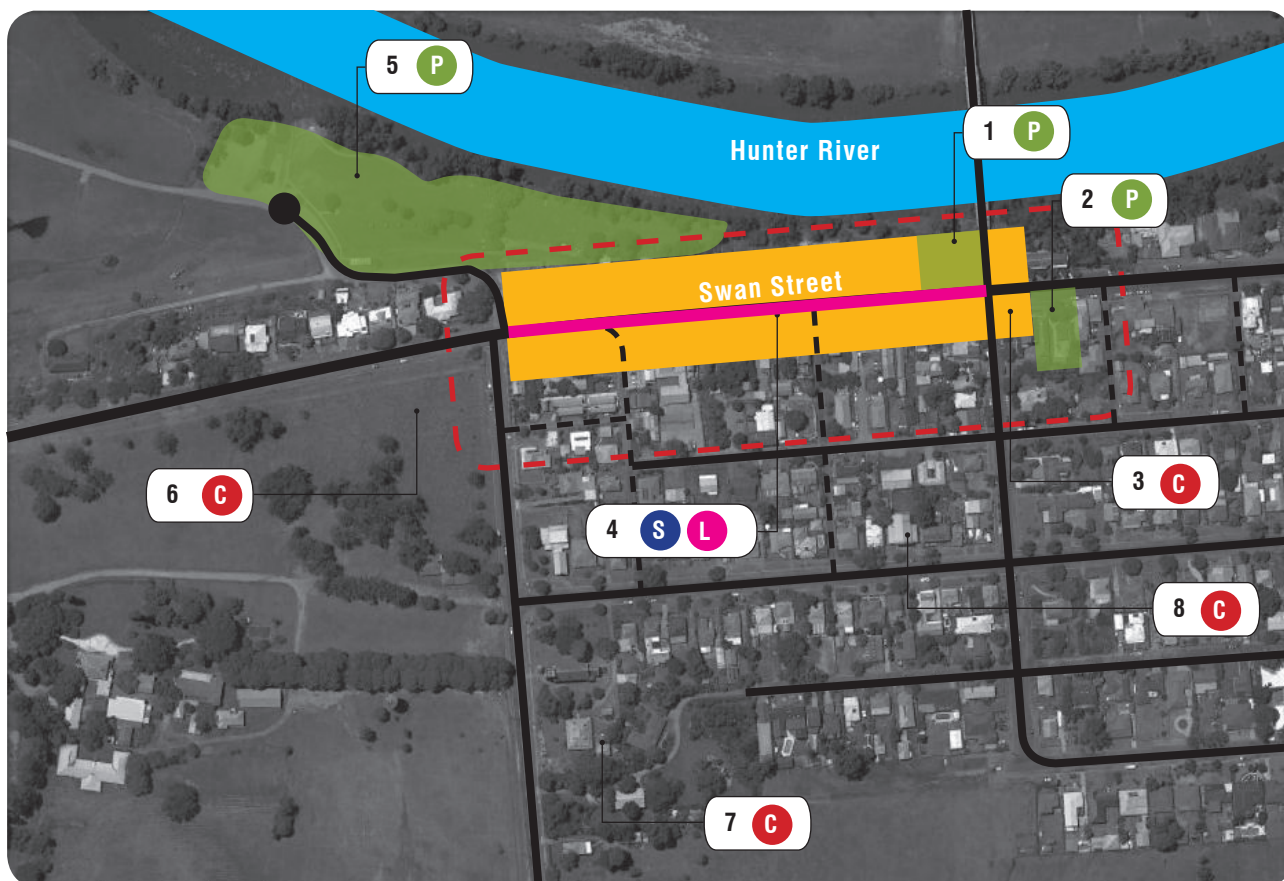
There are places to meet such as the parks and cafes. However, Saturday nights have been identified as a problem and people can feel unsafe after dark. After dark activations could be beneficial to Morpeth.

#### Activities

There is a perception that the majority of the shops are not open from Monday to Wednesday, this perception could be addressed through activations. The majority of activities are retail, food and antique related. However, there are limited food options after dark.







### Key Places in East Maitland

1		Illalung Park	6		Closebourne Village
2		Noel Unicomb park	7		St James Church
3		Morpeth Museum	8		School of Arts Hall
4		Swan Street - Main Street of Morpeth			
5		Queens Wharf			

### Legend

	Hunter River		Core of the activation precinct
	Swan Street		
	Laneways		
	Open Space		
	Retail/Commercial core		

## 4 RUTHERFORD

*Rutherford is predominately residential a community located to the north of the New England Highway. The Rutherford area also comprises light industrial areas and a large shopping precinct.*

---

### 4 aspect analysis summary

#### Identity

Rutherford has both a residential and industrial identity. It has a mix of old and new residential communities. Telarah is generally an older residential community. Both areas lack the traditional 'main streets' that other heritage centres in the LGA possess.

#### Links

The Telarah train station is too far to walk from the Rutherford Shopping Precinct therefore, transportation is limited to the local bus service and private car. This limits the areas capacity as a walkable community. Pedestrian activity is important as it improves safety and enhances the vibrancy of a place. Existing pedestrian laneways are underutilised, presenting a great opportunity to improve access as well as activation spaces.

#### Social

The Rutherford Central Shopping Precinct provides spaces for social activities. In addition to a variety of cafes/restaurants there is the Rutherford Library and Community Centre off Arthur Street.

#### Activities

This area is primarily a residential and industrial area however, there is a shopping precinct located on the New England Highway. There are limited reasons to stay beyond shopping however there is an opportunity to activate adjoining greenspace that houses a skate park and playground.







### Key Places in Rutherford and Telarah

- |   |  |                     |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 |  | Library             |
| 2 |  | Skate Park          |
| 3 |  | Open space corridor |
| 4 |  | Playground          |

### Legend

	New England Highway		Core of the activation precinct
	Rutherford Shopping Precinct		Laneways

## 5 THORNTON

*Thornton comprises both residential and light industrial areas while neighbouring Metford is primarily residential. These areas are located to the south east of East Maitland.*

---

### 4 aspect analysis summary

#### Identity

Thornton is largely identified with the industrial estate adjacent to the New England Highway, however a residential community is firmly established north of the rail line. This area has a mix of old and new residential areas.

#### Links

Thornton Train Station provides connectivity into Newcastle however, the predominant form of transport is the car. A bus service does move through the area which connects residents to other parts of Maitland. There is a strong green network of path and trails throughout Metford making it extremely permeable for pedestrians.

#### Social

The social activities are localised to the local school and sporting spaces. There is also the library and a community garden within the church grounds. Thornton Shopping Centre is a key location for potential activations.

#### Activities

The social activities are localised to the local school and sporting spaces.







### Key Places in Thornton and Metford

1		Maitland Christian School and Park	7		Thornton Library
2		Metford Playing Fields	8		Thornton Shopping Centre
3		Alan and Don Lawrence Sports Field			
4		Thornton Public School			
5		Thornton Park			
6		Metford Primary School and Hunter River Community School			

### Legend

	Northern Rail Line
	New England Highway
	Green Corridor - Paths and Trails
	Metford and Thornton Train Station

## 6 RURAL & OUTLYING VILLAGES

*The urban centres of Maitland are surrounded by rural villages and outlying communities.*

---

### 4 aspect analysis summary

#### Identity

Maitland's outlying areas are predominately rural in character. The flood plains and open spaces (opposed to the river) which surround the urban centres give the area its identity and character.

#### Links

The perceptions of connectivity within the LGA are mixed. To some members of the community each rural village is remote and disconnected - often described as islands. While to others the villages are close together and within a short distance of the major centres. The need for pedestrian and cycle connectivity was generally agreed by all.

#### Social

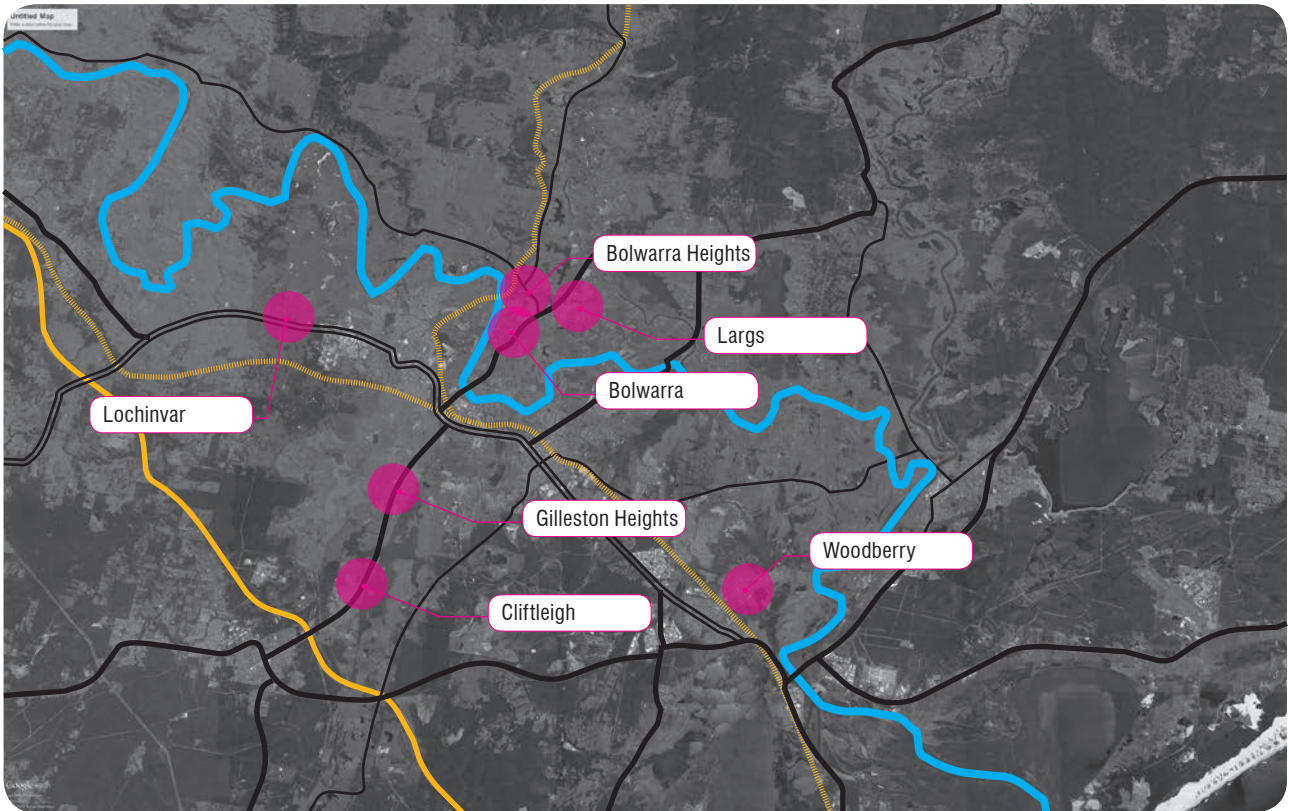
The social activities of these areas are centred on the local pubs and parks (for sporting events).

#### Activities





Sport is the predominate activity within the local parks. Generally people will travel to urban areas within Maitland to participate in other activities.







### Legend

-  New England Highway
-  Hunter River
-  Northern Rail Line
-  Rural communities

### 3.4 PLACE ACTIVATION ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The place activation assessments have provided insight into places that could accommodate place activations in Maitland.

The assessments demonstrate that Maitland's has a diverse range of places - from urban centres and suburban areas through to rural communities. These places are of different densities and scales which lends to a range of activations.

Within many of the maps, a core activation precinct has been identified. These are spaces where it is imagined that the majority of activities will take place. In some maps, a core activation precinct has not been identified. This is because the location does not have a distinguishable core, therefore potential place activation locations are spread out over a broad area. These are largely suburban and rural areas.

#### 3.4.1 Key Priority Areas for Place Activation

Three tiers of priority have been identified for place activation in Maitland. These priorities identify the places where Council will have their greatest involvement.

##### **Key Priority Areas**

Central Maitland will be the key focus for Council. This is due to a range of factors, including the community's priority on the revitalisation of Central Maitland, the availability of existing infrastructure, existing visitation and marketing. This existing framework will allow for Quick Wins with the greatest impact. These activations can become case studies for Secondary and Tertiary Areas.

##### **Secondary Areas**

East Maitland, Morpeth and Rutherford comprise the secondary area. Council will still be involved in these areas however, these areas will be less of a priority. Council may propose projects for these areas however, there is an expectation that the community will be actively involved in delivering activations in these places.

##### **Tertiary Areas/All other areas**

In other areas including suburbs of Metford, Thornton and the rural villages, Council will largely be looking to the community to drive projects. The community will be encouraged to identify and plan for place activations with the guidance of Council.





*"The Jetty at Morpeth -  
Picturesque, feels a little bit  
magic"*

*Community engagement participant*





*"I discovered Walka Water Works when I first moved to Maitland. It's an amazing place and amazingly under-used. It has: history, nature, community spaces, bike path but its nearly always deserted"*  
Community engagement participant



# THE PLACE ACTIVATION FRAMEWORK

The place activation framework is composed of two parts:

- 1 The Guiding Principle
- 2 Place Activation Goals
- 3 Place Activation Priorities

Together, these elements provide the framework for activations in Maitland.

The framework can be used by a place activation curator, whether it is Council, a private consultant or a community member, to plan and envision a place activation project.

## PLACE ACTIVATION GOALS

- 1 **CONNECTIONS**  
Create connections between businesses, the community, corporate partners and Council
- 2 **COLLABORATION**  
Establish a framework for a simpler process that enables Council to work with the community a business
- 3 **IMPETUS**  
Create a framework that allows Council and the community to develop Quick Win projects
- 4 **QUALITY OF LIFE**  
Enhance the quality of life of the community and those who visit Maitland
- 5 **FLEXIBLE**  
Create a strategy that is capable of meeting the needs of different sites, groups and locations
- 6 **HOTSPOT**  
Establish Maitland as a hotspot of daily activity and excitement

## THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

### *A positive approach and an open mind*

It's natural for people to be drawn to those who are friendly and interesting. We find joy in their company. And so it is with communities. Some can seem little more than dull mechanisms to provide basic services. We drive through these places. We don't stay. But other towns are different. An exciting town - an activated town - is more. The unique spirit of its public domain draws visitors and investors. They bring business and wealth. For those who call it home, they improve the quality of life.

Achieving an 'activated' town is not a straight forward formula. It can't just be plucked from the experience of other places. It involves risk taking and mistakes will be made. Indeed, some activation proposals may at first seem contrary to the norm. But we will learn what works for our city – without just automatically ruling things in or ruling things out. Maitland's Place Activation Strategy is about Council and the community moving ahead with a positive approach and an open mind to work through the processes that will allow our place activation projects to move ahead smoothly and successfully.

After all – we all stand to gain.

# SECRET MAITLAND

*Celebrate the hidden gems of Maitland for residents and visitors alike. Place Activation projects can explore the tangible and intangible qualities of Secret Maitland.*

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Establish place activations that encourage locals to gain a new and deeper understanding of Maitland - achieved through exploration and treading new ground. Getting to know your own backyard. e.g exploring a laneway or take a new path to work.  
*Potential Pillars: Interpretation, Repurpose, After Dark*
- Create place activation projects that explore the history of Maitland and demonstrates the importance of Maitland in Australia's history.  
*Potential Pillars: Interpretation, Repurpose, Street Art*
- Help the public see Maitland from a different perspective. Open Maitland to the public and reveal spaces and places not normally accessible throughout the year.  
*Potential Pillars: Interpretation, Repurpose, After Dark*

### Long Term

- Establish a Secret Maitland year round program which can be integrated into festivals/events, competitions and the like.  
*Potential Pillars: Interpretation, Repurpose, After Dark*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Educational Institutions
- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Heritage Groups
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community Organisations

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/Policies

- Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Plan
- High Street Masterplan and Laneways Action Plan

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Heritage Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- Splash Adelaide 'Story City' and 'Feast on Foot' (pg. 12)
- Sydney Open (pg 13.)



# TURN ON THE LIGHTS ENLIVEN MAITLAND AFTER DARK

*Encourage regular temporary night time activations which seed a night time economy  
which supports local businesses and makes places safer.*

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Encourage local businesses to work together and establish or encourage temporary activations which could generate an after hours economy.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, Street Art, After Dark*
- Support a pop up food and music culture. Food and music are key attractors and a powerful activation tool. After hours, these temporary activations, could be the catalyst to draw people into inactive areas.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, After Dark*
- Reinterpret public spaces throughout Maitland. For instance, temporarily convert a carpark into a park or entertainment venue.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, After Dark*

### Long Term

- Where a night time activation has been successful, investigate opportunities to install permanent infrastructure such as furniture, art, lighting and signage.  
*Potential Pillars: After Dark*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community Organisations

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services
- Infrastructure and Works

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/ Policies

- High Street Masterplan and Laneways Action Plan
- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015
- Special Events Policy

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Multicultural Arts and Festival Grants
- Art Grants
- Community Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- Sydney, Melbourne & Brisbane Noodle Markets (pg.14)
- 'Colour the Street' Nambour (pg. 12)
- Food Truck Park (pg. 14)

# WELCOME THE RIVER

*Strengthen the connection with the Hunter River by encouraging place activations that draw people to it and create interactions.*

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Give people a reason to leave High Street and explore the river's edge. This could involve a series of place activation projects within the laneways that lead to the river precinct.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, Street Art, Interpretation*
- Increase the range of activities by the river's edge such as exercise.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose*
- Activate the Lorn side of the river through activities that encourage the use of the water and the beach.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose*

### Long Term

- Where a riverside activation has been successful (where appropriate), investigate opportunities to install permanent infrastructure to make the activation part of daily life such as furniture, exercise equipment and signage.  
*Potential Pillars: Street Art, Repurpose*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Educational Institutions
- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Heritage Groups
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community Organisations
- Office of Environment and Heritage

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/Policies

- Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Plan
- High Street Masterplan and Laneways Action Plan
- Special Events Policy
- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015
- Queens Wharf and Lorn River Bank Master Plans
- Office of Environment and Heritage limitations
- Maitland LEP

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy
- Signage Strategy for Central Maitland

### Funding Opportunities

- Art Grants
- Health and Fitness Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- 'Colour the Street' Nambour (pg. 12)



# SEED THE CITY

## THE EVERYDAY, NOT EVERY OTHER DAY

*Encourage activations that are for the typical day - not just the special occasion or annual event.*

### KEY INITIATIVES

#### Quick Wins

- Create pop up's that transform the streets of Maitland and the way people interact - even if only for one day.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, Street Art, Interpretation*
- Create activations that cater to both parents and their children.  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, Street Art, Interpretation*
- Use place activation's to draw people between key places such as bridging the gap between the Maitland Regional Art Gallery and The Levee in High Street and the East Maitland train station and Melbourne Street  
*Potential Pillars: Repurpose, Street Art, After Dark*
- Plug into the existing events calendar to leverage on the increase in visitors to Maitland. Give people more to do and a reason to extend their visit to Maitland.  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

#### Long Term

- Make the successful everyday activations permanent and develop the partnerships created during the process (refer to page 11 Food Truck example)  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

#### EXTERNAL

- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community Organisations
- Recreation Groups/ Sporting Clubs

#### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

### CONSIDERATIONS

#### Existing Projects/Studies/ Policies

- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015
- Special Events Policy

#### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy

#### Funding Opportunities

- Multicultural Arts and Festival Grants
- Art Grants

- Community Grants
- Small Business/Start Up Grants

#### Best Practice Examples

- Portland Food Trucks (pg. 14)
- Street Art example (pg. 15)

# UNIQUE MAITLAND

Create a place activation program that creates a unified identity for Maitland, while reinforcing each unique place.

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Create place activation projects that work across all areas of Maitland, not just specific places.  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*
- Promote Maitland's local and unique food culture through place activation projects.  
*Potential Pillars: Pop up, Street Art, Interpretation*
- Keep the place activation conversation going by holding additional place activation roadshow's - to make place activation familiar and recognisable in Maitland.  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*
- 'Talk up Maitland' - create a 'talk positively about Maitland' program that supports and integrates into the #MYMAITLAND program. The intent is to create a positive relationship with the area and promotes it to a wider audience. *Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

### Long Term

- Develop a Directional Signposting Strategy that considers place activations.  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Educational Institutions
- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Heritage Groups
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community and Government Organisations

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/Policies

- Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan
- Special Events Policy
- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Art Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- 'Colour the Street' Nambour (pg. 12)
- Splash Adelaide 'Story City' and 'Feast on Foot' (pg. 12)
- Sydney Open (pg. 13)



# RETHINKING EVERYDAY SPACES

Rethink the use of public spaces in Maitland. Consider how they could be transformed into another use.

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Think outside the box with regards to Maitland public spaces. Consider how a public space could serve a different purpose and test that purpose through place activations.  
*Potential Pillars: Pop up, Street Art, Interpretation*
- There are large areas of open space in Maitland but these spaces are not well used or known about. Hold place activations within these spaces to show these spaces are valued.  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

### Place Activation Target - Long Term

- Improve the infrastructure in open spaces/public spaces based on the outcomes of place activations and new uses/user groups held in these spaces  
*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community and Government Organisations
- Recreation Groups/ Sporting Clubs

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/ Policies

- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015
- Special Events Policy
- Community Garden Policy

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Multicultural Arts and Festival Grants

- Health and Fitness Grants
- Arts Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- PARKing Day (pg. 13)
- Food Truck Park (pg. 14)
- Colour the Streets (pg. 12)

# KEEP CALM & EXPERIMENT

Encourage experimentation within the public realm through place activation projects.

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Create 'experimental zones' during the early implementation phase of place activation in Maitland. These areas will be testing grounds for place activations. These experimental zone to be located within Priority 1 areas.

These areas will be selected for the following reasons:

- strong visual presence for the wider community
- biggest impact on the local economy and support by the local business community
- no road approvals required
- can be undertaken using existing Council policies and approvals

*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

### Long Term

- Retain the 'experimental zones' however, increase place activations to the entire LGA (subject to approval by Maitland Council).

*Potential Pillars: All Pillars*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Educational Institutions
- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community and Government Organisations

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/Policies

- Special Events Policy

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Art Grants
- Community Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- Splash Adelaide 'Story City' and 'Feast on Foot' (pg. 12)



# UPSKILL MAITLAND

Use place activations to upskill the community by learning a new skill and enhancing personal development.

## KEY INITIATIVES

### Quick Wins

- Use place activations to help the community develop a new skill. This skill could be for professional improvement or for leisure.  
*Potential Pillars: Pop up, Street Art, Interpretation*
- Establish a volunteer program for place activation participation. This will reduce the cost of activation and create the opportunity for community members to share their skills or learn a new one.  
*Potential Pillars: Pop up, Street Art, Interpretation*

### Long Term

- Develop a register of mentors for future place activations.  
*Potential Pillars: N/A*

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

### EXTERNAL

- Local Businesses and Property Owners
- Artists and Creative Industries
- Community and Government Organisations
- Recreation Groups/ Sporting Clubs

### COUNCIL

- Marketing and Communications
- Development and Environment
- Community and Recreation Services

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Existing Projects/Studies/ Policies

- Buskers Code of Conduct 2015
- Special Events Policy
- Community Garden Policy

### Required Council Policies and Procedures

- Maitland Place Activation Policy
- Food Truck Policy

### Funding Opportunities

- Educational Grants

### Best Practice Examples

- PARKing Day (pg. 13)
- Sydney Open (pg. 13)



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# IMPLEMENTATION

## 7.1 AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

To deliver this place activation strategy for Maitland, an enabling environment needs to be created.

This is an environment that acknowledges that its okay to:

- take risks
- be playful
- experiment
- learn through failure

There will need to be changes to Council policy and processes in order to facilitate place activations quickly and efficiently in Maitland.

Although, some place activations may be possible through existing mechanisms, new policies and processes will be required.

The Place activation delivery strategies are proposed on the following pages to enable this process to take place.

### 7.1.2 Create an Interim Place Activation Framework

*Create an **interim place activation program** that utilises existing council processes and policies to get projects moving.*

- Identify existing policies and programs, within Council, that could be used to facilitate place activation projects in the short term. These policies can be used until the appropriate policy framework is established
- Establish 'Experimental Zones' within Maitland that will hold place activations during the interim period. This ensures that place activations are not diluted across the LGA and enable outcomes to be evaluated.

### 7.1.3 Create a place activation framework, within Maitland City Council

*Create a policy framework within Maitland Council, that facilitates place activation projects.*

- Create a clear and simple implementation process that allows for both Council and the community to undertake a place activation project.
- Place activation projects are defined as projects quick to conceive, implement and deliver. A fast Council approval process is needed to make this possible.

- The cost of approvals should be in line with the quick and fast philosophy of place activation. An approval cost/fee that out weighs the cost of the project will hold back potential projects.

### 7.1.4 Celebrate Local

*Continue collaborating with the community; a process which began with the place activation engagement process.*

- The engagement workshops connected individuals and groups eager to be involved in place activations across Maitland. Facilitate ongoing collaboration workshops and activities with interested individuals and businesses
- Establish a 'Nominate Your Activations' program which allows for each precinct (identified in the place assessments) to support and develop their own unique place activation project. As a first step, the nominated activations could be held within the 'Experimental Zones'
- Utilise existing volunteer groups to help facilitate place activation programs in Maitland
- Encourage and provide guidance to local businesses to be part of Maitland's place activation program.
- Encourage the community to deliver place activation projects in Maitland. As Council has a limited budget and resources, community involvement will increase the frequency of place activations.

## 7.2 THE MAITLAND PLACE ACTIVATION ACTION PLAN

Supporting this strategy is the Maitland Place Activation Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies a range of potential projects that may be implemented to help deliver each of the eight priorities identified in Section six.

It's important to understand that these initiatives may not be all undertaken but represent a living list that may be added to or revised from time to time depending on opportunities that may present themselves.

Each project provides an indicative budget, timeframe and identifies stakeholders who can help in its delivery.

The projects will be used by Council to deliver place activation projects and provide the community with ideas and suggestions on where to start.

### 7.2.1 Resourcing Place Activation

The Priorities in Section six identify potential partners and collaborators. These are organisations and individuals who may help deliver place activations, alternatively they may be part of the approval process.

The following have been identified as potential partners and collaborators. Each Priority lists potential collaborators and partners specific to that project.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
Educational Institutions	Schools, University of Newcastle, TAFE
Local Businesses	Social enterprises, Farmers/food producers
Property Owners	Commercial real estate agents
Heritage Groups	Historical Society, Genealogical Group, Morpeth Museum
Artists and Creative Industries	Music and performing arts, Film, TV, radio, design, visual arts and digital content
Recreation Groups/ Sporting Clubs	Sporting and recreation clubs
Government Agencies	State and Federal Government and other Statutory Agencies and Authorities
Community Organisations	Service Clubs, Youth Groups, Seniors Groups, Neighbourhood groups, Churches, Disability groups, CALD groups and Indigenous groups

KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
Development and Environment	Heritage and Health, Environment, Planning
Community and Recreation Services	Library Services, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Community Planning
Marketing and Communications	City and Visitor Economy, Events, Marketing and Communications, Gaol
Infrastructure and Works	Assets, Traffic and Design

Figure 8: List of external and internal stakeholders



### 7.2.2 Funding of place activations

Council has identified a budget allocation of one million dollars over seven years for place activation.

The budget for place activations is allocated as follows:

Financial Year	Allocation (Ex Gst)
2014/15	\$140,000
2015/16	\$230,000
2016/17	\$140,000
2017/18	\$210,000
2018/19	\$140,000
2019/20	\$140,000

However, for place activation to grow and develop, funding for projects should come from both this and a range of other sources.

Funds could be secured from public and private sectors.

Furthermore, funding does not need to be limited to place activation style funding such as public art. Creatives and applicants should look at what the activation is trying to achieve and seek funding down that route. For instance, there is a wide range of health and wellbeing grants available. One of the goals of place activation is to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Lastly, funding does not necessarily have to be limited to budget allocation, it may be:

- advice/expertise
- hands to help
- permissions/approvals

Examples of public and private funding that could be sought by Council and the community include:

Public	Private
Federal Grants	Private Development
State Grants	Local Community Partnerships
Local Authority Grants	Artist Lead Funding
	Health companies and banking institutions
	Crowd sourcing
	Fundraising

Figure 9: List of public and private grants





# EVALUATION

## 8.1 Evaluating the success of place activation

*Place Activation is sneaky - success won't look the same every time*

It is common to test the success of project however, it is just as important to understand a projects failures. From failure we learn and grow - a factor of considerable importance in place activation.

Place activation has no rule book. Place activation is about experimentation and therefore requires an evaluation methodology that embraces experimentation.

Two evaluation tools can be used - Quantitative Tools and Qualitative Tools.

**Quantitative Tools** identify the how many's, the how big's of a project. It is easy to measure and is tangible.

**Qualitative Tools** explores perceptions, awareness and reactions. These are less easy to measure and are intangible.

Both tools are important individually however, become more valuable when reviewed together.

The table below identifies the types of tools:

QUANTITATIVE / TANGIBLE	
Comparison Tests	Test a project space before and after - to understand the effect/results of the activation project.
Data Collection	Record the numbers of attendees/time frame
Social Signs	Record increase or decrease in negative social activities such as graffiti and vandalism
Budget analysis	Review the estimate cost against the actual cost of the project. This will assist with future planning. Determine why variations may have occurred.
Formal research	Undertake formal research with participants and attendees of initiatives

## 8.2 How often to evaluate?

Regular evaluation is key to creating great places. By understanding what worked and what didn't work, future place activations can be continually improved.

Evaluations can take place at any time however, the following can be used as a guide.

1. High level annual evaluation of all place activation projects
2. Evaluation of noted successful projects
3. Evaluation of noted unsuccessful projects

QUALITATIVE / INTANGIBLE	
Observations	Watch what people do,where they go and how they act. Are they engaging/ participating or do they shy away
Case Study	Select a project and undertake an in-depth study. It could be a success or a failure.
Working Groups	Use a focus group to review a project. The focus group should be cross a wide audience and comprise 3 - 4 people.

Figure 10: Examples of evaluation methods

