08 REGIONAL CENTRES
Throughout the NSW North Coast, regional centres are located in coastal and inland settings. Whilst their physical characteristics may differ, there are other aspects that are consistent between regional centre settlements.

These centres provide goods, services and employment to people from surrounding settlements as well as to their own growing populations.

Regional centres on the North Coast also provide infrastructure for tourism, tertiary education, medical facilities, entertainment and industries not otherwise supported in the smaller settlements of the region.

The evolving density and extent of development in regional centres illustrate growth and increasing population.

This growth creates a need for well-planned transport infrastructure, public open space and high quality buildings to support the needs of existing and future residents.
This regional centre is sited on the alluvial flood plain at the confluence of a coastal river and its tributary. The settlement serves the surrounding agricultural settlements of the North Coast hinterland. It was established to support the timber-getting and dairy industries which relied on the surrounding temperate forests and rich alluvial soil.
8.2 REGIONAL CENTRE ONE - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This major regional centre is located within the flood plain valley of a coastal river, inland from the coast, with much of the settlement on low lying, flood prone land. Dense forests, the foothills of the surrounding mountains and the river define the boundaries of this settlement.

Within the regional centre there is an extensive green band along the river edge that is largely not visually accessible from the town. Many formal public open spaces provide sport and recreational facilities for the community.

Key landscape elements of the major regional centre include:

— The river as an important landscape focus for the settlement
— Extensive public open space and well established private gardens; the surrounding landscape is visible throughout the town
— The sense of a valley landscape is strongly conveyed from many vantage points within the settlement

Buildings are generally set back from the river edge with an address to the river, which is a natural focus to the settlement.
Many high quality formal public open spaces are evident throughout the centre.

The valley landscape setting is visible at the end of many streets within the settlement.

Well established residential gardens of local and imported species contribute to the landscape character of the regional centre.
8.3 REGIONAL CENTRE ONE - STREETSCAPE

The street hierarchy in this major regional centre is well defined. Within the commercial centre, the streetscape is formally treated with wide streets, formed kerbs and gutters, central parking medians, formal landscaping and consistent building setbacks. The development of the town has resulted in varied streetscapes.

Residential streets are also diverse in character, ranging from more formal kerb and gutters and pedestrian paths to the verge, to informal with grassed verges and drainage swales. Residential streets that are adjacent to formal recreational facilities generally offer formal road, stormwater and footpath treatments.

The key elements of the streetscapes in the major regional centre include:

— Straight, gridded streets on flat topography, which reveal views to surrounding mountains
— Mature street planting to the town centre and throughout the residential streets
— Main streets that provide space for outdoor dining
— Some less formal residential streets with unformed edges, grassed verges and drainage swales with mature planting
— Typically wide main streets with parallel or angle parking to either side often with a centrally landscaped median
A wide, mixed use street dense with street planting

Wide footpaths and high quality public domain encourage outdoor dining

Informal residential street with grassed verge, drainage swale and mature street planting; private residential gardens with mature local and imported planting
8.4 REGIONAL CENTRE ONE - BUILDINGS

The range of buildings in the central business district reflects the role of this regional centre. Building types such as cathedrals, commercial offices, hospitals, public administration, cultural facilities and tertiary education institutions are all evident within the settlement.

Buildings within the commercial centre are typically between one and three storeys. Buildings are generally of high quality masonry construction and vary in architectural style according to purpose. Otherwise, the original commercial centre includes shop top developments with awnings to kerb, providing a continuous covered pedestrian path along the street. Some commercial buildings are separate from the town centre and scattered throughout the urban settlement serving residential areas.

The residential buildings reflect the warm temperate climatic conditions of the area. There is a mix of lightweight and masonry construction. The temperate climate allows for many varied building types although elevated lightweight housing is common in the older areas. The density of housing decreases away from the commercial centre.

Key building elements in the major regional centre include:

— A diverse range of building typologies in this centre illustrates the role and importance of this regional centre
— Buildings are high quality, built to last, reflecting the investment made in a regional centre
— A diverse range of housing with original residences typically lightweight, elevated and often with a garage underneath

Regional centres are a setting for high quality buildings and the highest order of cultural facilities
Regional Centres

Traditional dwellings constructed of lightweight materials and elevated to avoid flooding are important to the character of this settlement.

High quality building with cultural use

Traditional lightweight elevated housing with garage underneath

Two storey masonry public buildings

Traditional dwellings constructed of lightweight materials and elevated to avoid flooding are important to the character of this settlement.
Higher density buildings distinguish the commercial centre from residential areas.

A continuous covered way provides pedestrian protection in the town centre.

Higher density buildings provide opportunity for a more diverse range of residential and commercial accommodation.

Wide road reserve and median planting reflect the importance of the main street within a regional centre.
There is a distinctive commercial centre in this settlement with formal north-south grid; this grid is bounded by natural features. The settlement has developed around natural features such as creeks and mangroves which are still evident within the township.

Generous public open space exists along the foreshore and throughout the centre. Recent higher density development is concentrated along the coast line.

Residential development maintains the north-south grid as in the town centre.

Situated on the coast at the mouth of a river, this regional centre was established early in the history of NSW as a penal colony and over time has developed as a river port supporting forestry, agriculture and more recently tourism.
8.7  REGIONAL CENTRE TWO - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This major regional centre is situated on the coast at the mouth of a coastal river. The surrounding natural environment is characterised by rocky headlands and beaches along the coast and mangroves near the river.

The regional centre has pockets of remnant vegetation which are linked by green corridors along ridgelines, creeks and headlands. The urban environment is set back from the coastal edge and separated by a main perimeter road and formal public space.

Key landscape elements of the major regional centre include:

— Extensive natural reserves in pockets and corridors traversing the settlement
— Strong visual connections to both the river and the coastline
— Local and imported planting throughout, with distinctive Norfolk Island pines along the coastal edge
— Formal and informal public open space to coastal and river edges
— Buildings are generally set back from the coastline with a main road and public space defining the edge of the settlement

The regional centre is sited along beaches, over headlands and into the surrounding hinterland; the coast is a critical landscape feature.
Regional Centres

Pockets of indigenous vegetation within the settlement contribute to character.

As the settlement rises over headlands and into surrounding foothills, views of the ocean give a strong sense of the landscape.

Formal planting of palms in key commercial streets creates a distinctive sense of place.
8.8 REGIONAL CENTRE TWO - STREETSCAPE

There is a complex, well defined street hierarchy within this regional centre. The commercial centre has a formal north south grid pattern bounded by the river and the harbour. The outlying residential street grid is less formal, responding to hilly topography, the coastline, river and creeks.

The commercial centre has formalised two way carriageways with defined parking to either side, formed kerbs and gutters, landscaping and central medians. Building setbacks are generally consistent with most buildings providing covered footpaths with awnings to kerb.

The majority of residential streets have formal carriageway treatments, with kerbs and gutters and reasonably consistent building setbacks incorporating generous landscaping. The more informal layout of these streets provides the opportunity for dwellings to take advantage of view corridors to the hinterland beyond, the coastline and the rivers. The streets have mature, dense planting often screening the built form.

Key elements of the streets in the major regional centre include:

— Formal grid pattern in town centre providing view corridors to the surrounding natural landscape
— Typically wide main streets with parking either side and often a central landscaped median
— Street grids and hilly topography providing views to the mountains, coast and river
— Typically, mature exotic and indigenous planting in residential and commercial areas

A wide main street with high quality public domain improvements including formalised planting beds, defined parking bays and a median incorporating significant palm trees
Informal residential street with varying treatments to either side, formed kerb and gutter, footpaths and grassed verges; generous building setbacks and mature vegetation create a streetscape dominated by trees.

The effect of a gridded street pattern as it runs over undulating topography is to reveal the land form and views.

Commercial street with central parking and mature indigenous planting in median.
8.9 REGIONAL CENTRE TWO: BUILDINGS

There are a wide variety of buildings in this major regional centre, illustrating the successive phases of development of the settlement and its regional supportive role. Civic and cultural buildings and medium to high density accommodation characterises the town centre and some other key areas of the settlement.

The buildings on commercial streets range in size, typically, from one to three storeys. These range in form from traditional shop-top attached buildings to freestanding masonry civic and cultural buildings. Several high end and medium density apartment buildings, some with active ground floor access, also exist along the coastline and within the town centre.

The outskirts of the regional centre display other smaller neighbourhood retail centres. There are also several schools and a regional hospital supporting the regional centre.

The residential density is highest near the coast, with a range of multi-storey residential apartment buildings overlooking the beach. Residential buildings reduce in density and scale further away from the town centre and coast. Despite the scale and density of buildings in the regional centre, the settlement has a close connection to the natural environment.

Key building elements in the major regional centre include:

- Commercial buildings in the regional centre are typically one to three storeys in height; some masonry and attached, others of lightweight construction with awnings to the kerb edge
- High and medium density residential apartment buildings are prominent within the commercial centre and along the coastline
- Other residential housing is varied in construction and style but includes both masonry and lightweight materials
- Many well maintained, traditional and heritage buildings are evident throughout this regional centre
High density residential apartments are a feature of this regional centre. They are typically sited overlooking public open space at the coastal edge.

A high quality commercial building in the commercial centre that contributes greatly to the character of the settlement.

Five level residential apartment building adjacent to extensive public open space.
8.10 REGIONAL CENTRE TWO - SUMMARY

The road and formal public space provide a mediating zone between the urban and natural environments.

Higher density development to the coastal edge with a consistent building setback clearly defines the edge of the settlement.

Ample planting within the front gardens provides a strong streetscape appropriate to all buildings.

Residential Park Edge Street

Approx. 23m
Road reserve
6m
Setback