



Frequently Asked Questions

The Georges River is one of the most important urban river systems in Australia. Where it meets the Georges River local government area (LGA), the river expands to create an intricate network of bays more resembling a coastal inlet than a river. These qualities are currently protected by the Georges River Council through the following policy tools:

- Land use zoning
- Provisions for Riparian Land (riverside land) and foreshore, and
- The Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA)

The FSPA forms the basis of this Character Study, in which options to characterise, protect and maintain local character are explored. The aim of the study is to create tangible, evidence-based protections while allowing for future development that enhances biodiversity and scenic values.

| FAQ | Answer |
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| What is the difference between the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper (2018) and this Foreshore Scenic Character Study (2021)? | <p>The Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper (2018) included a number of key matters, including identification of the values of the Georges River and its foreshore, identification of key threats to these values and identification of emerging directions for future local planning measures. Based on consideration of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, Council proposed to maintain the existing provisions for Riparian Land and the Foreshore Area but make some changes to the FSPA.</p> <p>Following this, the Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study (2021) was commissioned to focus on the role, extent and zoning of the FSPA. This study resulted in the recommendation to reduce the mapped extent of the FSPA to areas of highest sensitivity and significance, and to adopt a new Local Character Overlay in other areas of high significance. In addition, a biodiversity study for the whole local government area was conducted at the same time to identify areas of high terrestrial biodiversity significance.</p> |
| Why do a study? (Character Review + Biodiversity) | <p>The intent of this Study was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on an existing technical evidence base to add to the existing body of knowledge and help inform future planning measures by Council. • To explore the role, mapped extent and zoning of the FSPA in response to the resolution made by the Local Planning Panel in June 2020. • To create a platform from which to further develop and refine the key directions of the FSPA. • To respect community time, energy, and input. |
| What is the role of the FSPA? | <p>The role of the FSPA is to protect the scenic character of the Georges River foreshore. Key issues with the existing FSPA are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current mapped extent of the FSPA is too large, including land that cannot reasonably be related to the foreshore. • Development in some locations under the FSPA is unlikely to result in significant scenic character impacts. • The 'Scenic Value' of the area has not been clearly defined <p>Currently, the scenic character of the FSPA is not well articulated in local planning policy. This restricts potential development, without achieving the best result for the area or community in terms of scenic value.</p> |
| What are the key recommendations of the Study? | <p>The key recommendations of the Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the mapped extent of the FSPA. • Update the objectives and controls for the FSPA to ensure a clear and specific focus on scenic character. • Provide details on the scenic character in the FSPA |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a local character overlay for the Bush Suburban, Garden Suburban - Naturalistic and Rivers Edge - Contemporary local character areas • Further articulate the preferred future character for each of the identified areas • Council to consider excluding the FSPA and local character areas from the Low Rise Housing Diversity Code • Maintain existing zoning for the FSPA and the local character areas while adopting the proposed additional restrictions on subdivision for lot size and dual occupancies, as well as requirements for greater landscaped area and design excellence. |
| Why is this so complicated? | The complexity of the Georges River foreshore means that the FSPA is not well suited to a 'one size fits all' policy – unlike zoning or height which is easily measurable, it must be considered on merit. |
| What is 'local character'? | Local character is what makes a neighbourhood distinctive and is the identity of a place. It encompasses the way the place looks and feels. It is created by a combination of land, people, the built environment, history, culture and tradition including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and looks at how they interact to make a distinctive character of an area. Local character is distinctive, it differentiates one area from another. |
| What is not Local Character? | <p>Local character is not the same as heritage. Heritage is distinct from local character, although there are often common elements between a conservation area and a place with a valued or distinctive local character. In this study, references to local character are not areas to be preserved; it is not an alternative form of heritage listing where an area does not change or evolve.</p> <p>Local character is not the same as amenity. Amenity is about the pleasantness and good functioning of an area. Local character is about its sense of place and community meaning. Regardless of the character of an area there are standards of residential amenity that apply to all residential development. These basic amenity standards include overlooking, overshadowing and solar access.</p> |
| What if my property has been included in a Local Character Area but doesn't fit the description? | Local Character is defined by the culmination of a variety of key attributes including building style, vegetation, topography and street layout that together form an overarching character of an area or neighbourhood. While there may be some cases where an individual home doesn't entirely fit the description of a Local Character Area, it will likely reflect some of the key attributes that contribute to the character of the area. |
| What is 'scenic character'? | Scenic character is related to local character, but is different in a key way. While every area has a local character – good or otherwise – only some areas have a scenic character. Scenic character is a measure of attractiveness and derives from a combination of attributes that people typically like, such as the land and water interface. We found that our foreshore – which is the area that has a strong visual connection to the Georges River – has scenic character. |
| How do we determine if land has a strong visual connection to the Georges River? | This study utilised technology including GIS and LiDAR data (factoring in elevation, existing buildings and vegetation) to determine if and to what extent views to Georges River are afforded. |
| What does sensitivity and significance mean? | <p>The sensitivity of an area considers the total number of values that are found to be present within a character area. These values relate to environmental, economic, and social attributes of an area. A higher number of values present within an area will affect their ability to accommodate increased levels of change. Character areas with a greater number of identified values are more sensitive. Conversely, character areas with fewer identified values are less sensitive, and therefore more likely able to accommodate increased change.</p> <p>To determine the significance of a character area, it is assessed against the following key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How representative or illustrative is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context? • Is the character area (and its attributes) instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature or local policy? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context? • How uncommon, rare or endangered is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context? |