

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

September 2025

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Factsheet

Image: Artists impression of proposed development.

## Project Overview

### What is being proposed?

Three apartment buildings with a total of 104 homes across 4 levels, plus underground parking. The proposal also includes improvements to the Hawks Nest Golf Club car park, new landscaping, and a sewer pumping station that will be owned and managed by MidCoast Council.

### Where will it be located?

The site is at Lot 1 DP1234229, Sanderling Avenue, Hawks Nest, next to the Hawks Nest Golf Club and close to Bennetts Beach and local shops.

### Why this location?

The land is zoned for medium density housing, which provides for developments such as the one proposed subject to development consent. It is close to shops, services, and recreation areas, meaning residents can access what they need without relying heavily on cars.

### What does the development include?

The development will include three apartment buildings (up to four storeys) providing 104 apartments with a mix of studios, 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed and 4-bed apartments. It will also include basement parking for residents and visitors as well as shared resident facilities including landscaped gardens, pools, gyms, and BBQ areas. The apartments will be broken down into the following configurations:

- Total apartments = 104
- Studios = 12
- 1-bed = 6
- 2-bed = 51
- 3+-bed = 35

### Will MidCoast Council miss out on rates revenue if the development only has one ratepayer, like the retirement villages in Tea Gardens?

No. The 104 apartments will be on individual strata titles, with each unit owner required to pay council rates. This means Council will receive rates from 104 separate ratepayers.



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## Project Overview

### When will construction begin?

Construction is likely to begin early to mid-2027.

### What is the construction timeline?

Construction of Sanderling Avenue will commence with the underground parking commencing first, then the apartment buildings will follow. Construction is likely to take about 2 years.

### What are the benefits of the development?

The development will provide:

- more housing choice for the Hawks Nest-Tea Gardens area
- jobs during construction and support for local businesses
- new communal spaces and facilities for residents.

### Will the project be for permanent residents or short-term rentals only?

The proposed development on Sanderling Avenue is designed to provide long-term housing for permanent residents, not short-term holiday accommodation. While the R3 – Medium Density Residential zoning under the MidCoast Local Environmental Plan (LEP) allows a range of residential uses, the project has been purposefully planned to deliver stable homes for permanent residents.

This focus supports the NSW Government's housing strategy, which seeks to increase the supply of long-term rental and owner-occupied housing in areas where demand is high. The intent is to strengthen the local community by creating more permanent housing opportunities rather than short-term stays.

This approach aligns with the NSW Government's broader housing strategy, which encourages the supply of long-term rental and owner-occupied housing, particularly in areas experiencing housing pressure.

## Approvals process and EIS

### What is the approval process?

The proposal will be assessed as a State Significant Development (SSD) by the Housing Delivery Authority, supported by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI). This means the project will not be assessed by MidCoast Council, although Council will provide input as a referral agency.

As part of the process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared and placed on public exhibition. This gives the community the opportunity to review the proposal, provide feedback and make submissions before a decision is made.



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## Approvals process and EIS

### What is the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA)?

The Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) is a panel set up by the NSW Government in late 2024 to help fast-track approvals for large housing projects. It sits within the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

The HDA's role is to:

- review housing proposals submitted by developers through an Expression of Interest process
- decide which projects should be assessed as State Significant Development (SSD), sometimes alongside rezoning
- focus on projects that are large enough to make a real difference to housing supply – for example, usually worth more than \$60 million or around 100 homes in Sydney, and more than \$30 million or around 40 homes in regional NSW
- give preference to projects that can be built quickly, are well-located near services and infrastructure, provide more homes (including affordable housing) and have the capacity to get underway without delay.

### Why is the project being deemed as an SSD?

An application was made to the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) for the project to be considered under the State Significant Development (SSD) pathway. The HDA approved this in February 2025 and issued the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) in April 2025.

The SSD process includes:

- Requesting assessment requirements (SEARs) from the HDA
- Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Placing the EIS on public exhibition for community feedback
- Responding to submissions
- Assessment by the HDA/Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)
- A final decision by the Minister for Planning.

### What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

An EIS – or Environmental Impact Statement:

- Is a comprehensive report that looks at how a project might affect the people and environment.
- Is required for all State significant developments.
- Provides information on the economic, environmental and social impacts of the project.
- Helps the community, government agencies and the consent authority make informed submissions or decisions on the project.
- Covers things like traffic, biodiversity, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, visual impacts, and noise, and includes plans to avoid or reduce impacts.

### When can I read the Environmental Impact Statement?

The EIS will be lodged with the department in about a month's time and then be put on public exhibition that will allow community members to make submissions and have their say.



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## Ongoing engagement and consultation

### What is the consultation process?

Because the Sanderling Avenue project is being assessed as a State Significant Development (SSD), it must follow a clear consultation process set by the NSW Government. This means the community will have several chances to be involved and share their views.

Here's how the consultation works:

#### Early Engagement

1. Before the formal plans are submitted, the developer is encouraged to talk with local residents, Council, and other stakeholders to understand any concerns and help shape the proposal.

#### Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

2. The developer prepares a detailed report (called an EIS) that explains the project and its potential impacts. This report must also show how the community has been consulted so far and what feedback has been received.

#### Public Exhibition

3. Once the EIS is ready, it will be made available online for at least 28 days on the NSW Planning Portal. During this time, anyone can make a submission—including individuals, community groups and Council.

#### Responses to Feedback

4. After the exhibition period, the developer must respond to all submissions and explain how they've addressed the issues raised.

#### Ongoing Updates

5. If the project is approved, there may be further consultation during construction or operation, especially if conditions of approval require it.

This process ensures that the community's voice is considered at every key stage of the project.

### Will there be opportunities for community feedback?

Yes. Community feedback is welcomed throughout the planning and assessment process, including when the project is on exhibition. Updates will be provided during construction. Input helps identify local priorities and informs how impacts are managed.

### How will complaints be handled through construction?

A complaints register will be maintained. Residents will be given a contact point and all complaints will be logged, investigated, and responded to promptly.

### What is the role of Council and government agencies?

MidCoast Council is a stakeholder and will have the ability to review and comment on the project. The Housing Delivery Authority will assess and determine the outcome of the project. Both will continue to review the project and ensure commitments on safety, environment and community amenity are met.



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## Access

### **What will be the accessibility of the development once completed?**

The aims of accessibility legislation are achievable within the proposed development through accessible path of travel, accessible ramps, stairs, accessible car parking, accessible entrances, and doorways. All points of access have been assessed accordingly as equity and dignity are important aspects in the provision of access to buildings for all users.

### **What will the accessibility of the building be like for people with a disability?**

The design approach needs to maintain a high level of equity for people with disabilities and meet the performance requirements of the BCA (Building Code of Australia). The performance requirements adopt two main concepts in the provision of access for people with a disability being to the degree necessary and safe movement. Both concepts need to be achieved within the context of equitable and dignified access. The development will have accessible entrances to allow for wheelchair access, etc.

## Biodiversity and environment

### **What is the purpose of the biodiversity assessment?**

The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report assesses how the proposed development at Sanderling Avenue may affect local biodiversity and sets out ways to avoid, minimise and offset those impacts.

### **What kinds of biodiversity is present on the site?**

The study area is 1.49 hectares and includes 1.24 hectares of native vegetation in varying condition, along with 0.25 hectares of cleared or exotic vegetation. Two native plant community types were recorded: Coastal Sands Apple-Blackbutt Forest and Lower North Sand Swale Banksia Woodland.

The site does not contain hollow-bearing trees and has been affected by disturbance and encroachment of exotic species. While the vegetation still provides some ecological value and connection to surrounding habitat, it is in a degraded condition. Threatened species previously recorded in the area include the New Holland Mouse, Grey-headed Flying-fox, Little Bentwing-bat, and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

### **Will existing vegetation be retained?**

No, trees within the development will not be retained. New planting as part of the overall landscape plan will use native canopy and understory species where possible to reinforce the coastal setting and provide habitat, including koala feed trees.

### **Were any habitat tress identified within the site?**

No, there were no habitat tress were identified within the site.



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## Biodiversity and environment

### What are the impacts on the environment?

The project has been designed to ensure environmental impacts are minimized and the project design accords with all Council LEP and DCP requirements.

The design includes rain gardens, solar panels and water-sensitive features to manage stormwater and minimise environmental impacts. Landscaping will use native species to support the local setting. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will also be prepared and put on public exhibition.

### Will impacts still occur?

Yes, some clearing of vegetation and habitat loss will occur. These “residual impacts” are addressed through biodiversity credits and compensatory planting. The report concludes that adequate steps have been taken to avoid, minimise and offset impacts.

## Water Quality and Stormwater Management

### How does the project consider water quality and stormwater?

The project has been designed to carefully manage drainage and protect water quality. Stormwater will be collected on site, reused where possible, and treated through a system of rain gardens, biofiltration and large stormwater harvesting tanks before being released to groundwater in a way that mimics natural conditions.

Native landscaping will also help reduce runoff and improve filtration. Modelling shows the system meets or exceeds long-term “neutral or beneficial” water quality targets for pollutants such as sediments and litter.

## CPTED

### Will this development increase crime in the area?

The Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED report) rated the project as an insignificant crime risk.

### How will the design improve safety?

The development has been designed to:

- maximise natural surveillance, with good sightlines and open communal spaces
- provide secure access to carparks and buildings
- clearly define property boundaries and entry points
- connect pathways with the golf club and surrounding area in a safe way

### What about lighting?

Lighting will be designed to Australian standards. Pathways, carparks and entry areas will be well lit for safe movement and wayfinding at night.

### Will there be CCTV?

The report recommends a digital CCTV system to cover public areas. This would add another layer of security for residents and visitors.

### How will landscaping be managed for safety?

Landscaping will avoid dense, concealing vegetation. Trees will be high branched, with low planting under 600mm to keep sightlines clear.



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## CPTED

### **Has Council's safety and security requirements been met?**

Yes. The project has addressed the five Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles required by MidCoast Council – surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, space management and lighting.

### **What does this mean for the community?**

The design is intended to minimise opportunities for crime, help residents feel safe, and support a positive community environment around the new development.

## Housing SEPP and design criteria

### **What is the Housing SEPP report?**

This report demonstrates how the Sanderling Apartments proposal meets the NSW Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) and the Apartment Design Guide. It addresses key design principles such as context, scale, sustainability, amenity, and safety.

### **How does the design fit with Hawks Nest?**

The buildings are designed to complement the surrounding neighbourhood, with setbacks, landscaping, and articulation that reduce bulk and integrate with the coastal setting.

### **How has the height of the project been decided?**

The Housing Delivery Authority will accept an application for a building height up to 20% above the Great Lakes Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2014. This means a maximum height of 14.4 metres (12m + 20%). The design keeps most of the buildings under this height. For any variations above the 12 metres the application will need to justify the variation.

Only a very small part of the roof goes above 14.4 metres due to the natural landform (3 small dips in the site). This affects less than 8% of the total roof area, with the highest section being just 64m<sup>2</sup> – or 0.004% of the total building footprint.

### **What will the development look like?**

Three apartment buildings of up to four storeys with varied facades, landscaping, and open spaces. Design features include deep balconies, shading, and rooftop treatments that reduce scale and provide visual interest.

### **What sustainability measures are included?**

The design incorporates:

- passive solar design and natural ventilation
- photovoltaic panels on the roof
- rainwater harvesting and rain gardens
- double-glazed windows and water-efficient fittings

### **Will the building overshadow neighbours?**

No. The orientation and massing minimise shadow impacts, and compliance has been demonstrated with solar access standards.



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## Housing SEPP and design criteria

### How will the design contribute to the streetscape?

Ground floor apartments, balconies, and landscaped areas provide passive surveillance and activity along Sanderling Avenue. Fencing and entry design avoid concealment and encourage safe interaction between residents and the public domain.

### What communal spaces are included?

More than 30% of the site is communal open space (well above the required 25%). This includes two pools, a gym, landscaped gardens, BBQ areas and seating. Spaces are designed to be attractive, safe, and accessible to all residents.

### What about privacy between apartments and neighbours?

Building separation distances comply with the Apartment Design Guide. Landscaping, screening, balcony design and setbacks help to protect visual and acoustic privacy.

### How is natural light and ventilation achieved?

Over 73% of apartments receive at least three hours of sunlight in winter, while 62.5% are cross-ventilated. Ceiling heights are generous, and window placement maximises light and breezes.

### What housing mix is provided?

A variety of apartments are included – studios, one, two, three and four-bedroom layouts. 12 apartments are adaptable to for people with mobility needs

### How is parking managed?

All resident car parking is underground and screened from view. Bicycle spaces and electric vehicle charging are included. Vehicle access is separated from pedestrian pathways for safety.

### How is waste managed?

Waste and recycling are managed through basement storage. Facilities are well-ventilated and designed to be unobtrusive from the street.

## Landscape

### What will the new landscape look like?

The proposed material palette draws inspiration from the history and heritage of the site and it's coastal setting. It encourages natural textures and colours to evoke the warmth of sandy beaches.

Use of brickwork on the entry wall draws upon the residential architectural style and it's setting contrasted with a sandstone boulder making reference to the Worimi people.

Using plants and materials that fit with the landscape will assist to soften to project on the surrounding landscape.



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## Noise and vibration

### What is this report about?

It assesses potential noise and vibration impacts from the Hawks Nest residential development, both during construction and once the apartments are operating.

### What are the main noise sources during operation?

Air conditioning units, exhaust fans, cars entering and leaving, waste collection, and people using communal areas like pools and gardens.

### Will the apartments cause ongoing noise issues for neighbours?

No. The modelling shows all operational noise will comply with NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) criteria at nearby homes, caravan parks, and the golf club.

### How will construction affect neighbours?

Construction management plan will be implemented prior to construction works commencing to ensure noise impacts to neighbours are mitigated to acceptable levels.

### What hours will construction occur?

Standard hours only:

- Monday to Friday, 7am–6pm
- Saturday, 8am–1pm
- No work on Sundays or public holidays

### How will construction impacts be managed?

Construction will follow all council and state requirements for work hours, noise, and dust control. A Construction Management Plan will be prepared before works begins, setting out how impacts such as traffic, parking, and access will be managed to reduce disruption for neighbours and nearby businesses.

### How much noise can we expect from construction?

Muller Acoustic Consulting has completed a noise and vibration impact assessment to quantify emissions from the proposed Hawks Nest Residential Development. The results demonstrate that noise emissions would satisfy the relevant PNTLs (Project Noise Trigger Level) at all assessed receivers for all assessment periods once noise controls for the project are implemented.

There are no anticipated exceedances as mitigation measures will be in place.

### What are the noise controls?

The project construction manager should adopt the following mitigation of construction activities:

- using the quietest available machinery
- shutting down equipment when not in use
- scheduling noisy activities at appropriate times
- noise barriers or mobile screens where needed
- notifying nearby residents of noisy works

### What about vibration during construction?

Vibration from rollers, hammers, or piling will be monitored. The golf club building next door (the closest receiver) may be within buffer zones for some plant. Vibration management measures will be in place to minimise impacts.



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## Visual impact

### How tall will the buildings be?

The buildings will be four storeys high, with a ground floor and three levels above for apartments. There will also be a basement level for resident parking, bike storage, and general storage.

### Will the buildings be visible from public areas?

Views of the buildings will be limited due to existing vegetation and topography. Clear views will occur mainly from:

- the golf club (car park and Hole 17)
- Sanderling Avenue
- the informal beach car park nearby

From most other public areas, views are filtered or negligible. The proposal will not be visible from the beach.

### What are the levels of visual impact?

The level of visual impact ranges from negligible to moderate:

- Moderate impact is expected from nearby viewpoints (like Sanderling Avenue), where the buildings are closest and most noticeable.
- Low or negligible impact is expected from further away, where the buildings blend into the landscape or are screened by vegetation.

These assessments are based on a professional Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

### What about lighting impacts at night?

Lighting will be designed to meet Australian safety standards while also protecting the local environment. Measures include:

- downward-facing lights
- shielded fittings to reduce glare
- energy-efficient bulbs
- curfews for decorative lighting

This helps minimise light spill and protects nearby plants and animals.

### What being done to reduce visual impact?

Several design features will help the buildings blend into the landscape:

- upper-level setbacks and gaps between buildings to reduce bulk and allow for views and greenery
- a coastal-inspired material palette, including:
- curved brickwork at lower levels
- light finishes on middle levels
- darker concrete tones on the top level to reduce visibility
- planter boxes with cascading greenery to soften the street view
- landscaping with native and tropical trees to create a green buffer, especially on the southern and eastern sides

These elements help the development sit comfortably within the existing vegetated coastal setting.



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## Traffic and transport

### How much traffic will the development generate?

The apartments are expected to generate around:

- 22 vehicle trips in the morning peak hour/per hour
- 31 vehicle trips in the evening peak hour/per hour
- 287 vehicle trips per day

This represents a modest increase compared to existing traffic in Hawks Nest. Local roads have capacity to handle this increase without causing delays or congestion.

### How many parking spaces are required and how many are provided?

Council's parking rates require 153 car spaces for a development of this size. The proposal provides 161 spaces, including resident, visitor and adaptable parking. This is more than required, meaning all parking demand can be contained within the site.

### Will pedestrians and cyclists be catered for?

Yes. The project includes new pedestrian links through the site and extends the shared path along Sanderling Avenue. This connects to existing paths leading to the golf club, town centre and Bennetts Beach.

### What about public transport?

Bus services already operate through Hawks Nest, with stops near the shops on Booner Street. These services will continue, and no upgrades are required for the development.

### Will Sanderling Avenue need widening or upgrading?

No. The road width (around 6.2 metres) already meets Austroads safety guidelines. With very low existing traffic flows, the additional vehicles will not require any widening or upgrades.

### What is the overall traffic impact?

The report concludes the development will have a minimal and acceptable impact on the local road network. Roads and intersections will continue to operate safely and efficiently.

### How will this development affect future traffic and transport?

The traffic generated by the development has been carefully assessed and is well within the capacity of the local road network, even during peak summer holiday periods. Sanderling Avenue has been reviewed against Austroads national guidelines and is considered appropriate and safe at its current width. No new driveways will connect directly to this section of road, so it will continue to provide safe access both to the new apartments and for beach users.



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