

# CATHO CHRONICLE

CATHERINE HILL BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HERITAGE VALUES OF CATHO HILL BAY



## SHARED VISION REVEALED IN 2025 COMMUNITY SURVEY

In a recent opinion survey conducted by the Progress Association, residents have voiced their concerns, values, and aspirations for the future of Catherine Hill Bay. The results reveal a community that values its heritage, seeks better public infrastructure, and desires a vibrant and connected township.

One of the strongest themes to emerge was the need for improved community infrastructure such as sports facilities and a community hall. Many respondents expressed concerns over the inadequacies of the current Catho SLSC building as well as insufficient parking for beachgoers. Furthermore, the overall lack of community facilities in our fast-growing town is a source of frustration.

Another key issue raised was the desire for shops and cafés. While long-term plans are in place for cafés at the planned Community Hub (old Bowling Club site) and the new Surf Club, residents are eager for more immediate solutions.

The survey also highlighted strong community support for the planned coastal pathway linking different parts of the town. The good news on this topic is that progress is already underway, with sections being developed by different stakeholders to ensure that, eventually, residents and visitors alike will enjoy a continuous scenic walkway stretching from north of Middle Camp to Moonee Beach.

AUTUMN 2025 ISSUE...

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### VILLAGE PARK OPENS

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### COUNCIL'S 5 YEAR DELIVERY PLAN

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### ANZAC SERVICE

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### 46TH ANNUAL CATHO CLASSIC SURF CONTEST

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### NEXT PA MEETING at Catho SLSC on date TBA

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*Cover shot: Scott Myers carves a turn on the way to winning the Mens O/40 Division of the Catho Classic 2025.*

*Full report page 6.*

*(photo courtesy of Jim Wright of Right On Photography)*

## 2025 Community Survey (continued)

In a recent meeting with the Mayor, the Association President and CHB Alliance Chairperson had the opportunity to raise these priority issues. Lake Macquarie City Council's response was to reaffirm its commitment to implement the Catherine Hill Bay Precinct Master Plan. This long-term initiative will deliver on many of the aspirations voiced by residents in the survey, seeing the creation of a Community Hub with green spaces, play areas, a new Surf Club building with improved pedestrian access, and enhancements to historical sites like the Heritage Trail and Catho Lookout. Over the longer term these developments will help to bring the community's vision to life.

In the meeting Council also indicated they were open to short-term options such as facilitating mobile food trucks or a container cafe, however the future of any retail developments remains uncertain. For example the fate of the historic shop on Flowers Drive in Middle Camp, which is currently for sale, presents a possible opportunity for a new business to revive this local landmark.

A question raised by many in the survey responses was the relationship between the town's two active community organisations: the Progress Association and the Catherine Hill Bay Community Alliance. While they have different points of focus, both are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the town's unique character and improving the daily lives of residents. In recent times collaboration has strengthened between the two organisations, with joint efforts on environmental monitoring, event planning, and community advocacy. This is set to continue.



*The survey revealed strong support for the coastal walkway from Middle Camp to Moonee Beach*



*Residents would like to see cafes and shops in Catho*

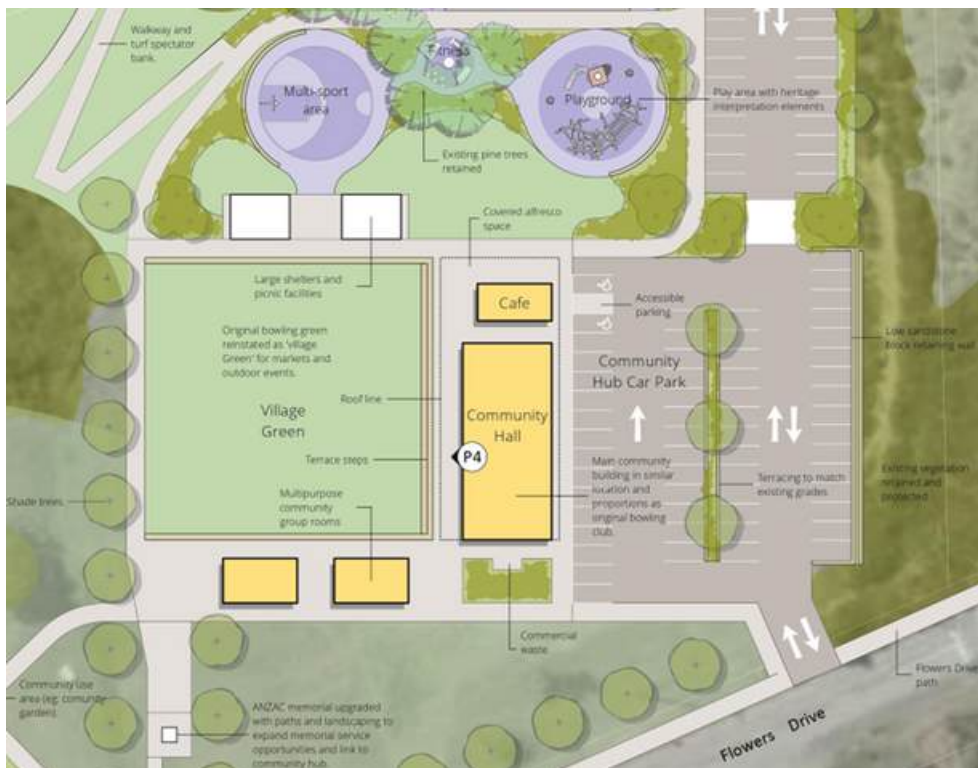
Overall, the 2025 survey results confirm what locals already know – that Catherine Hill Bay is a special place and its people are passionate about shaping its future while preserving its past. The Progress Association will use the survey feedback to guide its activities in influencing stakeholders and decision makers to achieve the best possible outcomes for our town.

## LMCC Capital Works Plan for Catherine Hill Bay

Lake Macquarie City Council recently published their draft 2025-2029 capital works delivery program. The proposed capital works for Catherine Hill Bay are:

- 1) \$5.7m to rebuild the road embankment in Hooey St, Moonee in 2025-2027
- 2) \$250k for planning and design of Stage 1 of the CHB Master Plan (Middle Camp Community Hub) in 2025-2027
- 3) \$200k for planning and design of Stage 2 of the CHB Master Plan (Surf Club Precinct) in 2026-2028
- 4) \$2.19m to start construction of the Middle Camp Community Hub in 2028-29.

It's encouraging to finally see firm plans published for construction of Stage 1 of the CHB Master Plan, but disappointing that it's four years away (with completion probably two years after that). The original plan was for completion sometime between 2023 and 2028. There is no timeframe available for construction of Stage 2 of the Master Plan.



*The Middle Camp Community Hub (part of the CHB Master Plan Stage 1)*

It is unclear if the \$5.7m to fund reinstatement of the failed section of Hooey St in Moonee is diverting Council funds away from the CHB Master Plan, or whether the repair cost is covered by the developer that built the road. Either way, given that our Bowling and Community Club was closed down by Council seven years ago and Catherine Hill Bay's population has since surged by almost 400%, the PA's view is that residents have endured too many years without basic infrastructure such as a community hall and sports ground facilities.

Development of these public facilities should be fast-tracked, not delayed, and we strongly encourage residents to voice their concerns about the slow delivery of the CHB Master Plan at this link before the 22<sup>nd</sup> April deadline for comments: <https://shape.lakemac.com.au/dp-op-2025-2026>

Alternatively, if you miss the deadline we recommend you make a submission as soon as possible to [council@lakemac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@lakemac.nsw.gov.au) with the heading: 'Comments on Draft Delivery Program 2025-29'.



## Anzac Day Dawn Service

The Catherine Hill Bay community will pay tribute to those who have served with an ANZAC commemoration service at 6am on 25<sup>th</sup> April in Roy McDougall Park, Flowers Drive.

All are welcome to attend and a coffee van will be providing refreshments.

We invite veterans, local groups, and community members to lay wreaths. Please arrive early and see Damien Ure of our CHB RSL sub branch for service arrangements. LEST WE FORGET.



## Landcare News

*Content courtesy of Landcare Team Leader - Carmel Brown*

Huge thanks to Simon, Wendy, Amy and the mighty Green Team for renovating and then re-installing our impressive Landcare sign in the NE corner of the cemetery on 29<sup>th</sup> January. An historic day! Lindsey and Dave came along too, with Helen Rubelli from Hunter Region Landcare Network taking photos and clips. Thank you all so much!



*Restored Landcare sign (left), and the South Site team at work in Pat Slaven Reserve (above).*

On 20 March, Peter, Louise, Jann and Carmel attacked the Bitou bush on the beach side of Pat Slaven Reserve, pruning and then painting with glyphosate. We haven't needed to do that for years – no doubt resulting from the hot, wet summer. We also wound up Morning Glory vines and hung them in the Banksia tree. Sad to see how quickly this has spread over the erosion control area. More to do there.

Jayne, Mina and Carmel worked through the top edge below the Graveyard Beach carpark on 7th April, where we worked with the Green Team last year. There's some low, wide spreading, entangled and tough Bitou bush in there! We used cut and paint with glyphosate. Peter went about halfway down the track, then went in and attacked it from below! We're determined to keep this main square as weed free as possible, as it's where everyone parks and looks out over it to the ocean. It's a great example of how the foredunes should be (see photo over page by Jayne).

## Landcare News (continued)

Join us on the first Mondays of the month at Graveyard Beach (North Site), and the third Thursday of the month near the Surf Club (South Site). Call us first if you're new on 0438 499636 for a brief induction.

All are welcome at both sites. Come for the whole session, or any part that suits you. Bring a drink, gloves and your favourite weeding and pruning tools, otherwise we have a few. Wear long sleeves and long pants and always be sunsafe!



*Peter, Jayne, Carmel and Mina at the North Site*

## Village Park Opens!

With little fanfare, certification of Catherine Hill Bay's new Village Park, Headland Reserve, and surrounding roadways was completed by Council and opened to the public in early March.

The playground area is already a popular gathering place for families, and the coastal views from the Headland Reserve - overlooking the jetty to Newcastle and beyond - are simply breathtaking. These are wonderful new additions to Catho's public spaces.



A community 'Picnic in the Park' event was planned for 30th March to commemorate this exciting milestone but it was called off due to inclement weather. The event has been rescheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> May with further details to be provided shortly.



## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Catho Classic

*Content courtesy of Mick McCall from Catherine Hill Bay Boardriders Club*

The 46th annual Catho Classic Surf Contest was held at the North End of Catherine Hill Bay on the 5-6<sup>th</sup> April. Both Saturday and Sunday enjoyed brilliant autumn sunshine with over 130 entrants from as far afield as Dudley Beach in the north to Norah Head in the south.

Conditions were perfect 1-1.8m waves and offshore winds on Saturday. The heats started at the North End and moved to just south of the Boiler Bank (near the middle of beach) as the swell died and a light southerly wind came in. Predictably that 'light southerly' brought with it a larger swell on Sunday morning, with 2m+ waves at the North End. The wind swung offshore again and the surf cleaned up to provide perfect waves for Finals Day, with competition results as follows:



Under 15s:	1st Nixon White, 2nd Billy Snowden, 3rd Kai Delaney, 4 <sup>th</sup> Rio Messitier
Under 18s:	1st Jaxon Cowan, 2nd Corey Robards, 3rd Chace Puttergill, 4th Jai Thoroughgood
Men's O/30s:	1st Tyler Williams, 2nd Reece Menzies, 3rd Kaine Watts, 4th Beau Evenden
Men's O/40s:	1st Scott Myers, 2nd Beau Evenden, 3rd Dale Thomas, 4th Andy Brinkworth
Men's O/50s:	1st Brad Marriott, 2nd Doc Glen Valaire, 3rd Dale Thomas, 4th Stuart Riley
Men's O/60s:	1st Ged Cook, 2nd Tony Rae, 3rd Steve Piggott, 4th Rob Mitchell
Women's Open:	1st Kayla Renes, 2nd Sienna Pitt, 3rd Daisy Delaney, 4th Piper Kennedy
Men's Open:	1st Connor Lee, 2nd Ryan Slattery, 3rd Jaxon Cowan, 4th Dom Thomas.



### Specialty Awards:

Best Cutback Non-Finalist:	Archie Fairleigh U/18 Semi,
Best Re-Entry Non-Finalist:	Aaron Moore Mens O/30s Semi,
Best Tube Ride:	Ryan Slattery Mens Open Round 2 Heat 4,
Highest Scoring Wave:	Jaxon Cowan Mens Open Round 2 Heat 1 (Perfect 10s from all judges!),
Worst Wipeout:	Non-Finalist, Luke Mullins Mens O/60 Semi.

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Catho Classic (continued)

Luke was crunched in the heavy shorebreak, ending up with a broken tibia and badly damaged cruciate ligament necessitating the lifesavers to drive the full length of the beach in their moke. Huge thanks to Catho SLSC!

Also a massive thanks to all our sponsors, all listed on the 'CC46 2025' tee shirts proudly on display around the community and at the beach. We can't thank these businesses enough for getting behind this long running event and enabling the blue-ribbon Mens Open Champ and Runner-Up getting \$1250 and \$750 prizemoney respectively. They also provided heaps of great prizes including surfboards, wetsuits, travel gear, and clothing for the multitude of finalists.

Club President Scott Myers, 56, deserves a special mention for out-surfing all the 'youngsters' in the Over 40s final. What a performance! And lastly, a big shout out to the Catho Crew and especially the Moore family (there in droves) for their much-appreciated ongoing help before, during, and after the event. Moore, Moore, Moore!!

We'll be back next year for our 47th Catho Classic for sure. What a paradise this place can be!!

## Did you know ...

.... that 126 men from Catherine Hill Bay went to the First World War?

Fifteen didn't come home. Of those that did, many endured health problems resulting from injuries on the battlefield, or chemical weapons, or mental health trauma. Here's a few of their stories.

**Edward Baker**, 21, was an engineer at Wallarah Colliery who enlisted soon after war broke out. He joined the 19th Battalion, then transferred to the field ambulance stretcher bearers before sailing to the war zone from Melbourne on "HMAT Ceramic". Later that year, in November 1915, he died from leg wounds caused by a bomb blast at Lone Pine, Gallipoli. He was buried in Shrapnel Gully, Gallipoli. On Arbour Day 1916 a tree was planted in his memory in an avenue to remember the fallen at Catherine Hill Bay School.



**Joseph Fox** was born in Catherine Hill Bay. He enlisted in 1915 at Newcastle at the age of 19, where he was noted as fit for active service with the 30th Battalion. In November 1915 he sailed from Sydney on the "Beltana" to England, then on to Marseilles. He suffered serious abdominal wounds on the Western Front battlefield. Dangerously ill, he was evacuated to the English military hospital at Edmonton, where he eventually recovered. After returning to Australia in 1917 he married, raised a family of four children, and worked at the Wallarah Colliery.

**Walter Hancock** lived at Mine Camp in Catherine Hill Bay. Following in his father's footsteps, he began working in the Wallarah Colliery at just 14 years of age. He later moved to Sydney to work as a fisherman. In 1916 he enlisted in the 1st Pioneer Battalion at age 26. He served as a stretcher bearer on the Western Front until he was struck down by the poisonous gas weapons used by the Germans. Walter recovered and returned to work at the Wallarah Colliery, employed as a hostler at the horse stables.



The Anzac Day service on the 25<sup>th</sup> April will take place at the War Memorial in Roy McDougall Park, Flowers Drive. **Roy McDougall** was a coal miner and President of the Catherine Hill Bay RSL Sub-Branch Committee for many years, with his brother **Cecil McDougall** as Treasurer. Roy often led the ANZAC Day dawn service with his trademark down-to-earth humour.

Even though coal mining was classed as a 'protected industry' during the Second World War – with miners prohibited from joining the armed forces – through sheer persistence Roy managed to enlist on his third attempt. His brother Cecil and sister **Evelyn** did the same.

Returned soldiers initially held the Anzac Day services in the Catherine Hill Bay School grounds. Later they succeeded in petitioning the mining company to help build an RSL Hall on the corner of Flowers Drive and Northwood Road, which had previously been the School of Arts site. When the hall was sold, Anzac services were held at the Surf Club for many years before the current War Memorial site was established.

The Memorial site, the establishment of which had been a long-sought goal for the community, was dedicated and consecrated on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The occasion was marked with a fly-over of RAAF jets.

## How to become a PA member

Would you like to become a member or friend of the CHB Progress Association? The annual membership fee is \$20, or \$10 for pensioners. The membership form is attached to this newsletter email. Please email membership forms to [accounts@catherinehillbay.org.au](mailto:accounts@catherinehillbay.org.au). Thank you to all our members and friends who have already renewed their membership.

To join the Catho Chronicle mailing list, please email us at [newsletter@catherinehillbay.org.au](mailto:newsletter@catherinehillbay.org.au)

**For more local news check the following links:**

[www.catherinehillbay.org.au](http://www.catherinehillbay.org.au)

[www.facebook.com/CathHillBay](https://www.facebook.com/CathHillBay)

[www.facebook.com/CathHillBayLandcare](https://www.facebook.com/CathHillBayLandcare)

[www.chbcommunityalliance.org](http://www.chbcommunityalliance.org)

**and the various other Facebook pages related to Catho:**

[www.facebook.com/cathoslsc](https://www.facebook.com/cathoslsc)

[www.facebook.com/cathoboardriders](https://www.facebook.com/cathoboardriders)

[www.facebook.com/swanseaSES](https://www.facebook.com/swanseaSES)

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