

Fort Wallace and Rifle Range

What's happening at Fort Wallace and Rifle Range?

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) is seeking to provide high quality, modern accommodation for Defence families and the wider community at Stockton Fort Wallace and Fern Bay Rifle Range.

To develop parts of both sites for residential uses, the land needs to be rezoned through what's called a 'planning proposal' process. The Fort Wallace Planning Proposal is currently undergoing preliminary assessment by Newcastle City Council and the Rifle Range Planning Proposal is due to be lodged with Port Stephens Council in the coming weeks.

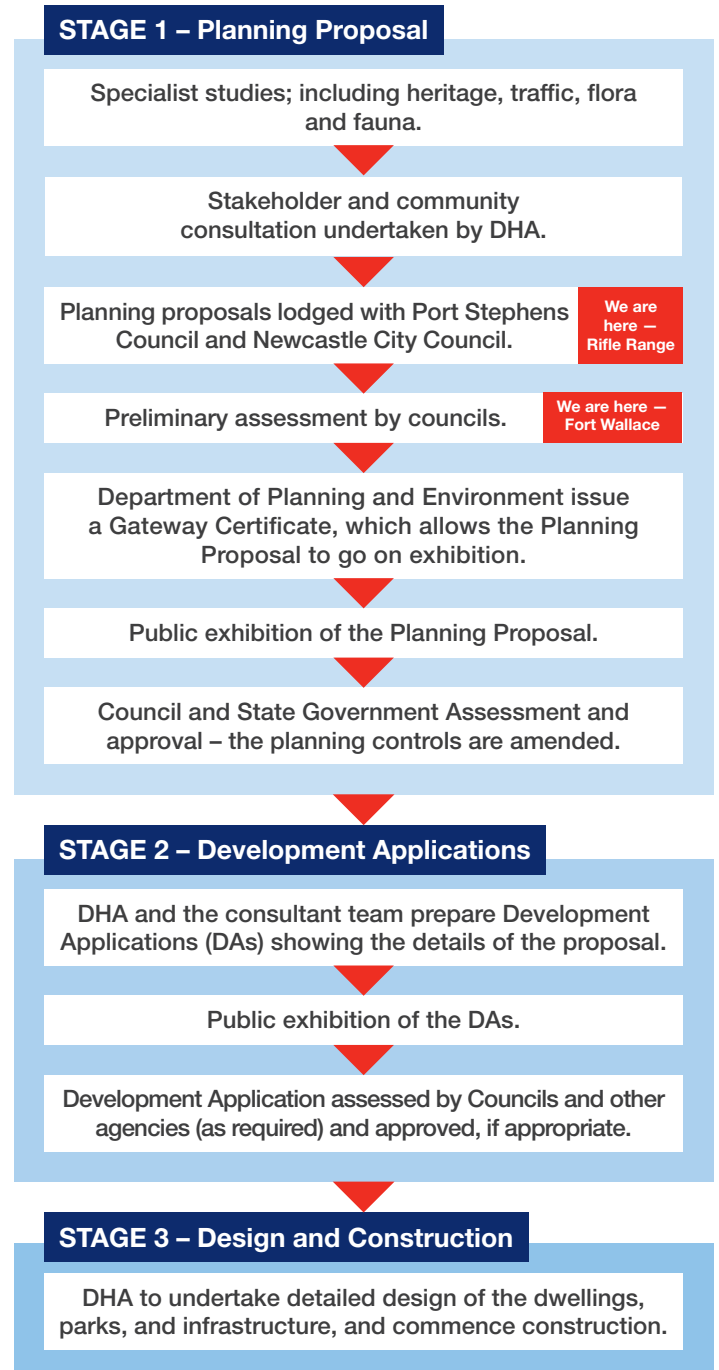
What's happened so far?

Since purchasing the land in 2015, DHA has undertaken:

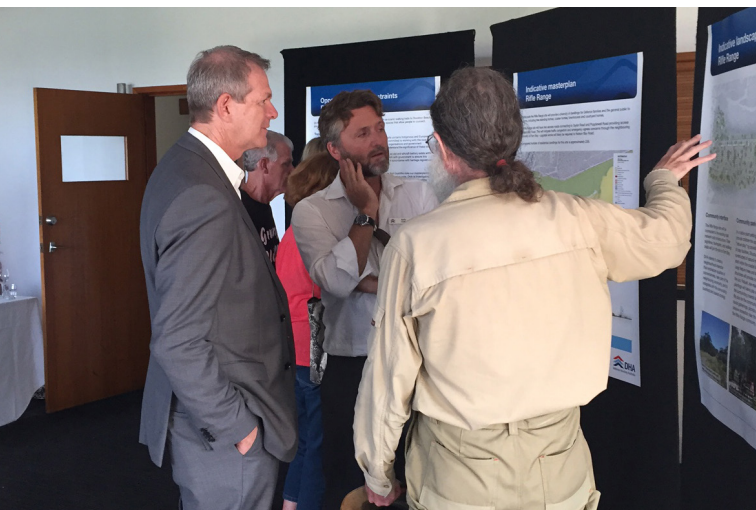
- specialist studies for heritage, traffic, flora and fauna
- two community information and feedback sessions introducing the proposals in July/ August 2016
- one community information and feedback session presenting indicative masterplans and housing typologies to the community in December 2016
- an onsite tour of Fort Wallace
- a presentation to the Fern Bay & Fullerton Cove Progress Association
- face-to-face stakeholder meetings
- distribution of two community newsletters (July and December 2016)
- a dedicated website, 1800 line and project email.

DHA has considered the impact of our planned development on traffic, the environment, coastal erosion, bushfires, heritage, and aboriginal culture. Full reports will be available during the Council exhibition process.

What is the planning process?



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Community Information Session at Newcastle Golf Club

What will happen next?

Following preliminary assessment by the relevant council, the Department of Planning and Environment will decide whether the proposal can proceed (with or without variation) and with conditions that may include further studies, consultation and time frames. Any necessary amendments or further investigations are undertaken in line with the conditions from the Department (known as a 'Gateway Determination') in consultation with Council. The Planning Proposal will then go on public exhibition, giving the community and stakeholders an opportunity to formally comment on the proposal.

We expect public exhibition of the Fort Wallace Planning Proposal to occur in the coming months, ahead of the Rifle Range Planning Proposal.

We'll be in touch with details for community drop in sessions to support public exhibition for both proposals closer to the time.

Security and surveillance onsite

We have been working to prevent damage caused by unauthorised access to the sites, including destruction of vegetation areas and vandalism to significant local heritage. Access through the dunes on quad bikes and 4WD is not only dangerous and damaging to the sensitive dune ecology, it is also illegal.

Bushland regeneration

In the early to mid-1900s, South African Bitou Bush was planted in Stockton to stabilise mined sand dunes. However in 1999, 'invasion of native plant communities by bitou bush' was listed as a key threatening process by the NSW Scientific Committee.

Bitou bush is a highly competitive weed that smothers native plant communities and destroys natural habitat and food sources for native animals.

As part of our regeneration works onsite, we've been working with Total Earth Care to remove bitou bush in the project area, particularly around heritage sites and dune areas. The works have involved a mixture of physical removal and spraying techniques, and have been complimented by the planting of new native species to stabilise the dunes.



Total Earth Care planting native seeds to stabilise the dunes

Hazard reduction advisory

Rural Fire Services (RFS) will be conducting a controlled Hazard Reduction burn at the Rifle Range in the coming months, to reduce the risk of an uncontrolled bushfire to the local community.