

Bulahdelah Golf Course Rezoning Social Impact Assessment

Prepared by:

RPS
Level 12,
92 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T: +61 2 8270 8300
F: +61 2 8270 8399
E: sydney@rpsgroup.com.au
W: rpsgroup.com.au

Prepared for:

GREAT LAKES COUNCIL
PO BOX 450
Forster NSW 2428

Report No: PR103163

Version/Date: July 2010

Contents

I	INTRODUCTION	I
1.1	Structure	I
1.2	Terms of reference	I
2	SUBJECT PROPOSAL	2
2.1	Background	2
2.2	Subject Proposal	3
2.3	Strategic context	4
2.3.1	Mid North Coast Regional Strategy	4
2.3.2	Great Lakes Rural Living Strategy	4
2.3.3	Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy (Draft)	4
3	EXISTING COMMUNITY	6
3.1	Demographics	6
3.1.1	Population	6
3.1.2	Age distribution	7
3.1.3	Country of birth and indigenous population	7
3.1.4	Mobility	7
3.1.5	Education	8
3.1.6	Family status	8
3.1.7	Car ownership	8
3.2	Social and community infrastructure	9
3.2.1	Public transport	9
3.2.2	Education	9
3.2.3	Community	9
3.2.4	Recreation	10
3.2.5	Children's Services	10
3.2.6	Health	11
3.2.7	Aged Care	12
3.3	Housing and accommodation	12
3.3.1	Housing stock	12
3.3.2	Tenure type	13
3.4	Employment	14
3.5	Income	16
3.6	Retail services	16
3.7	Summary of existing community characteristics	17
3.7.1	Population	17
3.7.2	Social and community infrastructure	17
3.7.3	Housing and accommodation	18
3.7.4	Employment	18
3.7.5	Income	18
3.7.6	Retail	18
4	SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	19
4.1	Demographic change	19
4.1.1	Population projections	19
4.1.2	Population impacts of the subject proposal	20

4.2	Accommodation and housing	20
4.2.1	Forecast dwelling and housing growth	21
4.2.2	Rural housing markets	21
4.2.3	Local housing market	22
4.3	Facility requirements	25
4.3.1	Expressed need	25
4.3.2	Normative need	26
4.3.3	Comparative need	27
4.3.4	Summary - social infrastructure needs	28
4.4	Neighbourhood and community	28
4.4.1	Community cohesion	28
4.4.2	Accessibility	29
4.5	Design guidelines for improving liveability	30
4.6	Needs of older people and people with a disability	31
4.7	Economic issues	31
4.7.1	Economic multiplier during construction	31
4.7.2	Contribution to employment and dwelling targets	31
4.7.3	Mix of housing options	31
4.7.4	Impact on local retail	32
4.8	Summary of social impacts	32
4.8.1	Positive benefits	32
4.8.2	Challenges	33
4.8.3	Mitigation measures	33
5	CONCLUSION	34
6	REFERENCES	36

I Introduction

Great Lakes City Council resolved in September 2006 to incorporate the site of the existing Bulahdelah Golf Course into the Great Lakes Rural Living Strategy (RLS) to enable rezoning of the site for residential use. The purpose of this study is to investigate and report on the social impacts of the proposed rezoning of the land.

“Social impacts” have been defined as changes to one or more of the following (LGSA NSW, 1995):

- People’s way of life – how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis
- Their culture – shared beliefs, customs and values
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities

This SIA investigates the impacts of the proposed rezoning on service provision, community cohesion and accessibility. The local housing market and economy are also studied.

The terms of reference for the SIA are based on the NSW Department of Planning advice as to the necessary documentation for the rezoning. The SIA therefore forms part of the necessary documentation prepared in accordance with section 57 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act), as required by the Department of Planning.

It is important to note that development proposals can also result in important impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage but that these are dealt with in a separate report included with the environmental study.

1.1 Structure

- Section 1 introduces the structure and terms of reference of this Social Impact Assessment (SIA)
- Section 2 presents background information on the proposal
- Section 3 presents baseline information about the current community, its demographics and the level of social and community infrastructure
- Section 4 presents and discusses the likely social impacts of the proposal
- Section 5 concludes the report

1.2 Terms of reference

The Department of Planning requirements for the environmental study relevant to this SIA are:

- Social and economic considerations particularly potential impacts/benefits for wider Bulahdelah community, and the sustainability of its existing services, facilities, and community infrastructure
- Consideration of the sources of demand for additional housing and relevant implications for the location and type of housing proposed – eg. Consideration of specific markets/submarkets and their relevance to Bulahdelah’s growth
- Discuss the respective merits/limitations of ‘greenfield’ development and ‘in-fill’ or consolidation options (including adequate quantitative and qualitative eg. Social and economic benefits/limitations, streetscape and ‘town’ character considerations, etc – of respective options)
- Discuss the functional relationship of the proposed golf course development to the existing town and relevant issues in terms of ‘integration’ of its community with the existing community

2 Subject Proposal

2.1 Background

Bulahdelah is located in the centre of the Great Lakes Local Government Area (LGA), 40kms from Tea Gardens, 73 kms from Taree and 68 kms from Forster and approximately three hours drive from Sydney (see Figure 2-1).



Figure 2-1 Location Plan-Bulahdelah, NSW

Source: Google Maps

The subject site is north east of the main township of Bulahdelah, on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway (see Figure 2-2). It is adjacent to the Bulahdelah Golf Course. A number of approvals have been issued for development of the site that change the existing uses of the land:

- On 24 September, 2007 Great Lakes Council approved a development application for a three (3) lot subdivision in order to create separate allotments for the Bulahdelah Golf Club, a brewery complex and tourist facility
- On 11 October 2007, the construction of the brewery complex was approved. Construction has not yet commenced.
- On 13 March 2008 a deferred commencement was issued for the tourist facility and community title subdivision of serviced apartments. The terms of this deferred commencement have since been met and an operational consent issued. Construction has not yet commenced.

The process of re-zoning the land to date has been:

- On 12 September 2006 Great Lakes City Council Strategic Committee resolved to incorporate the subject site in the Great Lakes Rural Living Strategy (RLS) to enable rezoning of the site for residential use
- On 9 March 2007 the Department of Planning indicated that it would not support the inclusion of residential zoning on the land
- On 18 May 2007 Great Lakes Council provided further justification for the proposed residential rezoning
- On 2 December 2008, NSW Department of Planning issued advice as to the necessary documentation required for the proposed rezoning, which forms the terms of reference for this SIA



Figure 2-2 Location of subject site

2.2 Subject Proposal

The subject proposal seeks to rezone the subject site from its existing I (a) Rural zoning to a residential zone.

The proposed residential area will be located in the centre of the site, which is less environmentally constrained. The subject site is estimated to accommodate around 200 residential lots.

The form of residential development has not been determined at this stage but has been conceived as “resort style” residential, with a high level of amenity.

Full details of the proposal are in the environmental study of which this report forms an Appendix.

2.3 Strategic context

The following NSW and Great Lakes policy documents are relevant to the proposal:

2.3.1 Mid North Coast Regional Strategy

The Mid North Coast Regional Strategy was prepared to guide local planning in the eight local government areas including Great Lakes LGA. The aims of the Regional Strategy are:

- a supply of new residential land can be provided in the right locations to respond to population increases and assisting with housing affordability. The Strategy caters for 59,600 new homes by 2031 for a forecast population increase of 94,000
- a surplus of well-planned employment land is available to support an additional 48,500 jobs for new and existing residents
- 'green breaks' are in place between urban areas, protecting areas of high scenic value along with rainforests, wetlands, estuaries and significant farmland
- increased opportunities for medium-density housing in key centres to match the ageing of the Region's population
- new growth is linked to infrastructure provision, incorporating new regional infrastructure identified in the State Infrastructure Strategy.

The subject site is included in the Regional Strategy as a growth area that requires significant issues to be resolved before the final development footprint and dwelling yield is determined.

2.3.2 Great Lakes Rural Living Strategy

The Rural Living Strategy (RLS) provides future direction for settlement and development of land within the rural areas of Great Lakes Local Government Area by identifying areas of land that are suitable for rezoning. Bulahdelah is identified in the RLS as a town with capacity for expansion. The RLS identifies 2 areas for urban development in Bulahdelah, one of which is industrial and the other is the subject site. The Strategy states that the subject site is the 'logical place' for Bulahdelah to expand.

A three-category system is used in the RLS to describe the priority for different projects. Category 1 Precincts have a relatively high degree of certainty that most, if not all, of the land within the precinct can be rezoned and Category 3 precincts are least likely. However, unlike other precincts the subject site is not assigned a category because development of the site 'should be identified in association with the location of the highway bypass which is to be on the eastern side of the land and consideration should be given to its staging in association with the bypass construction'. Accordingly, it is proposed that no residential land would be released at the subject site until the bypass construction is completed.

Section 4.2 of the RLS provides Development Principles that Council should consider for the rezoning of land. Development Principles applicable to this SIA are as follows:

- Provide a choice of living opportunities and types of settlement.
- Ensure future development is within close proximity to established service centres.
- Provide for the continued and improved social and economic well being of the community.

The proposal generally supports the aims and objectives of the RLS because of the proximity of the site to the existing township of Bulahdelah. These issues are addressed in this SIA.

2.3.3 Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy (Draft)

The Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy was prepared in July 2006 by Parkland Environmental Planners for Great Lakes Council. It has not been adopted by the Council but provides information regarding recreation and open space needs in the Great Lakes LGA, including Bulahdelah.

3 Existing community

This section provides a profile of the areas impacted by the subject proposal. Two areas have been selected for study: the local area, defined below, and the Great Lakes LGA.

In this SIA, the local area is defined at the State Statistical Suburb of Bulahdelah, as shown on

Figure 3-1. The area is 400.4 square kilometres in size. It includes the township of Bulahdelah, which covers a 4 square kilometres area in the middle of the State Statistical Suburb.

The State Statistical Suburb of Bulahdelah (referred to as the “local area” or as “Bulahdelah”) has been selected because it represents the catchment for the local community and retail services. It will therefore better reflect the impacts of population changes and changes in demand for services that could occur as a result of the subject proposal. Data for the Bulahdelah Urban Centre - Locality (usually referred to as “Bulahdelah Township” or the “Township”) has also been included, where relevant.

The second locality is the Great Lakes Local Government Area (LGA). It is 3375.4 square kilometres in size and will be referred as the “region” or as “Great Lakes”. Data for NSW is also used as a comparison.



Figure 3-1 State Statistical Suburb - Bulahdelah

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

3.1 Demographics

3.1.1 Population

In 2006 the total population of Bulahdelah was 1,593 persons. 1,092 persons were located in the Bulahdelah Township.

In Bulahdelah, 1,499 persons lived in 614 occupied private dwellings, giving an average household size of 2.4 persons; the Township had 437 dwellings and an average household size of 2.3 persons. Both of these are slightly higher than in Great Lakes (2.2 persons per dwelling) but lower than NSW as a whole, where the average household size is 2.6 persons per dwelling.

3.1.2 Age distribution

The median age in Bulahdelah is 46 years old. This is higher than the median age in NSW, which is 37 years old but lower than in Great Lakes, where the median age is 50 years old.

Figure 3-2 shows the age profile of the local area, region and NSW. Bulahdelah has a higher proportion of younger people, aged between 5 and 19 years old, than Great Lakes and NSW. The largest group in the local area population is 10-14 year olds.

Compared to Great Lakes, Bulahdelah has a lower proportion of the population aged between 20 and 34 years but higher proportion between 35 and 54 years old. Bulahdelah and Great Lakes both have higher proportions of their population over 50 years old compared to NSW as a whole.

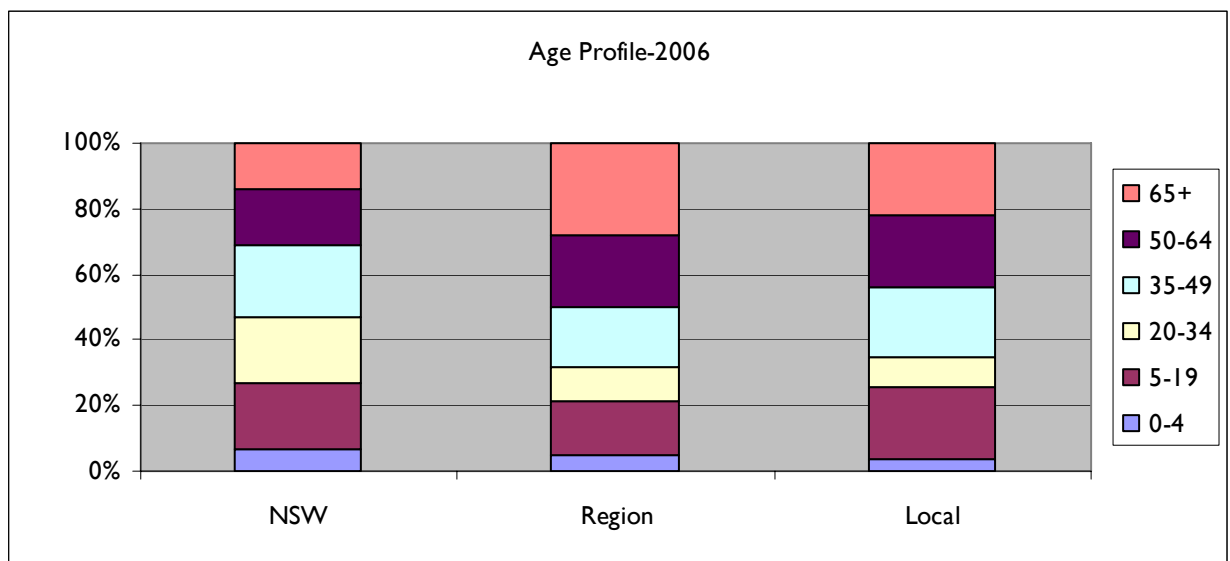


Figure 3-2 Age profile - 2006

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

3.1.3 Country of birth and indigenous population

Bulahdelah and Great Lakes both have high proportions of persons born in Australia. Over 86% of the population of Bulahdelah and over 83% of the population of Great Lakes were born in Australia. This is in contrast to NSW where the proportion born in Australia is around 69%.

Around 2% of the population of the local area identified themselves as of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, which is lower than the proportion in Great Lakes, which is around 3%, but the same as in NSW as a whole.

3.1.4 Mobility

Mobility in the local area is comparatively low, with almost 62% of people in Bulahdelah having lived in the same address 5 years before the 2006 Census. This compares with the comparatively high mobility of people in Great Lakes as a whole, where 41% were at a different address five years ago (see Figure 3-3).

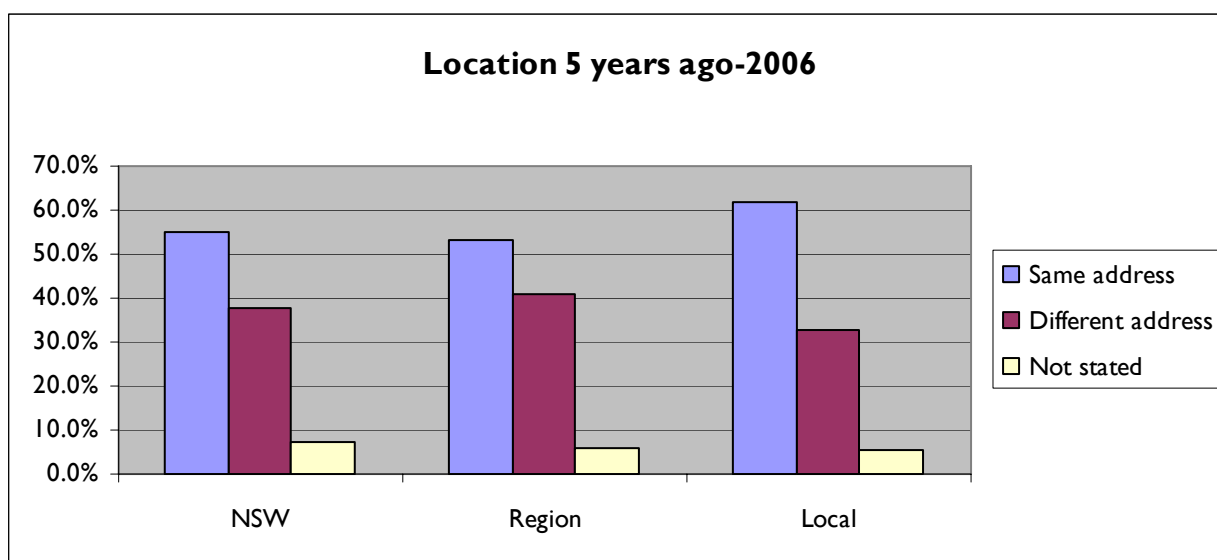


Figure 3-3 Mobility, location in 2001

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

3.1.5 Education

Compared with Great Lakes and NSW as a whole, Bulahdelah has a higher proportion of the population whose highest level of school completed was Years 9 and 10 and lower proportions that completed Years 11 and 12.

A lower proportion of the population of the local area have completed post school study than in Great Lakes and NSW, around 64% in Bulahdelah, compared with 71% in Great Lakes and 75% in NSW as a whole.

3.1.6 Family status

83% of people in Bulahdelah live in a “family household”. This is slightly higher than in the proportion in Great Lakes (82%) but lower than in NSW as a whole (85%).

The local area has comparatively fewer lone person households, around 11%, compared with around 13% in the region and 9.5% in NSW as a whole. The proportion of group households is lower in Great Lakes and Bulahdelah, around 2%, compared to NSW as a whole (3%).

In the local area “Couples with Children” is the predominant family type, making up 52% of families which is higher than in Great Lakes (43.5) but lower than NSW as a whole (60.5%).

The proportion of one parent families in the local area is higher than in the region. 15% of families in the local area are one parent families compared with 14.5% of families in the region. The key difference between the local area and the region is the proportion of couple families without children. In the Great Lakes, couples without children make up 41% of all families; in Bulahdelah they make up only 32%. In NSW couples without children make up 24% of families.

3.1.7 Car ownership

Households in Bulahdelah have high levels of car ownership, with 97% of households owning a motor vehicle, which is similar to NSW as a whole. Households in the local area also has high levels of multiple car ownership, with over 15% of households having 3 motor vehicles and more than 5% having 4 or more.

3.2 Social and community infrastructure

3.2.1 Public transport

The private bus company Busways provides two (2) services that pass through Bulahdelah on route to Taree or Tuncurry from Sydney: Route 150 (Sydney – Taree) and Route 151 (Sydney – Tuncurry).

Busways also runs a daily Bulahdelah to Taree service (Route 154) on public school days, which leaves Bulahdelah at 7.10am, reaching Taree at 8.35am and returns from Taree at 3.15pm, arriving at 5.03pm at Bulahdelah.

There are a series of school bus runs provided by Busway that transport children to the Bulahdelah Central School during the morning and afternoon. St Josephs Catholic School also provides a dedicated bus service for its students.

3.2.2 Education

Bulahdelah Central School

Bulahdelah Central School is a public school that provides primary and secondary education. In 2008 there were 526 students, 167 primary students and 359 secondary students, and 44 staff

Bulahdelah Central School is also the secondary education provider for Tea Gardens, Hawks Nest, Booral, Coolongolook and Bungwahl. The School received funding for a new library as part of the Building the Education Revolution program.

There is a network of public schools serving the region: Tea Gardens Public School serves the Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest areas; and small public schools located at Booral Public School, Coolongolook Public School and Bungwahl Public School.

St Josephs Primary School

This is a Catholic school located in Bulahdelah. In 2008 the school had 28 students and 4 staff.

St Clare's High School, Taree

This is a Catholic high school serving the area including Bulahdelah. In 2008 the school had 609 students.

3.2.3 Community

A good network of community organisations exists in the local area:

- Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Inc.
- Country Women's Association - Bulahdelah
- Bulahdelah Spinners & Weavers Guild
- Bulahdelah Show Society
- Bulahdelah Historical Society
- Bulahdelah & District Progress Association
- Anglican Church
- Catholic Church

3.2.4 Recreation

Parks

A good network of public open space exists and has been recently upgraded.

- Wade Park
- River Park
- Bulahdelah Showground
- Bulahdelah Playground (in Showground)
- Bulahdelah Skate Park (in Showground)
- Bulahdelah State Forest

The parks and playgrounds are used by local residents and as a rest area for drivers using the Pacific Highway.

Sporting facilities

Sporting facilities are centralised at the Bulahdelah Showground:

- Jack Ireland Sports Complex (in Showground) – 2 playing fields, cricket pitch
- Bulahdelah Tennis Club (in Showground)
- Bulahdelah Swimming Pool (in Showground)

Public library

Bulahdelah has a public library located at Meade Street that is part of the Great Lakes Library System.

The library is open the following hours: Wednesday 2.30pm-5.00pm and Friday and Saturday, 9.30am-11.30am. Library services include:

- Internet Access - Free
- Photocopying
- Fax
- Newspapers
- Reserves
- Reference Material
- Inter Library Loans

Halls and meeting places

Bulahdelah School of the Arts (capacity for 352 people)

3.2.5 Children's Services

The only childcare centre in the local area is Bulahdelah Pre-School.

This is a private pre-school/child care centre. It is licensed for 25 children but currently has two staff and around 20 children. It operates Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but could expand to meet any future demand.

The current capacity of the facility was confirmed by telephone interview with Gai Tooze, Director of the Bulahdelah Pre-School.

3.2.6 Health

Bulahdelah is part of Hunter New England Health Service - Lower Mid North Coast Cluster

GP services

There is one (1) GP in Bulahdelah.

Hospital

The Bulahdelah Community Hospital is located on the corner of Richmond and Crawford Streets. The Hospital is a 12 bed acute medical rural hospital with a 2-bed Emergency Department. A General Practitioner services the hospital and a 24hr emergency service is provided. There is no Medical Officer on site. The Hospital provides:

- Aged Care
- Palliative Care
- Medical Care
- Emergency Care
- Radiology (twice weekly)

The nearest rural referral hospital is the Manning Hospital at Taree. This hospital provides a broad range of specialist services to the local area including Greater Taree, Great Lakes and Gloucester Local council areas. The hospital has specialist wards/units for Surgery, Day Surgery, General Medicine, Critical Care, Obstetrics, Paediatrics, Emergency Services, Oncology, Palliative Care, Rehabilitation, High Dependency Nursing and Mental Health. The hospital has 166 beds including 20 Mental Health beds and treats approximately 12,000 inpatients and 20,000 Emergency Department patients each year.

Community Health

The Bulahdelah Community Health is located in Richmond Street.

Community Health Centre provides a range of services:

- Aged Care
- Child & Family Counselling
- Continence
- Diabetes
- Dietetics
- Early Childhood Nursing
- Genetic Counselling
- Generalist Care
- Mental Health
- Paediatric Occupational Therapy
- Paediatric Physiotherapy
- Paediatric Speech Therapy
- Palliative Care
- Women's Health

The Community Health Centre services are available on an appointment / clinic basis.

Ambulance

An ambulance station is located in Bulahdelah.

3.2.7 Aged Care

Home Care

One of the main sources of support for older people in Australia is the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program. HACC is jointly funded by the Australian and State governments and in NSW is administered by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. HACC services help frail older people and people with a disability that would otherwise be prematurely or inappropriately admitted to residential care to live independently in their own home.

Great Lakes Council provides local HACC services, as does the Home Care service at Tea Gardens.

Residential Care

Great Lakes Nursing Home is a community-owned, not –for-profit nursing home. It provides the following:

- 10 approved low care places (hostel)
- 47 approved high care places (nursing home including 2 approved high care respite places)
- palliative care suite for residents and family (high care)
- 6 self care free standing cottages (2 bedroom)

Great Lakes Nursing Home has plans to expand on the current site by 3 more self care units. This is the limit of expansion possible on the current site.

Currently, the self care and low care units are at capacity and there are 6 unfilled high care places. Within the context of the future development of residential aged care in the region (particularly the expansion of aged care in Tea Gardens) the existing facility could meet additional local demand.

The capacity of the existing facility was confirmed by telephone with John Ireland, Executive Officer of Great Lakes Nursing Home.

Support services

Senior Day Care provides indoor/outdoor activities for the frail aged and disabled once a week from the Bulahdelah School of the Arts.

3.3 Housing and accommodation

3.3.1 Housing stock

Separate houses predominate in Bulahdelah and are 91% of all dwellings, compared to Great Lakes where 76.5% of dwellings are separate houses (Figure 3-4). In Bulahdelah more than 5% of dwellings are alternative dwellings such as cabins and caravans, compared with around 1% in NSW as a whole.

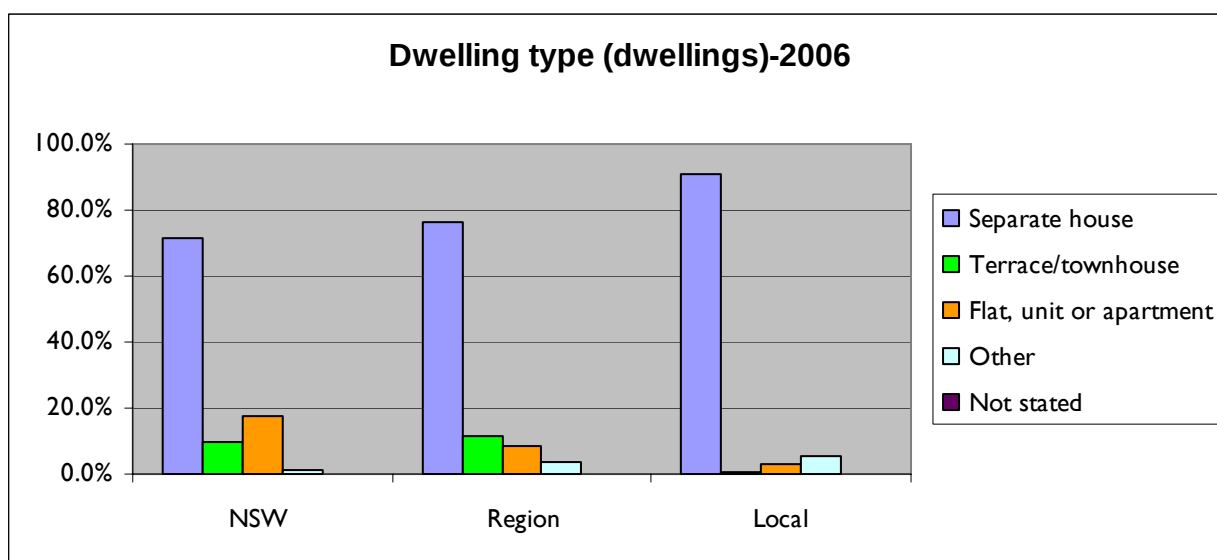


Figure 3-4 Dwelling type (dwellings) 2006

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

3.3.2 Tenure type

The level of full home ownership in Bulahdelah and in Great Lakes are higher, both around 50%, than in NSW as a whole, where full home ownership is around 35% (Figure 3-5).

The proportion of the Bulahdelah population purchasing their home (25.5%) is also higher than in Great Lakes (21.5%) but lower than in NSW as a whole (32%).

There is also a lower proportion of persons renting in the local area than in Great Lakes. 29.5% of the population of NSW rent their dwelling, but only 24% in Great Lakes and 21% in Bulahdelah.

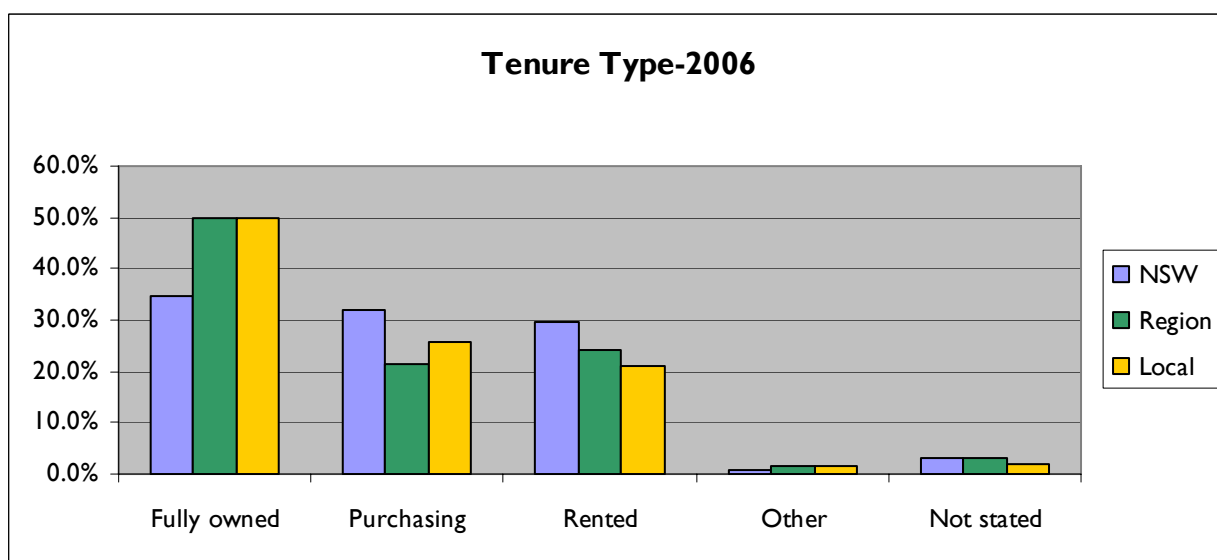


Figure 3-5 Tenure type-2006

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

In Bulahdelah the proportion of the population renting from real estate agents is low compared to NSW and Great Lakes. 43% of the those renting in Bulahdelah rent from a real estate agent compared to 55% in the Great Lakes. In Bulahdelah renting from a “private individual not in the same household” is high

compared to Great Lakes and NSW as a whole. In Bulahdelah, the level of public housing, whether rented through a state housing provider or a community housing provider is significantly lower than in Great Lakes and NSW as a whole.

3.4 Employment

Figure 3-6 and Figure 3-7 show Employment by industry-2006 and Employment by occupation-2006, respectively, for Bulahdelah, Great Lakes and NSW.

Both Bulahdelah and Great Lakes have large proportions of their working age population (those over 15 years old) not in the workforce. In Bulahdelah more than 40% were not participating in the labour force and in Great Lakes more than 50%. In NSW as a whole the same group forms only 34% of the working age population.

In Bulahdelah and Great Lakes, the proportion of labour force unemployed was 6.2% and 9.3%, respectively. This is much higher than NSW as whole where the figure was 5.9%. The main employers in Bulahdelah are:

- retail trade
- accommodation & food services
- health care & social assistance
- education & training

In Great Lakes between the 1996-2006 census periods there was a proportional contraction in employment in the region in agriculture, forestry and fishing; mining and wholesale trade. Job creation over the same period occurred in construction industry; service industries such as health; retail trade; accommodation and food services; education and training; professional, scientific and technical services; public administration and safety; arts and recreation services; administrative and support services; transport, postal and warehousing; electricity, gas, water and waste services; rental, hiring and real estate services. There was a slight increase in manufacturing jobs (Hawkins 2008).

The timber industry and manufacturing were also major employers in Bulahdelah.

Compared with Great Lakes there were lower proportions of people in Bulahdelah employed as professionals but a higher proportion of people in Bulahdelah were employed as:

- community & personal service workers
- machinery operators & drivers
- labourers

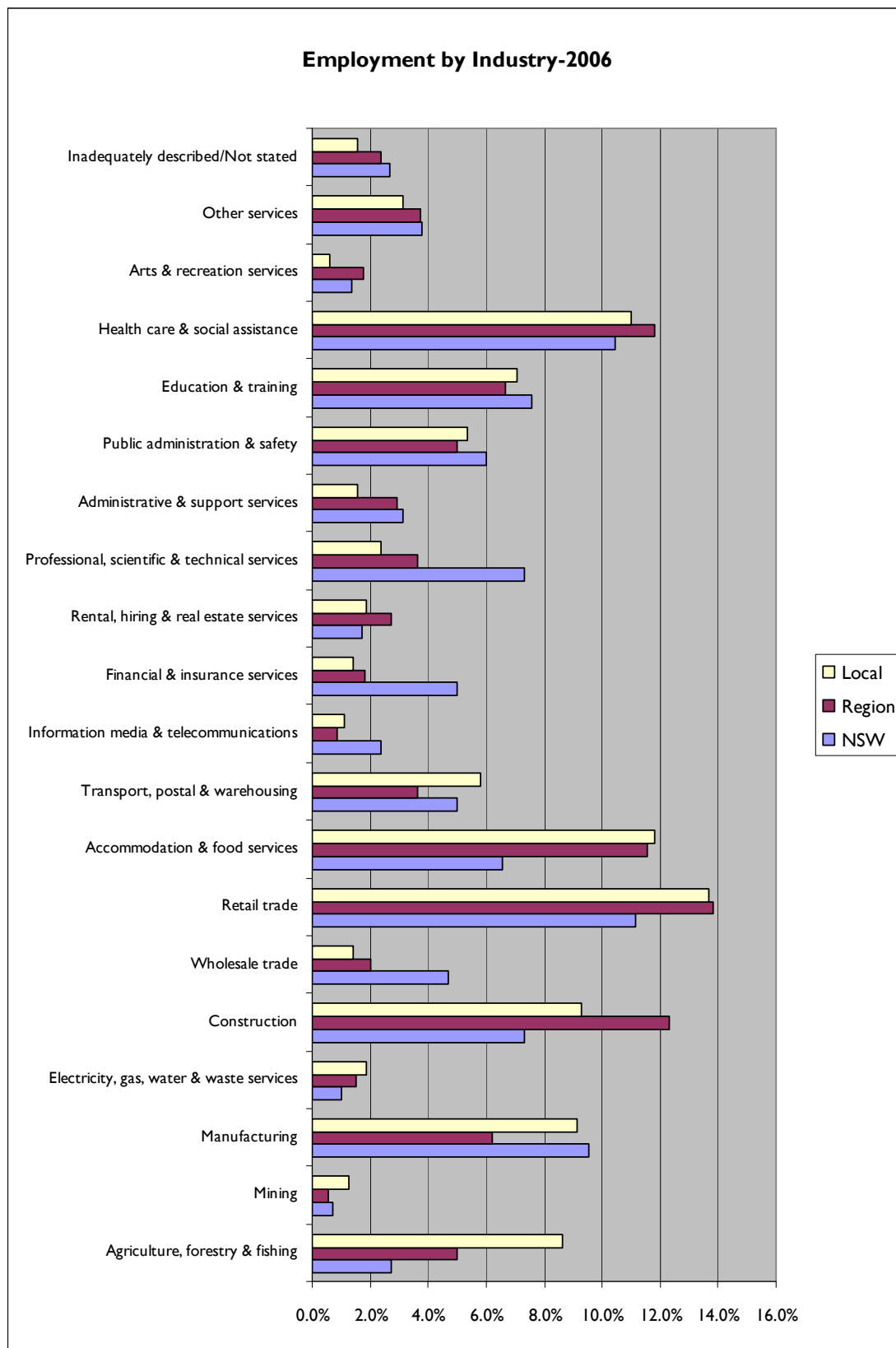


Figure 3-6 Employment by industry-2006
Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

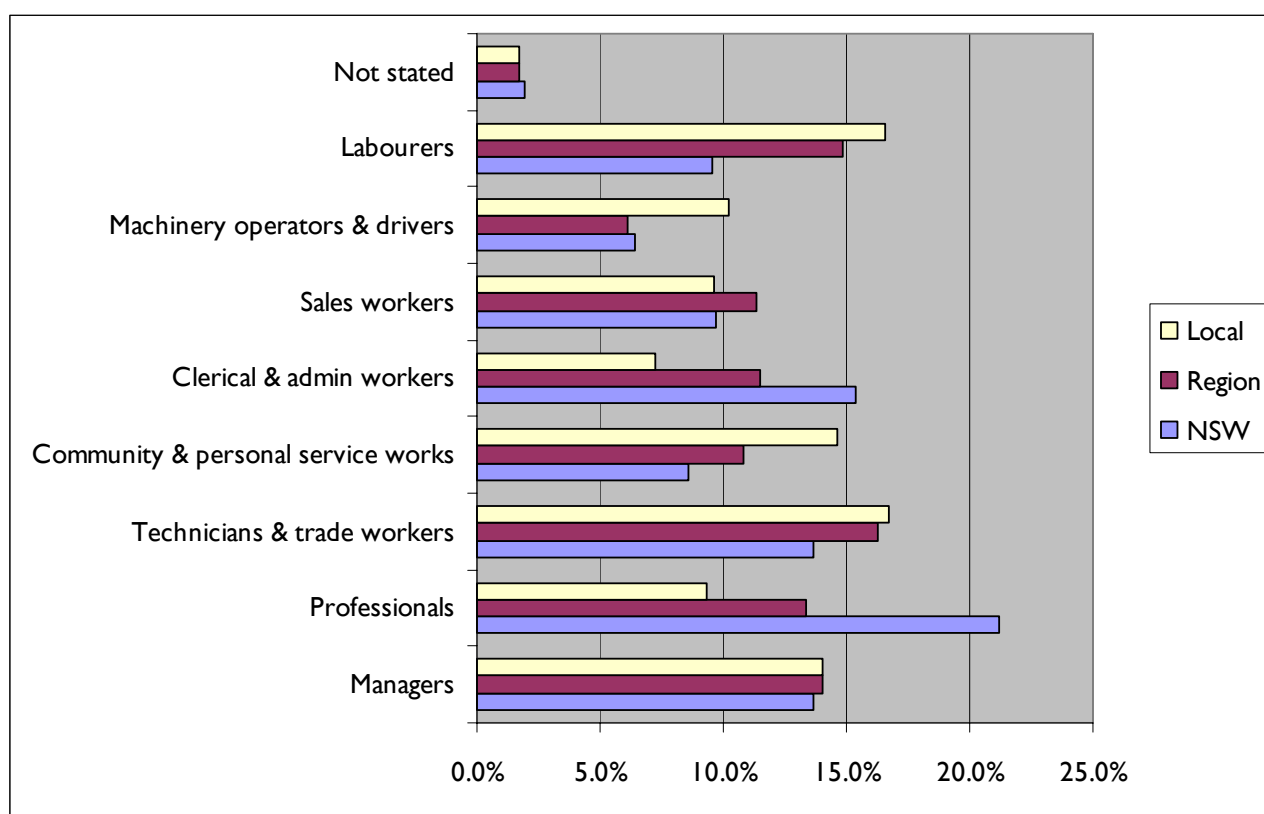


Figure 3-7 Employment by occupation-2006

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

3.5 Income

The median weekly individual, family and household incomes in Bulahdelah were higher than in Great Lakes but lower than NSW as a whole (Table 3-1).

Bulahdelah has a higher proportion of households with incomes in the higher level, above \$1,700 per week, than Great Lakes but around the same proportion in the lower levels (below \$500 per week).

Table 3-1 Median Weekly Income

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

Median Income	Bulahdelah	Great Lakes	NSW
Individual	340	338	461
Family	791	747	1181
Household	622	611	1036
All are \$ and weekly income			

3.6 Retail services

Bulahdelah has two retail functions. In the retail hierarchy, it functions as a town, with a small concentration of retail, health and other services and a catchment of between 2-5 kilometres. Higher order centres, such as Forster provide wider retail and commercial services.

Bulahdelah also currently functions as a highway service centre and in 2004 this role was estimated to generate around \$8.6 million in annual revenue for the town (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2004). In 2004 the main businesses in Bulahdelah were (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2004):

- petrol stations and motor vehicle repairs
- food stores (tourists and local convenience demand)
- restaurants, cafes, takeaways
- service industries (real estate agents, chemist, newsagency, clothing store, hairdresser, credit union and the
- Myall River Produce store)
- tourist accommodation
- tourism-related businesses
- clubs and hotels

A small local supermarket (IGA), also serves the township. These local businesses were found to be highly dependant on passing trade. There is expected to be a short-term loss in business as a result of the Bulahdelah Bypass although there may be some improvements over time due to increased highway usage and other mitigation measures such as townscape improvements (Great Lakes Council 2010). Council's Great Lakes Council's Highway Service Strategy seeks to reinforce Bulahdelah as a highway service town so as to partly mitigate the impacts of the relocation of the highway around the township.

3.7 Summary of existing community characteristics

3.7.1 Population

- Bulahdelah has:
 - » slightly younger population than Great Lakes LGA
 - » low numbers of people born overseas
 - » lower levels of educational attainment than Great Lakes
 - » mostly settled population with high numbers of people at the same address 5 years ago
 - » more one parent families than Great Lakes LGA
 - » fewer couples without children than Great Lakes LGA
 - » high level of car ownership

3.7.2 Social and community infrastructure

- Public transport focused on links between major centres or dedicated to particular user groups (school children)
- There are a large number of services located within the Bulahdelah township including the local hospital, branch library and public school
- There is also a good network of community organisations that offer recreational outlets and contribute to community connectedness in Bulahdelah
- Other services are provided by outreach from Taree, Gloucester, or Forster-Tuncurry

3.7.3 Housing and accommodation

- Bulahdelah has:
 - » Predominantly separate houses
 - » High levels of home ownership
 - » Lower level of renting, with high levels of renting from private individuals rather than real estate agents

3.7.4 Employment

- Bulahdelah has:
 - » High levels of working age population not in workforce
 - » High level of unemployment
 - » Most people employed in retail and accommodation/food services
 - » Most people employed as labourers and technicians/trade workers

3.7.5 Income

- Bulahdelah has median weekly incomes higher than Great Lakes

3.7.6 Retail

- Bulahdelah is a local centre as well as a highway service centre
- The importance of passing highway trade is strong in the local economy

4 Social Impact Assessment

4.1 Demographic change

4.1.1 Population projections

Great Lakes Council has prepared population projections for Bulahdelah (forecast.id 2010) based on the following specific assumptions¹:

- Age-specific birth rates based on historic data for the area, modified based on the forecast age structure at each year of the forecast
- Death rates based on historical estimates for Great Lakes Council
- 288 new dwelling commencements during the period 2007-2031
- Declining average household size, from 2.33 in 2006 to 2.13 by 2021
- In-migration of young families, that is people aged between 25-39 years old and their children aged 0-9 years old
- Out-migration of young adults, aged 18-24 years old, and people aged over 75 years old

The forecast projects a 0.5% increase in the population between 2006 and 2031. Figure 4-1 shows the change in the age profile of Bulahdelah Central Rural based on the population projection. The main changes in the population over the period 2006-2031 are expected to be:

- Number of people aged under 15 years old is forecast to decrease;
- Number of people aged over 65 old is expected to increase;
- 75-79 year olds is the age group which is forecast to have the largest proportional increase (relative to its population size) by 2021;
- Changes in household composition are forecast to be:
 - » largest increase will be in couples without dependents;
 - » proportion of one parent families will decrease;
 - » proportion of lone person households will increase; and
 - » proportion of couple families with dependants will decrease.

¹ The area used by Great Lakes Council for the population projections is larger than both the local area as defined in Section 3.1 and the township of Bulahdelah. The area used for the population forecasts includes the township of Bulahdelah, several small villages and the mostly rural localities of Bombah Point, Boolambayte, Crawford River, Markwell, Mayers Flat, Mungo Brush, Myall Lake, Topi Topi, Upper Myall, Violet Hill, Warranulla and Yagon. The population of this area in 2006 was 1,842 persons and the projected population in 2031 is 2,107 persons.

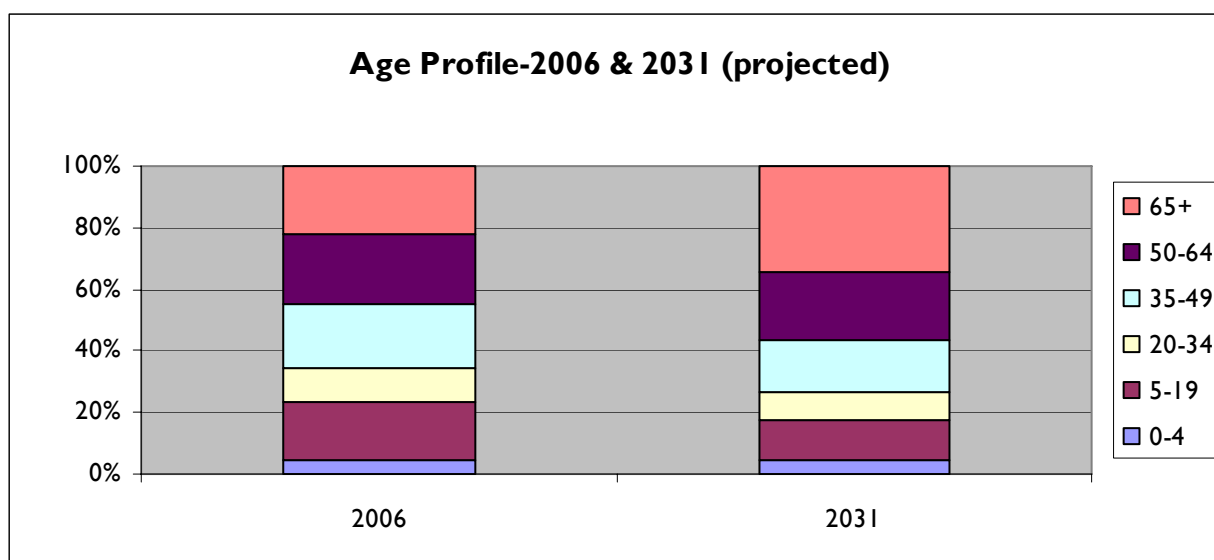


Figure 4-1 Bulahdelah Age profile 2006 compared to 2031 forecast

4.1.2 Population impacts of the subject proposal

The additional dwellings resulting from the subject proposal were not factored into the Great Lakes Council population forecast. The additional population following the completion of the subject proposal will be approximately 480 persons and the total population of the local area approximately 2,150 persons. This is based on 200 dwellings on the site and an average household size of 2.4 persons per household (the current average household size). However, the actual population is likely to be lower as it is expected that average household size will fall over the period.

It is expected that the new population resulting from the proposal will be generally consistent with the forecast above because the assumptions used generally apply to the subject proposal:

- The proximity of the subject site to facilities such as local schools will mean it is attractive to young families
- The subject site is not suitable for “seniors housing” (see Section 4.6) and therefore it will not result in an increase in people over 75 years old. Although there are local aged services, as they age a proportion of any new population will still need to relocate to obtain these services in the future.

Therefore following the completion of the subject proposal, it is likely that the population of Bulahdelah will continue to be older than the NSW average but slightly younger than the rest of Great Lakes.

Unlike the forecast above, the subject proposal will likely result in a local population with a slightly larger proportion of couples with dependant children. There may also be fewer young people leaving the local area because of the additional employment opportunities, although this will not be substantial.

4.2 Accommodation and housing

The Department of Planning requirements requested that the environmental study examine the following issues in relation to accommodation and housing:

- Sources of demand for additional housing
- Considerations of housing market
- Merits of Greenfield development as compared with infill development

This section describes the strategic context for the housing market and then presents some of the general features of rural housing markets. The general features are then applied to local conditions to draw some conclusions about the subject proposal, sources of housing demand and the housing market.

4.2.1 Forecast dwelling and housing growth

The Mid North Coast Regional Strategy has established the framework for future dwelling and housing growth in the area. There are four subregions in the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy: Clarence, Coffs Coast, Hastings-Macleay Valley and Manning Valley-Great Lakes. Bulahdelah is within the Manning Valley-Great Lakes.

Manning Valley-Great Lakes is expected to grow by 15,000 additional dwellings and the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy aims to focus this residential growth on the four major regional centres and six major towns. As such, most of this development will occur in Forster-Tuncurry and Taree but Bulahdelah could accommodate some of this target, if proposals meet certain environmental conditions. The subject proposal would contribute 200 lots to meeting this target.

4.2.2 Rural housing markets

This section presents some general features or attributes of rural housing markets². This discussion will provide a framework that can be used to examine the local housing market.

Housing costs

Rural and regional areas tend to have lower cost housing markets than metropolitan areas. For example, Table 4-4 shows that compared to NSW as a whole, in the Mid North Coast Region the median house price is lower.

Table 4-1 Median House Prices - December 2009

Source: Housing NSW

LGA	Median '000	Change in median QTLY %	Change in median Annual %
Great Lakes	330	3.1	8.6
Coffs Harbour	352	10.3	14.7
Hastings	371	11.3	14.9
Greater Taree	275	7.8	12.2
Rest of NSW	308	10.0	15.1
New South Wales	420	7.7	16.7

Lower housing costs do not necessarily translate into “affordability”, as housing affordability is related to the proportion of household income spent on housing costs and rural areas may have lower average incomes than metropolitan areas. Housing affordability in rural areas can also be influenced by seasonal factors (see below).

Accessibility

This attribute is related to the ability of residents to access employment and services. Rural housing markets have been described as having poor or limited local private and community services, with many people needing to relocate to larger centres to obtain services.

² Based on: Beer (1998), Jones & Tonts (2003), Wulff, et.al (2005), Wulff, et.al (2007), and Tually, et.al (2010).

Access to employment is a particularly important factor in housing markets and is changing in rural areas. Improved roads have made commuting from rural areas to metropolitan and regional centres a possibility and more attractive to a broader range of households. Telecommuting, sole operators and the changing commuting needs of tree/seachangers and older people are also important emerging factors.

Adequacy of housing supply

As with all markets, supply affects prices. The supply of housing can be affected by the size of the supply industry (which is relatively small in rural areas) and the level of planning controls.

In rural areas the range and type of housing stock is also important. The standard of housing in rural and regional areas has been characterised as “generally lower” than in larger settlements and therefore tends to be less diversity in housing stock (for example, fewer smaller dwellings, particularly for rent). A more diverse range of housing stock has been recognised as an important factor in promoting local economic development (Beer 1998).

Life stages and lifestyle changes

The patterns of life stages and household formation affect housing markets, forming the demand side of the market. There has been a general trend in Australia to smaller household size, which requires more dwellings to meet population increases. Lifestyle changes also influence the housing market. For example, there has been an increasing trend towards living alone amongst older people. The “sea change” and “tree change” phenomena have been important in influencing housing choice in regional housing markets, as people move to rural areas that they believe offer a more pleasant and relaxed lifestyle. In some cases this has resulted in rising house prices and poorer access to housing for local long term residents.

Seasonal and unique economic factors

Resource booms impact on housing supply, affordability and quality as do seasonal factors such as holiday periods and seasonal workforce requirements, for example, harvesting or picking seasons.

4.2.3 Local housing market

Great Lakes has been characterised as an expanding housing market (Wulff, et.al 2007). The area is attractive to many people as a sea change/tree change location because of its climate, comparative affordability and access to recreational facilities such as beaches, national parks, etc. Bulahdelah fits this pattern but also offers a number of differences that distinguish it within the housing market.

Housing costs

Housing costs in Bulahdelah are lower than in NSW as a whole and lower than the other areas of the Mid North Coast (see Table 4-1). The median house price in Bulahdelah, as at December 2009, was \$220,000³.

Bulahdelah is therefore comparatively affordable. In terms of price it is attractive to households in metropolitan areas of NSW but also to those already living in Great Lakes, who may be finding other areas of the LGA too expensive. Over 40% of those who moved to Bulahdelah in the five years before the last census were from another part of the Great Lakes Council area and over 47% of those who moved in the year before the census were from the Great Lakes Council area (see Figure 4-2).

³ PriceFinder - <http://www.pricefinder.com.au/>

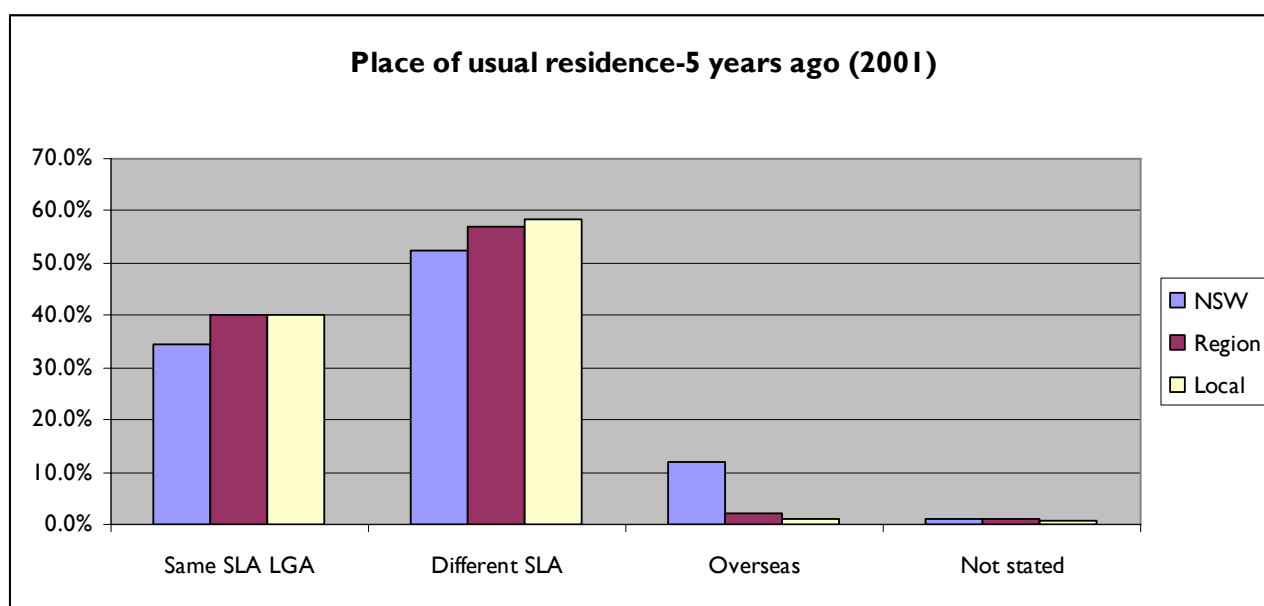


Figure 4-2 Place of usual residence, 2001

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing

Accessibility

Bulahdelah has good access to road transport and this will improve with the planned upgrades to the Pacific Highway. Public transport is poor but there is anecdotal evidence that some people buying in Bulahdelah are telecommuting or are professional people who work from home, reducing their regular commute.

In terms of access to services, Bulahdelah has a good range of services, within the existing Township. For young families, the Bulahdelah Central School, which has both primary and secondary education, will be attractive and for “baby boomers” the hospital and aged care facilities will be an incentive to purchase in Bulahdelah. The local provision of aged care is a particular advantage as it allows people to remain in the local community, rather than move to larger centres, if they become frail and unable to care for themselves.

Adequacy of housing supply

The ability of the local housing market to meet the needs of the growing population appears to be constrained.

Existing housing supply

There is a limited supply in the Township and other potential local developments do not appear to be able to offer diversity in the range of housing stock. Meeting the local demand through in-fill development will probably face a number of challenges.

Myall Park Estate

The Myall Park Estate is an existing residential development is north of Bulahdelah Township. The development comprises 34 lots, the smallest of which is 1ha and the largest is 4.5ha.

Around 41% of the lots have already been sold, the remaining are priced between \$199,000 (1ha) and \$450,000 (4ha), with the majority around \$220,000.

Other lots

Great Lakes Council has estimated that around 70 vacant lots exist within the township. There has been a comparatively low supply of residential lots for development on the market and in the last year only 5 vacant lots were listed for sale compared with 76 dwellings.

Some of the development lots available are constrained by environmental factors such as flooding. The two areas highlighted for future residential development in the Great Lakes Rural Living Strategy are Lee Street and Pacific Highway East precincts. These areas are adjacent to the existing Township. Lee Street is closely integrated with the existing township character, lot size and subdivision pattern and Great Lakes Council has foreshadowed that residential allotments will not be less than 1,000 sqm to ensure the new development compliments the character of the existing township. Pacific Highway East is adjacent to industrial land uses, which may conflict with future residential development. Both sites required a 300m buffer to the Pacific Highway.

In-fill development

As a means of meeting housing demand, in-fill development has a number of advantages (including the development of more compact urban centres) but there are also significant challenges in delivering in-fill development. The National Housing Supply Council (2010) has identified the challenges in providing additional housing through in-fill development, including:

- difficulties in aggregating and preparing land for construction
- securing development finance
- lengthy and sometimes uncertain planning and development assessment processes
- community opposition to infill

The National Housing Supply Council (2010) is focused on metropolitan areas and the provision of medium and high density housing but these issues are also relevant to Bulahdelah. There are few vacant development sites available in the town, which presents a challenge to aggregating sites to prepare land for development. The existing large vacant sites close to the Township (Lee Street and Pacific Highway East) need to fit into the established subdivision pattern of the Town. Offering diversity in housing types on these sites will be difficult and may meet with community opposition. A Greenfield development in this location, such as the subject proposal, will not have difficulty in delivering development sites and provides the opportunity to offer more diverse housing types, such as “resort style living”.

Life stages and lifestyle changes (current demand)

The population of Great Lakes is expected to increase over the next 20 years by more than 33%. A smaller population increase is also expected in Bulahdelah. In Bulahdelah and Great Lakes, average household size fell between 2001 and 2006 and is predicted to continue to fall. These are the main drivers of demand in the local and regional housing market. Sales since 2004 demonstrate that part of the overall demand for housing in Great Lakes is being directed to Bulahdelah, with on average sale of 23 houses per year. Although this has dropped in 2010, demand for housing in Bulahdelah is expected to continue because of the positive attributes described above.

Table 4-2 Bulahdelah Sales 2004-July 2010

Source: PriceFinder

Year	# Houses Sold
2004	20
2005	19
2006	19
2007	21
2008	21
2009	39
2010 (to 9 July 2010)	4

Seasonal and unique economic factors

Bulahdelah is less affected by seasonal factors than other coastal towns in the region because of its inland location, which is less dependent on tourism. However, the proposal is adjacent to a tourist resort that may generate and accommodate seasonal demand.

Conclusion

It appears that the consistent demand for new housing in Bulahdelah will not be met by the existing supply. Bulahdelah has a number of attractive attributes, including that it is more affordable than other parts of the Mid North Coast. It has a good range of local services, particularly medical and health services. The subject proposal is also able to offer a distinct product to the local market, such as “resort style” housing, which contributes to the diversity of housing stock.

4.3 Facility requirements

DoP requires an assessment of the “sustainability of existing services, facilities and community infrastructure” be made in the LES. This section presents an assessment of the current and projected need for social infrastructure in the local area. Three perspectives on “social need”, based on Bradshaw (in Thayer 1973), are used: expressed need, normative need and comparative need. The assessment is based on a projected population described in Section 4.1.2.

4.3.1 Expressed need

“Expressed need” is the need stated by the community in the form of a request for a service. In Bulahdelah Great Lakes Council strategic planning has been used as the source for expressed need. These plans are:

- Great Lakes Council’s Recreation & Open Space Strategy
- Great Lakes Council’s Rural Living Strategy

The Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce has also prepared a “Bulahdelah Strategic Community Plan” (with the assistance of NSW Department of State and Regional Development).

Table 4-3 Expressed needs in Great Lakes Council Strategic Plans

Source of expressed need	Need
Recreation & Open Space Strategy	Upgrade of recreational facilities such as park benches, play equipment More activities for young people
Rural Living Strategy	Halt population decline – increase in population will generate employment Quiet enjoyment not dense residential area distant from town Conserve natural environment and current standard of living and provision of services Focus on facilities in existing villages to ensure services are not lost More information on local activities
Bulahdelah Strategy Community Plan	Upgrade of recreational facilities such as park benches, play equipment More activities for young people Lobby to retain hospital

4.3.2 Normative need

Normative need is determined based on benchmarks for service provision established by “experts”. The benchmarks used in this report are based on Growth Centres Guidelines (Growth Centres Commission 2006).

Facility	Benchmark	Comment
EDUCATION		
Public Primary School	1:1,500	Primary school facilities already exist within 5km of the subject site. The existing school is part of a network of schools in the region and the projected population will not trigger the requirement for an additional school.
Public High School	1:4,500	Public high school facilities already exist within 5km of the subject site. The existing school is part of a network of schools in the region and the projected population will not trigger the requirement for an additional school.
HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE		
Community Health Centre	1:20,000	Community Health Centre already exists within 5km of the subject site. The projected population will not trigger the requirement for an additional community health centre.
Hospital	2 beds: 1,000	Hospital with 12 beds already exists within 5km of the subject site.
AGED CARE		
Aged Care Housing	1:10,000	6 existing self care units exist. This will be expanded to 9 in the future. These units supply demand to the region but would be able to accommodate local demand.
High Care (Nursing Home)	40 beds; 1,000 people 70yrs+	Currently 47 places. The existing facility is part of a network of services and any additional local demand is expected to be able to be accommodated by changes in the network capacity.
Low Care (Hostel)	48 places: 1,000 people 70yrs+	Following the completion of the subject proposal, the local population of people aged over 70 years is expected to be fewer than 1,000 persons.
Youth Centre	1:20,000	The projected population will not trigger the requirement for a youth centre.
Community Service Centre	1:60,000	The projected population will not trigger the requirement for a community service centre.
Childcare facility	1 place: 5 children 0-4 yrs	The 25 existing places are expected to be able to accommodate the expected number of children between 0-4 years old.
After school care facility	1 place: 25 children 5-12 yrs	Potential service gap. Approx 7 places will be required.
CULTURE		
Branch Library	1:33,000 (2,400 sqm)	Existing branch library. The projected population will not trigger the requirement for an additional branch centre.

Facility	Benchmark	Comment
Performing Arts/Cultural Centre	1:30,000	The projected population will not trigger the requirement for a cultural centre.
EMERGENCY SERVICES		
Ambulance		Existing.
Fire Station		Rural fire service. NSW Fire Brigade: Tea Gardens.
Police Station		Existing.
COMMUNITY CENTRES		
Local	1:6,000	The projected population will not trigger the requirement for a community centre.
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION		
	2.83ha: 1,000	Existing 19ha open space in Bulahdelah exceeds benchmark requirement.

4.3.3 Comparative need

Comparative need is “deduced by the outside observer, in circumstances where individuals not in receipt of a particular service have similar characteristics to others who do not receive it” (Thayer 1973).

Comparative need focuses on equity of service.

The number and capacity of services in the local area and the region is adequate. Community services operate within a network of services to ensure there is efficiency in delivery and reduce the duplication of services within an area. Bulahdelah is well placed in these networks. It is the hub of a network of health and aged services for the region, with a local hospital and aged care facilities and part of the network of Home and Community Care (HACC) services that are centred on Forster and the Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest area.

The key comparative need issue is the distance of the subject site from the local services. A range of services is located within 5km of the proposal (many are within 3.5km) but access to these services will generally require a motor vehicle. For many residents this will be adequate but for a number of groups access will be difficult, particularly, children, young adults, older people and people with a disability.

HACC services address these accessibility issues by delivering the services in the home or transporting clients to centres to receive services. Access to HACC services will therefore not be an issue, as the subject site will be well connected to the road network. Information about these services will need to be available to new residents so will be able to access them. A community transport service is also available to Bulahdelah (delivered from Tea Gardens) as part of the suite of HACC services. This will assist many less mobile HACC clients to access services by providing individual transport for medical and social needs.

While this is sufficient for certain types of services, there should additionally be local provision, on the subject site, of some services and facilities to meet the needs of those groups that do not have access to a motor vehicle, even though this may result in some local duplication.

The most important facility of this type is children’s play areas, as the advantages of local access to play areas are well documented in the literature (Frank et.al 2003; Beatley 2004; Woolcock, et.al 2008). Bulahdelah as a whole is well served by children’s play areas and open space but access to these facilities from the subject site will require a motor vehicle.

4.3.4 Summary - social infrastructure needs

In terms of normative needs the local area generally meets or exceeds the benchmarks. The additional residents could assist in maintaining the viability of local services, in particular the existing childcare facility. In the future, there may be additional need for after school care places.

In terms of comparative need, local children's play areas and open space for informal recreation within walking distance of the proposed residential area should be incorporated in the detailed design of the subject site, based on the design guidelines for active living and community safety (see Section 4.4). Information about HACC services should be available for residents.

The subject proposal is consistent with the expressed needs of the local community, as it contributes to the viability for local services and the additional residents may provide a rationale for retaining the hospital in the town.

4.4 Neighbourhood and community

DoP requires a discussion of the "functional relationship of proposal with existing town and relevant issues in terms of 'integration' of its community with the existing community". This section discusses issues of community cohesion, particularly the subject site's physical separation from the existing Township. There are well-established design guidelines that enhance the liveability of residential areas and these have also been discussed in this section.

4.4.1 Community cohesion

The subject proposal is physically separated from the existing Bulahdelah Township, but is in the same area as an approved tourist development. There is the risk that this could result in the creation of a separate community focused on the tourist development rather than integrated with the existing Bulahdelah Township community.

The basis of "community" is networks and the interactions between people, which establish trust and reciprocity. An important element of building networks is opportunity for positive interaction on a regular basis. These may be informal interactions (for example, while shopping or using community services and facilities) or formal interactions, at community meetings or community events. The physical separation of the subject proposal presents a potential barrier to these types of positive interactions that build community.

The existing Township will remain the logical location for the new residents to undertake convenience retail shopping and access local services. Maintaining these in the existing Bulahdelah Township will assist in overcoming the barriers to integrating the new residents into the existing community and will facilitate informal connections between the new residents and the existing Township community.

There are also existing formal opportunities for interaction. There are already community run local events, such as the markets, which focus on the existing Township and provide a site for new residents and existing residents to interact. Community engagement on issues related to the Township is currently being undertaken on local issues such as the Bulahdelah Bypass, the town centre improvement program and the local community strategic plan. While these issues may be resolved by the time the subject proposal commences, they form the basis of a culture of engagement and cooperation within the community.

There appears to be some readiness for change amongst existing residents. Discussions with local service providers showed a willingness to incorporate new people into community, particularly as a way to maintain the viability of the Township, and this is a key theme of the strategic plans already developed for the area. It is reasonable to expect that new residents will be welcomed into the community as a way of supporting these initiatives.

Managing expectations about rural living are also important. Many of the people buying in Bulahdelah are doing so because of their idea of a “rural lifestyle”, which is based on large physical separation between dwellings, and the lifestyle advantages that this brings, (lack of noise, crowds and traffic). Sometimes these expectations are not met by people making “tree/seachanges” which can lead to disillusionment with their new lifestyle (Byles-Drage 2005).

Misunderstanding about expectations can also result in land use conflict. Land use conflict is defined in *Living and Working in Rural Areas* (NSWDPI 2007) as where “there is disagreement or dispute as to the use of land and/or feeling that a person’s rights or well being or the rights of the environment are being threatened by an action or undertaking of another or the inaction of another”. As the *Living and Working in Rural Areas* suggests these conflicts are often the result of incompatible views, expectations and values.

Clear information about what is and is not available in Bulahdelah would assist in dealing with this issue, as potential residents could make informed decisions about whether to move to the area. The subject proposal is adjacent to the Golf Course and will be integrated with the proposed tourist and brewery developments, which may help to avoid these issues because the link between rural land uses has already been broken. There is scope in designing any future subdivision to ensure that there is an adequate separation between potentially conflicting uses.

4.4.2 Accessibility

Witherby (1993) found that rural areas have a number of accessibility issues. Car ownership in rural communities tends to be high, public transport poor and any public transport is focused on connections between larger centres and capital cities. The dependence on the motor vehicle has a number of social costs, including social exclusion because less mobile people are cut off from accessing services and engaging with the community, which has been exacerbated by the reduction and centralisation of services. While there are social costs associated with dependence on motor vehicles, the issue of motor vehicle usage in rural areas is also complex. For example, motor vehicle running costs can be lower in rural areas and driving a more pleasant experience than in metropolitan areas because there is less traffic congestion (Gray 2004).

Bulahdelah generally fits the pattern described by Witherby (1993). There are high levels of car ownership and limited public transport, which is focused on connecting the Township with the larger centres on the Sydney to Taree and Tuncurry routes. While there are many community services and basic retail services located in the Township, higher order retail and specialist services must be accessed in the major towns, which are predominantly accessible only by car. Residents working in regional centres, such as Forster-Tuncurry and the Upper Hunter, may also face long commutes.

These issues apply to any development in the Bulahdelah area, whether within the Township or on its outskirts. One advantage of the subject proposal is that, because of the number of services in the Township, residents are driving comparatively short distances compared with many other rural residents.

Bulahdelah is also undergoing change that will influence transport patterns. The Pacific Highway Bypass will result in reduced traffic in the Township, which will improve local driving conditions and the Township’s “walkability”. There are also patterns emerging that are reducing motor vehicle usage. Some of those employed at the tourist facility may live at the subject site; anecdotal evidence also suggests there is a reasonable level of telecommuting and working from home amongst new residents in new developments in the area.

Bulahdelah currently does not have a dedicated taxi service, which is an important part of rural public transport. The proposed tourist facility may result in an improvement in public transport provision if a regular taxi service is introduced in the future. The proximity of the subject proposal to the tourist development could therefore result in improved accessibility for the new residents.

There may also be opportunities to provide a small-scale local bus service that shuttles tourists and residents from the subject site into Bulahdelah. The cost of running the bus could be supported by the brewery and tourist development and perhaps also by the golf course or be available subject to a small fee.

The costs of motor vehicle dependence though fall most heavily on those without regular access to cars, such as children, older people and the disabled, and those for whom the cost of keeping a car may be high, such as young people. As part of the subject proposal there is the opportunity to provide specific accessible services to these groups, for example, a local playground for children and walking paths. General advice on the design of these facilities is provided below.

4.5 Design guidelines for improving liveability

Design considerations for encouraging active living

There is excellent research that suggests that well designed places that contribute to physical activity also contribute to healthy lifestyles, including reducing obesity and incidence of heart disease (Frank et.al 2003).

The Heart Foundation (2004) has developed design guidelines for improving health outcomes in communities, shown in Table 4-4. As a Greenfield development the subject proposal provides the opportunity to implement these design recommendations.

Table 4-4 Design considerations for encouraging active living

Source: Based on *Healthy by Design: a planners' guide to environments for active living*

Design Consideration	Comments
Walking and cycling routes	Attractive, integrated and accessible walking and cycling routes encourage alternative modes of transport because residents can travel with ease and safety.
Streets	Legible street networks with attractive frontages encourage residents to walk, which also connects local people through casual interaction
Local destinations	When food stores, schools and community facilities are accessible by foot or bicycle they provide destinations that encourage walking and reduce dependence on the motor vehicle
Open space	Parks and open spaces provide attractive places for people to walk and cycle as well as being used for active recreation activity such as sport
Public transport	Accessible public transport connects people to places, can reduce reliance on the motor vehicle and encourage walking.
Seating, signage, lighting, fencing and walls	Appropriate and good quality physical infrastructure in public places encourages physical activity and improves the safety and comfort of people using public places.
Fostering community spirit	A sense of ownership of public places contributes to reducing crime by encouraging natural surveillance. Spaces set aside for community activities provide destinations for walkers and cyclists.

The detailed design of the subject proposal should focus on delivering specific elements to overcome the subject site's deficiencies in other areas, such as public transport. Achievable actions include legible street network, walking and cycling routes, and fostering community spirit. The proposed residential development, being adjacent to a tourist resort will also be able to offer "local destinations" for walking and cycling. The detailed design of the subject site should incorporate these elements.

The possibility of a walking and cycling linkage between the study area and Bulahdelah Township should be investigated, although it is acknowledged that the Pacific Highway presents a serious constrain for pedestrian connectivity.

Community safety

There is also research that suggests well designed places can contribute to a reduction in the incidence of crime and the NSW Police has developed design considerations for improving community safety outcomes in communities (NSW Police 2010). As a Greenfield development the subject proposal provides the opportunity to implement these design recommendations.

4.6 Needs of older people and people with a disability

“Seniors housing” is defined in the SEPP (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) 2004 as:

- a residential care facility,
- a hostel,
- a group of self-contained dwellings,
- a combination of these

The site will not be suitable for “seniors housing” of this type unless retail, commercial and community services are locally available (within 400m) or there is a local transport system to these services.

The subject site is suitable for more mobile older people and there is “seniors housing” within the local area. This means older people moving to the subject site would be able to later move to a local care facility to obtain more intensive care, if required.

The subject proposal is at the design stage and this provides the opportunity to incorporate housing that is suitable for people with a range of special needs and adaptable so that it meets changing needs into the future. The specific objective of incorporating adaptable housing should be included in the detailed design for the site.

4.7 Economic issues

4.7.1 Economic multiplier during construction

The economic multiplier, the flow-on impacts of activities on other industries as a result of the construction, represents an economic benefit to the community. The construction industry is responsible for 6.6% of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the proposed development could have a strong positive economic impact on other industries through the multiplier effect.

At this stage it is not possible to quantify the state, local and regional benefits of the development as a because factors such as the origin of materials and construction contracts are yet to be determined. Following Holmes (2007) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (2007), the benefits flowing to the regional area could be as high as 40%.

4.7.2 Contribution to employment and dwelling targets

The proposal will contribute around 200 dwellings to the Great Lakes overall dwelling targets.

4.7.3 Mix of housing options

This proposal will renew the housing stock in the local area and offers the opportunity to provide a greater mix of housing options. Greater diversity in local housing options has been linked to local economic development (Beer 1998). This will be particularly important if Bulahdelah seeks to diversify its economic base, for example, to tourism from a heavy reliance on highway retail trade.

4.7.4 Impact on local retail

Bulahdelah Township has a heavy dependence on highway service trade (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2004). The subject proposal has the potential to increase the level of local retail purchases, in particular “convenience retail”, within the Township. This will be assisted by the proposed physical improvements to the Town’s streetscape and reduction in traffic as a result of the by-pass.

The subject proposal will be adjacent to an approved tourist facility, which includes retail premises. The intention of Great Lakes Council is that these premises only provide retail services to resort customers and the consent for the tourist facility requires that each of the proposed retail tenancies obtain separate approval. Great Lakes Council’s intention is that the resort retail does not become an alternative shopping centre to the main street of Bulahdelah. This approach will assist in ensuring that local retail spending is directed to the Township and does not “leak” to an alternative centre outside the established retail hierarchy but a clear policy basis will be required by Great Lakes Council to support this approach⁴.

Considering the high level of retail activity generated by passing highway trade, the proposal will not offset the loss resulting from the Bypass, but it will contribute to the viability of Bulahdelah as a town with a role in the local retail hierarchy.

4.8 Summary of social impacts

4.8.1 Positive benefits

- The subject proposal may reduce some of the impacts of the ageing local population by maintaining the proportion of couples with children in the population
- The subject site is well served by a range of community facilities and retail services
- The additional population will contribute to maintaining the viability of the local services and retail
- Maintaining services in the Township will contribute to integrating the new community with the existing Township community
- The subject proposal contributes to meeting Great Lakes’ dwellings targets without the challenges of in-fill development
- The subject proposal increases the diversity of the local housing stock, which will support any efforts to diversify the local economy
- New housing on the subject site can be designed to be adaptable and meet Australian Standards for access
- The subject site can be designed to incorporate crime prevention measures, encourage active living and avoid rural land use conflicts

⁴ See: *The Village McEvoy Pty Ltd v City of Sydney* [2009] NSWLEC 1232. The LEC dismissed an appeal against the refusal of a supermarket. The Commissioner argued: “I am most concerned that the approval of this proposal would be likely to pre-empt or constrain the proper planning approach that falls within the responsibilities of the relevant planning authorities. This concern is not about competition between supermarkets but instead about the considered determination of appropriate locations for them within the well-understood and accepted concept of a retail hierarchy”. Upheld on appeal: *The Village McEvoy Pty Ltd v City of Sydney* (no 2) [2010] NSWLEC 17

- The subject proposal may improve access to public transport (such as taxi services) because of proximity to tourist facility
- There will also be increased economic stimulus to the region from the flow-on effects of the construction work
- Increased population catchment for local businesses.
- Opportunities to provide more affordable homes in Great Lakes LGA.

4.8.2 Challenges

- The subject proposal requires use of a motor vehicle for access to most services and higher order retail
- The subject proposal will not increase the supply of “seniors housing” in the local area, as defined in SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004, as it is unsuitable for this use without the provision of additional local services. However, there are options to provide adaptable and accessible housing suitable for older residents.

4.8.3 Mitigation measures

- Incorporate children’s play areas and pedestrian walk ways in the detailed design of the subject site
- Ensure information on local services is widely available to new residents
- Ensure a clear policy basis exists to establish the central role of the Bulahdelah Township in the local retail hierarchy
- Ensure the detailed design of the residential area incorporates Safer by Design and Active Living principles
- Consideration of the linkages with the existing township and the possibility of future bus linkages.
- Consideration of housing designs in providing a mix of different housing types to cater for different populations.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this SIA has been to investigate and report on the impacts on human environment of the proposed rezoning of land for residential development at Bulahdelah in the Great Lakes Council area. It is expected that the subject site will accommodate 200 lots, which will increase the local population by less than 500 people.

The SIA presents demographic data about the existing community, based on the Bulahdelah Statistical Suburb, and a review of the existing community services and social infrastructure. Population projections for Bulahdelah prepared by Great Lakes Council, which did not include the subject proposal, were then reviewed. The assumptions used in these population forecasts were found to apply to the subject proposal and that the resulting population change will be generally consistent with the existing forecasts. The subject proposal may assist in reducing some of the impacts of the ageing local population by maintaining the proportion of couples with children in the population.

A review of the local housing market concluded that Bulahdelah has a number of attributes that make it attractive and that it would be able to sustain the subject proposal.

The existing social infrastructure was reviewed in the light of the changing population. The local area is well served by community facilities and services, however existing public transport options are poor, so the services will mainly be accessible via private motor vehicle. Dependence on the motor vehicle is common in rural areas and has a number of social costs, including social exclusion because less mobile people are cut off from accessing services and engaging with the community. To mitigate these costs, local provision of some facilities within the study area, such as playground equipment, should be considered in the detailed design and information about existing services should be provided to new residents.

While the subject site is physically separated from the existing Township the necessary social interactions that would integrate the new development with the existing community will be facilitated by the central role of Bulahdelah Township in the local retail and services hierarchy. GLC has stated that it will support the Township's retail role by not duplicating retail services at the new tourist resort. This approach should be supported by a policy that clearly establishes the retail hierarchy.

The detailed design of the subject site should incorporate the Active Living principles to ensure there are opportunities for walking and cycling that offset the reliance on motor vehicles for shopping.

The subject proposal will also have positive economic impacts, through flow-on effects of construction and the increased retail spending in the Township.

The report forms part of the necessary documentation prepared in accordance with section 57 of the EP&A Act and addresses the terms of reference provided by the DoP. The terms of reference have been addressed as follows in the report:

- Potential impacts/benefits for the wider community – refer to Section 4.8
- Sustainability of existing services, facilities and community infrastructure – refer to Section 4.3
- Sources of demand for additional housing – refer to Section 4.2.3
- Considerations of housing market – refer to Section 4.2.3
- Merits of Greenfield development as compared with infill development – refer to Section 4.2.3
- Functional relationship of proposal with existing town and relevant issues in terms of 'integration' of its community with the existing community – refer to Section 4.4

Overall, it is anticipated that the proposed development will have a significant positive social impact.

6 References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) *2006 Census Community Profile Series: Basic Community Profile*, Catalogue No. 2001.0.
- Beatley, T (2004) *Native to nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age*, Island Press: Washington.
- Beer, A (1998) "Overcrowding, quality and affordability: critical issues in non-metropolitan rental housing", *Rural Society*, 8, pp.5-15.
- Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce (2008) *Bulahdelah Community Strategic Plan*.
- Byles-Drage, H (2005) "Riverside and Rangesview: Urban to Rural Migration in Two Areas of Western Australia's Great Southern Region" *2nd Future of Australia's Country Towns Conference Bendigo* [electronic resource]. Assessed on 22 June 2010 from: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/csrrc/2ndconference/refereed>
- forecast.id (2010) *Great Lakes Council Population and Household Forecasts - Bulahdelah - Central Rural* [electronic resource] Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:
<http://forecast2.id.com.au/templates/forecast2/Clients/252Grea/PDF/100.pdf>
- Frank, L.D, Engelke, P.O, & Schmid, T.L (2003) *Health and Community Design: the impact of the Built Environment on Physical Activity*, Island Press: Washington.
- Gray, D (2004) "Rural Transport and Social Exclusion: Developing a Rural Transport Typology", *Built Environment* Vol.30, No.2, pp.172-181.
- Great Lakes Council (2004) *Rural Living Strategy*.
- Great Lakes Council (2006) *Recreation and Open Space Strategy [draft]*
- Great Lakes Council (2010) *Bulahdelah Bypass Plan Workshop* [electronic resource]
Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:
http://www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au/content/Public/Events_Directory/June_2010/Bulahdelah_ByPass_Plan_Workshopshop.aspx
- Growth Centres Commission (2006) *Growth Centres Development Code* [electronic resource] Assessed on 22 June 2010 from:
<http://www.gcc.nsw.gov.au/report-27.html>
- Hawkins, R (2008) *Recent trends in the Great Lakes labour market* [electronic resource] Accessed on 7 July 2010 from:
http://www.hvrf.com.au/pages/design/links/uploaded/recentchangesinthegreatlakeslabourmarket_final.pdf
- Heart Foundation (2004) *Healthy by Design: a planners' guide to environments for active living* [electronic resource]. Assessed on 22 June 2010 from:
<http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Healthy%20by%20Design.pdf>
- Holmes, S. (2007) *Employment and Economic Impact: Avey's Village*, prepared for Avery Village Partnership.
- Jones, R & Tonts, M (2003) "Transition and Diversity in Rural Housing Provision: the case of Narrogin, Western Australia", *Australian Geographer*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp.47-59.

LGSA NSW & NSW Office of Social Policy (1995) *Social Impact Assessment for Local Government – A Handbook for Councillors, Town Planners and Social Planners*, Sydney: LGSA.

National Housing Supply Council (2010) *2nd State of Supply Report* [electronic resource]. Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:

<http://www.nhsc.org.au/stateofsupply.htm>

NSW Department of Planning (2009) *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy*

NSW Department of Primary Industries (2007) *Living and Working in Rural Areas: A handbook for managing land use conflict issues on the NSW North Coast* [electronic resource]. Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/pubs/north-coast-land-use>

NSW Police (2010) *Safer by Design* [electronic resource]. Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:

http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/crime_prevention/safer_by_design

Parsons Brinckerhoff (2004) *Bulahdelah Upgrading the Pacific Highway Environmental Impact Statement Technical Paper 13 Social and Economic*, prepared for Roads & Traffic Authority. Accessed on 7 July 2010 from:

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/constructionmaintenance/downloads/pacific/bulahdelah/eis_tech_papers.html

Parsons Brinckerhoff (2007) *Riverside at Tea Gardens Economic Impact Statement*, prepared for Crighton Properties Pty Ltd.

Thayer, R (1973) "Measuring Need in the Social Services", *Social Policy & Administration*, Vol.7, No.2, pp.91-105.

Tually, S, Beer, A, Rowley, S, Haslam McKenzie, F & Birdsall-Jones, C (2010) *The drivers of supply and demand in Australia's rural and regional centres*, Positioning Paper No. 128, AHURI: Melbourne.

Vanclay, F (1999). "Social Impact Assessment", in Petts, J (ed) *International Handbook of Environmental Impact Assessment* (Vol 1), Oxford: Blackwell Science.

Witherby, A (1993) "Transport Beyond the Metropolis" in Sorensen, T & Epps, R (eds) *Prospects and Policies for Rural Australia*, Longman Cheshire: Melbourne.

Woolcock, G & Steele, W (2008) *Child-friendly Community Indicators – A Literature Review* [electronic resource]. Accessed on 22 June 2010 from:

<http://kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/Child%20friendly%20community%20indicators%20literature%20review.pdf>

Wulff, M, Legg, S, Reynolds, M, Healy, E, Hooper, A & Baum, S (2005), *Trends in non-metropolitan housing markets, 1991-2001*, Positioning Paper No. 83, AHURI: Melbourne.

Wulff, M, Legg, S, Reynolds, M, Healy, E, Hooper, A & Baum, S (2007) *Trends in non-metropolitan housing markets, 1991-2001*, Final Report No. 107, AHURI: Melbourne.