

Client

Roche Group

Project

Brimbin New Town Community Plan

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Contact

Jenny Vozoff
93872600
jenny@elton.com.au



Sydney
t (02) 9387 2600
PO Box 1488
Level 6, 332-342 Oxford St
Bondi Junction NSW 1355
f (02) 9387 2557
consulting@elton.com.au
www.elton.com.au
ABN 56 003 853 101

Prepared by Jenny Vozoff

Reviewed by



Steve Rossiter

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Contents

Executive Summary	1	7.5 Access to regional facilities	47
1 Introduction	3	7.6 Delivery, ownership and management arrangements	47
1.1 Purpose	3	8 Social issues and social impacts	49
1.2 Planning background	3	8.1 Key social issues	49
1.3 Site and project description	4	8.2 Social impacts	49
2 The policy context	8	8.3 Summary assessment of impacts	52
2.1 Planning strategies	8	9 Community development strategy	53
2.2 Greater Taree Council Policies	10	10 Voluntary Planning Agreement	55
2.3 Summary	12	11 Conclusions	56
3 The social context	13	12 References	57
3.1 Census data	13	Appendices	
3.2 Existing community facilities and human services	15	Appendix A – Population characteristics	58
3.3 Implications of the social context	15	Appendix B – Existing community facilities, human services and open space	60
4 Population projections	17	Appendix C - GTCC Criteria and Standards for Open Space	67
4.1 Brimbin dwelling mix and yield	17		
4.2 Population numbers	17		
4.3 Age and household characteristics	19		
4.4 Socio-economic characteristics	21		
5 Creating a socially sustainable community at Brimbin	22		
5.1 Planning principles	22		
5.2 Social sustainability principles	22		
5.3 Other strategies to encourage social sustainability	25		
6 Community facilities and human service strategy	27		
6.1 Guidelines for service provision	27		
6.2 Social infrastructure needs assessment	28		
6.3 Meeting identified social infrastructure needs at Brimbin	32		
6.4 State government social infrastructure	35		
6.5 Social infrastructure provided by non-government and private sectors	36		
6.6 Locational criteria for community facilities	39		
6.7 Delivery arrangements	39		
7 Open space and recreational facilities	42		
7.1 Open space needs	42		
7.2 Open space planning objectives	44		
7.3 Council open space standards	45		
7.4 Proposed open space provision	46		

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents a Community Plan for the new community of Brimbin New Town, to be developed within the Greater Taree Local Government Area. It has been prepared by social planning consultants Elton Consulting.

The Community Plan has been prepared to support the planning proposal (PP) for rezoning of privately owned land at Brimbin from RU1 – Primary Production, RU4 – Primary Production Small Lots and E2 – Environmental Conservation to a new mixed use community consisting of low and medium density residential uses, a commercial/retail centre, employment lands and conservation.

In broad terms, this Community Plan anticipates the likely needs of the future population for community facilities, human services and open space, and provides strategies to address these needs. Information contained in this Community Plan will also inform the Brimbin New Town Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) between Roche Group and Greater Taree City Council (GTCC), relating to open space and community and recreation facilities.

This assessment has been prepared following written feedback from a range of government and non-government agencies and consultations with:

- Greater Taree City Council
- NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), formerly the Department of Education and Training (DET)
- NSW Health (Hunter New England Area Health Service)
- A number of non-government service providers.

In addition to an introduction, the Plan comprises ten sections, as follows:

The policy context

The study provides an outline of current State and local government policies and plans that relate to social issues, community needs and social infrastructure of relevance to Brimbin. These have been used to guide the planning of social initiatives for Brimbin New Town.

The social context

The study has considered the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the existing

population in Greater Taree and for a smaller area incorporating the Brimbin site.

It has also undertaken an assessment of existing community facilities, human services and open space in the Greater Taree area to identify spare capacity and availability for use by the future Brimbin population.

Population and housing projections

It is proposed that Brimbin New Town will contain, at completion, approximately 8,000 dwellings, comprising a mix of dwelling types and sizes. These are expected to house approximately 22,000 residents.

Reflecting the mix of housing forms, it is expected that the Brimbin New Town population will have a diversity of age, household and socio-economic characteristics. It is expected that the bulk of new residents will be drawn mainly from the Taree and surrounding areas, and will reflect the characteristics, values, attitudes and lifestyles of the existing surrounding community.

Social sustainability

In describing how a socially sustainable community will be created at Brimbin New Town, the study has identified the social objectives of the development and a variety of strategies for their achievement. These relate to:

- Providing diverse, adaptable and affordable housing options that support ageing in place, residences for people of moderate incomes, quality lifestyle and a range of design choices
- Creating a network of green spaces to provide a safe and connected environment for different ages and lifestyles
- Establishing social and physical links to surrounding areas including walking and cycling paths
- Reducing greenhouse emissions through building orientation and design and encouraging sustainable transport
- Encouraging local enterprise through retention of rural land uses and activities, sizeable employment zones, mixed uses and neighbourhood centres within walkable communities, support for community capacity building and interaction to establish networks and establish a unique sense of place.

Community facility and human service requirements

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the community facilities and services required at

Brimbin New Town, in terms of local government social infrastructure, State Government facilities and services and those to be developed by private and non-government sectors. Key facilities to be provided will include:

- A multipurpose community centre within the mixed use centre. The facility will help fulfil a wide range of community needs including spaces for activities, meeting rooms, areas for delivery of outreach community health and support services, places suitable for functions and gatherings, youth and seniors' activities, playgroups, community education and life long learning, and other social and cultural activities. Development will be staged, with a temporary meeting room to be provided within the display centre for initial residents, followed by expansion to a small community centre at 3,500 households and completion of the facility at 7,000 dwellings
- A branch library to be co-located with the community hub
- Spaces for local activities at the neighbourhood level
- Three primary schools, one high school and provision for a special school. This may include independent or private schools subject to the level of interest from providers
- Police and emergency services
- Commercial spaces for provision of private medical and other services, entertainment, dining and social outings
- Places of worship
- Large areas of employment
- Public transport services linking places within Brimbin New Town and Taree.

Open space and recreation requirements

A variety of local and neighbourhood parks for active and passive recreation, together with lakes, riparian corridors, community gardens, courts, bowling greens, a substantial allocation of conservation lands, and a private golf course will be provided within Brimbin New Town. The level of provision will comply with the *Open Space Guidelines* prepared by GTCC, where a minimum of 22.66 ha of passive open space and 39.6 ha of active open space / sports fields is required. Embellishment will be consistent with facilities offered elsewhere within GTCC.

Social issues and social impacts

The report describes the ways in which Brimbin New Town will address key social issues within the region, including a need for diverse and affordable housing,

initiatives to address potential physical and social isolation, access to local employment opportunities, a need for quality social infrastructure and a particular need for activities and support for young people.

The report has assessed a number of possible social impacts of the development, including effects on the character of the locality, community integration, changes in demand for social infrastructure, impacts on visual amenity, access and traffic impacts, heritage items and neighbourhood safety.

No concerns have been identified with regard to the potential for social integration with adjacent local communities. Within a context of on-going population growth and change in the region, the characteristics and composition of the incoming population will facilitate acceptance of the new population. Social integration will be further enhanced by public access to and wider community utilisation of the facilities, services and recreation opportunities to be developed within Brimbin New Town, and by the proposed community development strategy.

The report concludes that potential negative impacts associated with visual amenity, traffic and construction will be mitigated through appropriate measures. Brimbin New Town has the potential to deliver a number of real and considerable benefits to the region and these will offset negative impacts likely to arise from the development.

Community development strategy

A community development strategy will be implemented at Brimbin New Town to help facilitate the formation of community networks and foster a sense of belonging. The strategy will include engagement of a community development worker (initially on a part-time basis), distribution of resident information packages and a community and stakeholder engagement program.

Voluntary Planning Agreement

A summary of Roche Group's offer to GTCC through a VPA is provided, together with comments on future delivery and management arrangements.

Conclusion

The report has considered the community facilities, human services and open space and recreation needs of the future population of Brimbin New Town and has identified strategies to ensure it will be developed as a socially sustainable community. The new community will contribute substantially to the mid North Coast Region in terms of housing supply, employment and social infrastructure, and can be developed without creating additional demands on existing facilities and services.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This report presents a Community Plan for Brimbin New Town, to be developed within the Greater Taree City Council (GTCC), approximately 8 km north of Taree. It has been prepared by social planning consultants Elton Consulting on behalf of the landowners and proponents, Roche Group.

The purpose of the Brimbin New Town Community Plan is to:

- Determine the community and recreational needs for the future population of Brimbin New Town
- Inform the future community planning and open space requirements for the growth area
- Inform the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) between Roche Group and Council.

This Community Plan sets out how the vision for a strong and socially sustainable community will be created at Brimbin New Town within an environment that offers an active lifestyle, local employment and an attractive and productive natural setting.

In broad terms, the Community Plan anticipates the likely needs of the future residential and workforce population for community facilities, human services and open space, and provides strategies to address these needs. It also identifies the strategies required for “community creation”, or “place making”, including the processes and arrangements required to create activate public areas, provide opportunities for residents to participate in community life and build the social networks and support systems required to sustain them.

The scope of the Community Plan includes:

- Population forecasts for Brimbin New Town, based upon the development scenario outlined in the *Draft Brimbin Structure Plan* (Roberts Day, May 2013a) and *Staging Plan* (Roberts Day, May 2013b)
- Consideration of broad housing needs, including provisions for housing diversity and affordability
- Requirements for community facilities, human services and open space to meet demand generated by the future residential and workforce populations of Brimbin New Town

- The strategies required to address those needs, including funding, implementation and delivery, management, and ongoing planning processes
- Provide a social assessment of the project, giving consideration to the range of possible social impacts and identifying positive and negative social impacts, including measures to ensure social integration with existing local communities
- Community development and place-making strategies to underpin community creation.

Preparation of the Community Plan has involved:

- A review of background studies and planning policies of GTCC and planning documents prepared in support of the rezoning, including the *Draft Brimbin Structure Plan* and *Structure Plan Report*
- An understanding of existing community facilities and open space in the surrounding area and their capacity to meet the needs of the future population, based upon information provided in previous studies, desktop analysis and consultation with Council staff and service providers
- Consultation with staff from GTCC to consider needs and strategies for social infrastructure provision
- Review of written comments received from relevant state government agencies to consider their strategies for providing facilities and services within Brimbin New Town
- Discussions with Roche Group and members of the consultant team

At the time of preparing this Community Plan, discussions in relation to a VPA had not been finalised. The Community Plan has been prepared to support and inform the VPA.

1.2 Planning background

Brimbin has been recognised as a location for future urban development, since the *Taree Wingham Urban Growth Plan* (Greater Taree City Council, 1990). It has since been included within numerous planning strategies and local environmental studies. The site is now identified in the NSW Government's *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* (2009) as a Future Urban Release Area and Employment Lands. Development of lands in this area is intended to complement and reinforce the role of Taree as a Major Regional Centre while also removing development pressure from coastal towns and sensitive coastal environments. Service provision will need to match the future population of the area, to ensure

adequate facilities are available for residents, but also to attract investment.

The *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* identifies significant issues that must be addressed before the rezoning is approved.

The *Draft Brimbin Structure Plan* (Roberts Day, May 2013a) has been prepared to address these and other issues of concern to GTCC and the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure (DPI).

GTCC has now re-started the rezoning process and is preparing a draft Local Environment Plan (LEP). The Planning Proposal will support preparation of an amendment to the *Greater Taree LEP 2010*.

1.3 Site and project description

Roche Group is preparing a Planning Proposal (PP), including a Structure Plan for the rezoning of a 3,763 ha parcel of land owned by the company, at Brimbin, NSW, approximately 8 km north of Taree. As outlined above, the land is designated as a future urban growth area in several strategic and local level land use plans.

The western boundary of the site includes the Dawson River and Brimbin Road. The eastern boundary is Lansdowne River. The majority of the site's northern and south eastern boundaries are neighbouring rural properties. Lansdowne Road and the North Coast Railway Line bisect the site (refer to Location Plan at Figure 1). Land to the east of Lansdowne Road is gently undulating, while to the west, the site comprises steeper areas and rolling hills.

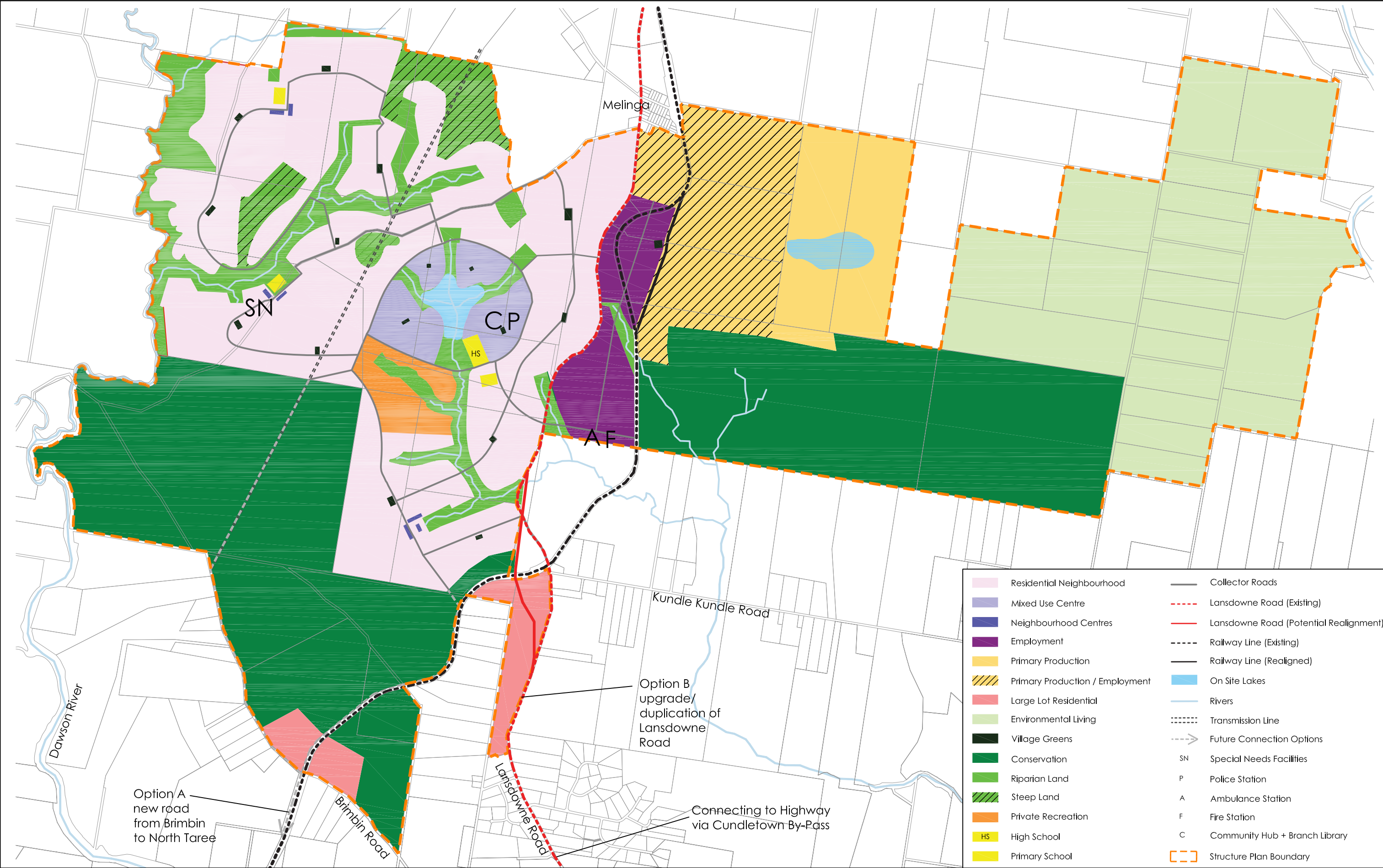
The rezoning would provide for the development of approximately 8,000 dwellings in a range of housing densities over the next 30 years, resulting in a population of around 22,000 residents with a mix of approximately 80% detached dwellings and 20% multi-unit dwellings. Approximately 874 hectares of residential land split between large lot residential, low density, medium density and seniors' living. This will provide a range of allotment sizes, dwelling types and encourage a mix of age and socio-economic groups to the area.

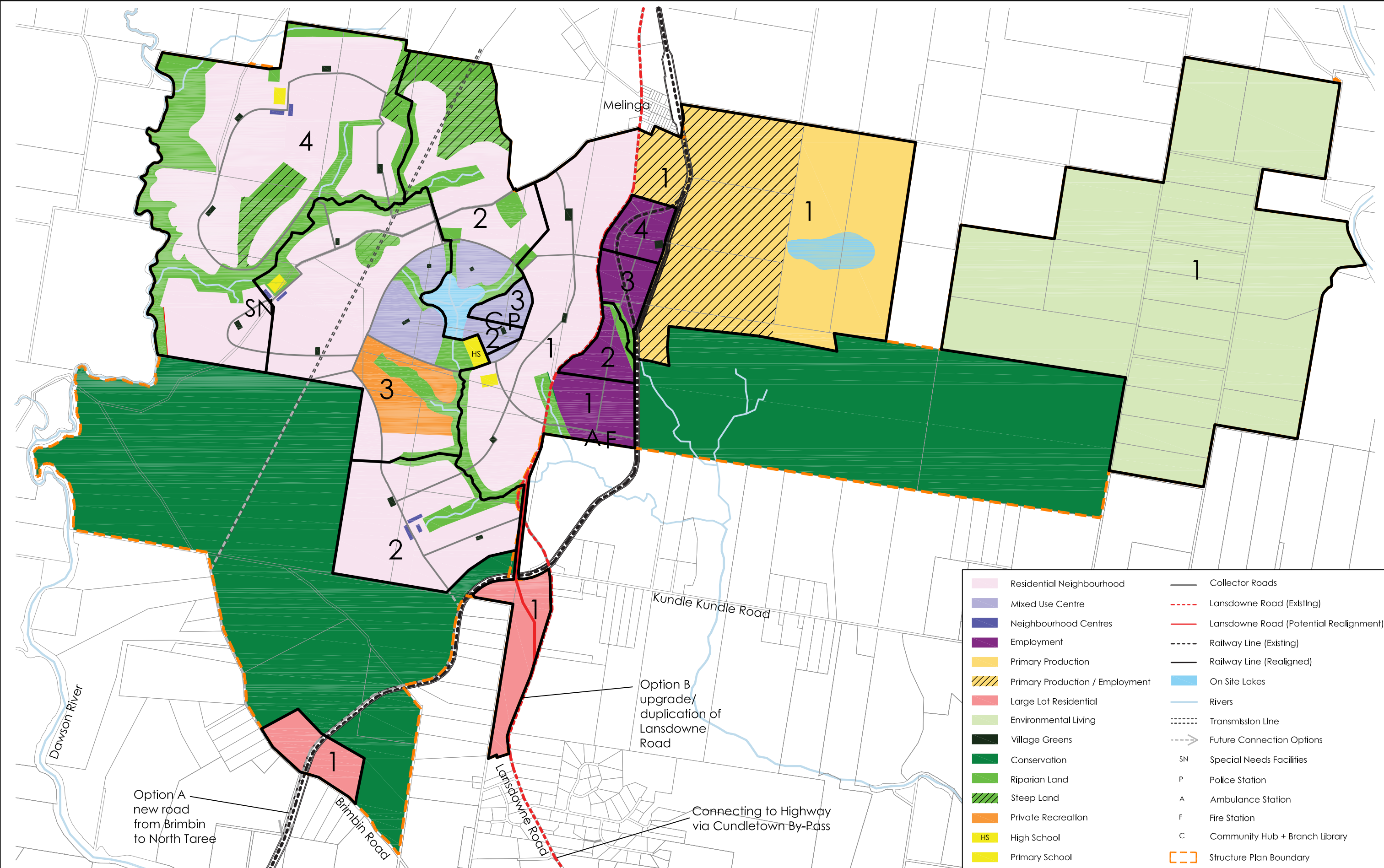
However, this community will be supported by a range of features to create an innovative and socially and environmentally sustainable community. Key features to support this new community will include:

- Approximately 112 hectares of employment lands allocated for bulky goods retailing, warehouse and distribution and general industrial uses. This will provide local employment for residents across a range of occupations and industries

- An additional 400 ha has been set aside for primary production, with some of that land possibly being used as an extension of the employment lands. This will ensure the area retains some of its rural character and economic base and encourage residents to source locally produced food and value added rural products
- A substantial portion of land dedicated to achieving regional environmental conservation outcomes, in particular providing a key habitat corridor linking the Dawson River and the Brimbin Nature Reserve in the west with the Lansdowne River, Lansdowne Forest and Cattai wetlands to the east. Retention of conservation areas will support environmental objectives and contribute to the attractive natural setting and active recreational opportunities for the local and Greater Taree communities
- Horticultural area for the intensive growing of plants (including protected cropping structures) to serve the local and State markets
- Retail centre providing opportunities for local business, general retailing and community facilities
- Recreation lake (existing lake to be augmented) providing public access to reserve and conservation areas
- Recreational areas providing sporting fields, netball and tennis courts, health club, bowling greens, a local golf and sporting club and hotel accommodation
- Open space in the form of high quality golf course, playing fields, neighbourhood parks and linear parks for passive recreation
- Community and social infrastructure comprising of schools, community centre and library, government business centre and emergency services
- An efficient and accessible network of roads including investigation of a new road link into northern Taree
- Allocation of land for a re-aligned railway corridor.

Development of the *Draft Brimbin Structure Plan* (Figure 2) has been guided by the vision to utilise the natural features of the area to create a community where living, working, interacting, undertaking sporting or leisure activities, pursuing interests and movement, can occur within a well designed environment, supported by the social infrastructure needed to attract and retain new residents and businesses.





Development of Brimbin New Town will be guided by the *Draft Brimbin Structure Plan* which identifies the location and size of different areas of land uses and an indicative road layout. The *Draft Structure Plan* structures development across 9 walkable neighbourhoods. These will be focused around three neighbourhood centres, each with a primary school, a small group of shops and facilities such as pre-schools. Local neighbourhoods will be designed to encourage active transport, including walking and cycling.

A mixed use area is situated near the lake in the centre of the western part of the site. The mixed use area will contain the main retail and commercial centre, as well as the high school, seniors' living, police station, a community centre, medium density housing, a hotel and recreational areas. Adjacent to the mixed use area, a 52ha private recreation area will be used as a golf course and for other recreational facilities.

The employment area will be located to the east of Lansdowne Road, with easy access to the rail line. Other lands will be zoned for agriculture, conservation areas and rural landscape.

Development is scheduled to begin in 2015, for completion within a 30 year timeframe. Four stages of development are proposed, each comprising approximately 2,000 lots. An indicative yield of 270 lots per year has been estimated, in line with the provision of trunk infrastructure, commencing in the south.

The development will deliver an estimated \$4.0 billion in direct expenditure and create approximately 20,000 full time equivalent jobs over the construction timeframe. Following completion, Brimbin will have the capacity to generate around 6,000 – 7,000 local full time and part time jobs by 2044 (Hill PDA (2012)).

The following section describes characteristics of the existing population near Brimbin and the range of community services and facilities available in surrounding communities, particularly Greater Taree.

2 The policy context

This section provides an outline of current State and local government policies and plans relating to community needs and the provision of social infrastructure that have been used to guide the planning of social initiatives for Brimbin New Town.

2.1 Planning strategies

2.1.1 NSW State Plan

The NSW State Plan 2009, *"Investing in a Better Future"*, contains a number of priorities and targets to guide Government decisions and funding. Those of greatest relevance to this study include:

- Focus on job creation, particularly for young people to increase youth employment and diversify regional economies
- Improve access to jobs and training and increase the number of jobs closer to home
- Increase the share of journey to work trips on a safe and reliable public transport system
- Boost active transport and increase walking and cycling
- Grow cities and centres as functional and attractive places to live, work and visit
- Improve housing affordability by ensuring an adequate supply of new dwellings and increasing the supply of affordable housing for low and moderate income households
- Increase the number of people using parks and participating in sporting and physical activity
- Increase the number of people participating in the arts and cultural activity
- Increase the number of people engaged in volunteering
- Improve child wellbeing, health and safety.

Development of Brimbin New Town will specifically address a number of these government priorities, such as contributing to the supply of new dwellings and affordable housing, provision of employment in the mid North Coast region including in areas close to residents, provision of parks and sporting facilities, high quality walking and cycling routes and design to encourage child friendly, healthy and safe

environments. The processes for providing for these needs are discussed in later sections of this report.

2.1.2 Mid North Coast Regional Strategy

The *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* provides the strategic planning framework for the future development and growth of the region over the next 25 years. The region is expected to house an additional 94,000 people in 59,600 homes by 2031, and will require another 48,500 jobs. Of these, the Manning Valley – Great Lakes region will need to cater for an additional 15,000 dwellings, in large part due to high levels of in-migration.

Other major trends identified in the Strategy include an ageing population and declining occupancy rates, which will impact on the types and availability of dwellings required:

"The median age is expected to increase from 44 years in 2006 to 55 years in 2031, and the population aged 65 years and over will more than double. At the same time the proportion of children under 15 years will decline from 19 per cent to 14 per cent of the regional population" (p. 6).

This indicates a future need for new types of housing, including accessible and adaptable multi-unit dwellings to cater for an ageing population. At the same time, communities face the challenge of managing this population growth and change "in a way that retains the coastal and local character of existing settlements, enhances a sense of community, prevents urban sprawl and limits damage to environmental and rural production values" (p. 6). New urban growth will need to support the role of Taree as a major regional centre.

Economic challenges include the need to support employment through the supply of adequate and well-located land, provision of support for existing primary production and a diversity in employment options.

The Strategy sets out 'neighbourhood planning principles' to guide the urban form of new developments. The aim is to create socially sustainable communities which are "better places to live, with attractive, adaptable and self-reliant settlements that foster a strong sense of community" (p.22). Councils are also required to draw on these principles and other best practice urban design guidelines to prepare statements about the desired character for each locality.

The proposed Brimbin rezoning is supported by and recognised within the strategic planning framework of the *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* and in particular will contribute to the Strategy's employment and dwelling targets and principles in a socially sustainable way.

2.1.3 Building liveable communities

The Hunter New England (HNE) Population Health has developed a resource for building liveable communities in the Lower Hunter Region. It outlines four principles which are considered essential for development of liveable communities: accessibility, sustainability, flexibility and connectivity.

Suggested principles for incorporation into the Structure Plan for Brimbin New Town include:

- Connectivity and public transport –access to public transport will support equitable access to employment, education and health services, allow ageing in place and a reduction in car dependency. A bus route should be accessible to all residents (400 m) and bus stops should comply with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Housing affordability and ageing in place – mixed housing affordability will minimise social isolation and disconnection amongst population groups. Affordable housing and housing for older people should be located near public transport and community services
- Open space and community facilities – these spaces should be available to everyone in the community and be flexibly designed so they can be used by a wide range of age groups, including good seating and shade trees. They should be located within 400-800m of residential dwellings and accessible by footpaths which are shaded by street trees, to encourage walking and cycling and physical activity
- Traditional neighbourhood design (TND) – this includes mixed use, pedestrian friendly communities and varied population, and retail outlets which provide affordable and healthy food options
- Access to fresh, healthy food – a community garden will promote local production and consumption of fruit and vegetables, increase physical activity and less car dependency to access food. Public space for a farmers market will also increase access to fresh local food.

These principles are incorporated into the *Draft Structure Plan* for Brimbin New Town.

2.1.4 Active Living Principles

The Premier's Council on Active Living has prepared guidelines to assist in the planning and development of new communities, to encourage active living for all groups (PCAL, June 2010).

Active living principles help promote healthy communities, reducing costs to State and National governments. Local government benefits from Active Living principles through encouraging community activity, improving amenity and supporting economic growth. Active Living design also creates features which can attract buyers to new development areas, "such as safe and aesthetically pleasing streets and local facilities" (p. 1).

The following principles of active living should guide future developments:

- **Walkability and connectivity**
- **Active travel alternatives**
- **Legibility**
- **Quality public domain**
- **Social interaction and inclusion.**

Walkability and connectivity relates to how friendly a place is for pedestrians and whether the environment and design encourages people to walk and is clearly signposted. Connectivity refers to the availability of clear and direct routes both within and beyond a development, and design for safe and easy access for people of all abilities

Active travel alternatives – refers to transport that requires physical activity, such as walking, cycling and public transport, and ensuring local traffic management does not discourage these modes. Planning mixed use precincts, and designing local centres, employment areas and community facilities near residential areas will help reduce car trips and promote walking.

Legibility – promotes easy 'wayfinding' and awareness of the local environment and direct routes, which encourage active transport

Quality public domain – supports Active Living by encouraging walking and cycling and providing appropriate facilities and areas of active and passive open space for exercise and rest within an attractive and safe environment. Planning for a safe and secure environment incorporates CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles

Social interaction and inclusion – Physical environments should be designed to bring people of all ages and abilities together. This can be achieved through design of active street frontages, active interfaces between the public and private domains and communal areas. Activity and interaction promote community safety.

Brimbin New Town will be designed in accordance with Active Living Principles.

2.1.5 Recreation and open space guidelines

The NSW Government's *Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government* (December 2010), update previous guidelines and provide a resource for Council to:

- Promote a standard approach to measuring demand for and supply of open space and recreation facilities
- Highlight the *major issues* to be addressed by Councils in developing open space and recreation plans, particularly in relation to the Metropolitan Strategy and regional cities' plans
- Present *options* for targets for local government provision of open space and recreation facilities
- Provide a *best practice guide* to assist Councils in planning their investment in open space and recreation.

In addition to needs assessment techniques and default standards, the guidelines contain a summary of recent trends and considerations when recreation and open space plans are being developed.

Considerations include:

- Changing population characteristics (eg ageing, diversifying, or becoming more or less affluent) will create shifts in needs and preferences. "For example, increased appreciation of natural and conservation values has increased demands for the retention and protection of land with landscape and environmental values" (p. 21)
- Consideration of the range of community aspirations to be met, the mix of facilities, and the staging, funding, development, management, programming and resourcing
- Differences in recreation patterns and preferences between communities and between areas
- Greater diversity in activities
- Wider array of participants
- Participation across a wider period of the day and week
- Growth in concern for the protection of, but more recreational use of, the natural environment
- Increased community awareness of the role of recreation and open space in promoting health
- Demand for higher quality, safer and more accessible facilities.

Considerations specifically relevant to new development areas and regional areas include:

- In addition to the quantity of open space, its location, connectivity and quality are critical
- Some regions have excess capacity in facilities, and therefore the focus should be on changing the role of open space provided
- Where population thresholds to support particular facilities are not met, the following factors should also be considered:
 - Economies of scale to share or co-locate with other facilities
 - Relative accessibility for residents from surrounding areas
 - Location of future growth areas.

2.2 Greater Taree Council Policies

Greater Taree City Council is in the process of preparing a Social Impact Assessment policy and guidelines for open space provision are currently on exhibition (see section 3.2.2). Council has advised that it does not have any stated policies or strategies in relation to ageing, disability or cultural planning.

2.2.1 Manning Valley Community Plan 2010-2030

Council's major community planning document is the *Manning Valley Community Plan 2010-2030*. Demographic and social characteristics of the Manning Valley contained in the Plan are summarised in Section 2.1.1. The *Community Plan* then sets out the findings of a lengthy community engagement process in which residents were asked about important values and future directions for their community. Assumptions about the future included:

- A stronger role for the Manning Valley as a regional centre
- Slow, steady growth (approximately 1% pa), resulting in about 5,000 additional households in the LGA over the next 20 years

Five major themes identified during consultations were:

- The state of infrastructure and the need to "look after what we've got"
- The need to respect the natural environment
- The importance of building a strong economy with opportunities for education and employment

- The value that people place on a sense of community, the lifestyle that they enjoy and the need to build civic pride in the region
- The importance of providing strong leadership and governance to ensure the “things get done” and sound decisions are made.

Key issues included:

- The need for strategic planning and funding to improve infrastructure standards
- Reducing dependency on vehicles and increased provision of public transport, cycleways and walkways
- Maintaining the area’s unique character through a balance between development and conservation and quality urban design
- Encouraging sustainable development and protecting waterways
- Supporting existing businesses, including tourism, and encouraging new business to relocate to the region
- Provision of infrastructure, adequately zoned land and access to vocational training to support business
- Encouraging connections and partnerships

Of particular relevance for Brimbin New Town are the 12 key lifestyle objectives set out in the Plan:

- Ensuring a range of suitable and affordable housing
- Promoting a sustainable source of locally grown food
- Providing opportunities for life-long learning
- Maintaining and improving health care facilities
- Providing a range of opportunities for recreation and leisure
- Providing a range of sporting opportunities for local, district and regional activities
- Maintaining and strengthening the role of public libraries
- Encouraging the arts and cultural activities
- Actively working towards reconciliation and respecting Aboriginal culture

- Ensuring the Valley’s heritage is valued and preserved
- Building strong community relationships
- Promoting a sense of community identity.

Community members expressed a strong desire to be involved in decision making about the future of community life, especially in relation to projects affecting their local areas.

Provision of a range of housing types in future will allow residents to continue to live in the areas where they wish to live and have connections. The Plan encourages a range of affordable housing styles, accessible community services and facilities. In addition, the plan includes place management for key towns and villages.

Sport, leisure and recreational needs are also important local priorities. Strategies have been developed to ensure a range of well managed and maintained public places and recreational facilities are provided to encourage active use and promote participation.

Support for life-long learning is shown through strategies to encourage a university presence in the community and support for training and libraries.

The Plan is a ‘living’ document. Regular reporting and ongoing feedback will track progress on attaining the stated objectives.

2.2.2 DRAFT Open Space Strategy 2011

Greater Taree City Council (GTCC) has prepared a draft Open Space Strategy to guide the planning, allocation, design, development and management of open space within the LGA.

The Strategy aims “to make a difference to the community’s health, wellbeing and enjoyment by sustainably managing the open spaces of the Manning Valley.” It sets out a hierarchy for open space provision, catalogues existing areas of open space across the LGA and identifies areas of surplus and shortfalls.

The five goals of the Strategy are:

- **Sustainability/Partnerships** – Provide recreational and leisure opportunities that reflect sustainable outcomes, having regard to social and financial circumstances and constraints, whilst recognising and promoting the value of community partnership arrangements to achieve identified objectives.
- **Quality/Safety** -Plan for, and deliver, public open space based on demographically substantiated need, which will enable the

adequate development of high quality and safe recreation and leisure facilities that meet community requirements, whilst aiming to achieve best practice industry standards.

- **Equity/Access/Opportunity** - Provide an equitable distribution of open space within the council area, having specific regard to the issues of access and opportunity for the Manning Valley community.
- **Range/Diversity** - Provide a diverse range of quality recreational, leisure, and environmental facilities that reflect the needs, interests and aspirations of the community including, but not limited to, sporting fields and associated facilities, skate parks, passive parks, playgrounds, natural areas, civic spaces, waterway and beach facilities.
- **Environment/Amenity** - Provide opportunity to conserve indigenous flora and fauna, and provide fauna corridors and vegetative buffer area. Management of natural areas will seek to enhance positive environmental outcomes whilst minimising adverse impacts.

The Strategy also provides details of the design requirements for new areas of open space. These requirements are included in Appendix A.

2.3 Summary

In summary, the policies and strategies discussed in this section have a number of common themes which can be directly applied to Brimbin New Town:

There is an emphasis on the importance of building on existing regional strengths and identity, providing a greater range of housing types (in terms of products types and affordability), creating socially sustainable, active and healthy communities and engaging with communities and stakeholders to identify needs, build capacity and social cohesion.

Well designed communities play an important role in achieving strategic priorities such as community wellbeing, social inclusion, prosperity, education and housing affordability.

In addition, the policy review has identified a range of social issues that should be considered in this assessment.

This policy framework has guided planning for a sustainable new community and has helped to shape the social objectives and social infrastructure planned for Brimbin New Town.

3 The social context

This section of the report considers the social characteristics of the areas surrounding Brimbin, as context for the community planning assessment. It provides a summary of the population characteristics and an overview of existing services, facilities and open space in surrounding areas.

It is important to understand the social context of an area, to ensure that any new development proposal takes account of, and is responsive to, the surrounding social conditions. A key element of the social context is understanding the characteristics of the population that lives near the subject site, in order to assess how they may be affected by the development and how integration of new and existing communities might be achieved. Understanding the profile of the existing population can also help predict the characteristics of the population which will be attracted to the proposed development and anticipate the needs.

3.1 Census data

Characteristics of the population near Brimbin have been analysed at three levels:

- The Brimbin local area – No single census area covers the Brimbin site. The smallest area for which population data is available (the Census Collection District, or CCD) divides the site in two along the railway line. The characteristics of Brimbin are therefore approximated using two CCDs (1090910 and 1091005), as shown on the following maps. Although these CCDs cover a large geographical area, their combined population at the 2006 census was 1,179.
- The Taree local government area, with a population of 45,145 people in 2006.

Characteristics of these areas are then compared with NSW state averages.

Preparation of the social profile has been based upon:

- Data obtained from planning documents including the *Manning Valley Community Plan*
- Analysis of data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006. (It is noted that 2006 census data is dated, but this is the best available at this time. 2011 census data will become available in mid 2012).

3.1.1 Key population characteristics

Key features of the population are summarised in Table 1. Further data is presented in Appendix A.

Table 1 shows that:

Taree LGA has:

- Predominantly family households
- A relatively higher proportion of older people, lone person and couple only households. Associated with this, relatively low average household weekly incomes
- A comparatively low proportion of households comprising couples with children
- A relatively high proportion of the population of Indigenous descent and a very young median age within the Indigenous population
- A high proportion (over 86%) of detached housing.

The small area of Brimbin displays somewhat different features, due to its rural character and distance from Taree. Compared with Taree, this area currently contains:

- A significantly higher proportion of family households and lower levels of lone person households. Couples without children make up close to half of all households
- A higher than average proportion of high school aged children
- Households and individuals on comparatively low median incomes, reflecting employment characteristics, education levels and age
- Almost exclusively detached housing stock
- Higher than average rates of home ownership and homes being purchased.

Table 1: Summary of demographic characteristics for comparison areas

Indicator	CCDs that include Brimbin New Town	GTCC LGA	NSW
Population	1179	45,145	6,549,177
Age groups (%)			
0-4	4.3%	5.5%	6.4%
5-11	9.5%	9.8%	9.3%
12-18	14.1%	10.7%	9.5%
19-24	4.1%	5.2%	7.9%
25-34	4.9%	8.3%	13.6%
35-54	33.2%	27.1%	28.4%
55-64	15%	14.2%	11.0%
65-74	9.5%	10.5%	7.1%
75-84	4.2%	6.7%	5.0%
85+	1.3%	2.1%	1.7%
Median age (yrs)	44	43	37
Cultural diversity (%)			
Aboriginal or TSI heritage	2.2%	4.3%	2.1%
Overseas born	8.0%	7.7%	23.8%
Speaks language other than English at home	4.4%	1.9%	20.1%
Household type			
Family household	81.3%	69.6%	67.9%
Lone person	13.9%	25.1%	22.8%
Group household member	1.9%	2.3%	3.5%
Average household size (no. people)	2.8	2.4	2.6
Family structure (%)			
Couples with children	42.9%	36.7%	46.2%
Couples without children	46.6%	44.8%	36.0%
Single parent families	10.5%	17.5%	16.1%
Other family	0.0	1.0%	1.7%
Income (\$)			
Median individual income	Approx \$325-\$330	\$336	\$461
Median household income	Approx \$700	\$635	\$,1036
Unemployed (%)	10.4%	10.5%	5.9%
Housing types (%)			
House	98.1%	86.1%	69.7%
Semi-detached house	0.0	5.1%	9.8%
Flat/unit/apartment	0.0	6.4%	19.0%
Other	1.9%	2.4%	1.4%
Not stated	0.0	0.0	0.1%
Same address 5 years previously	58.7%	52.2%	51.4%
Housing tenure (%)			
Fully owned	48.7%	43.1%	33.2%
Being purchased	34.1%	27.2%	30.2%
Rented	12.0%	24.6%	28.4%
Other / not stated	1.0%	5.1%	8.2%

3.1.2 Population and housing trends

The *Manning Valley Community Plan 2010 -2030* (Greater Taree City Council, undated) states that the population of the Manning Valley is scattered across river, coastline and agricultural lands, or within the five main urban areas and 23 villages. The current population is expected to grow to 60,000 by 2030, at a rate of around 1% per annum.

"The demographics of the Manning are similar to other regional coastal areas. The majority of residents were born in Australia and have English as their first language. There is a higher proportion of older residents and a lower proportion in the 20-30s age group. Many of these young people leave the Valley for jobs and educational opportunities in the city, though

some will return in later years to raise their families and reconnect with the community” (Greater Taree City Council).

The area’s cultural history is also described:

“The indigenous people, the Biripi and the Worimi, are the traditional custodians of this place” (p. 7). The Manning Valley is rich in heritage and diversity, with thousands of years of indigenous history, its more recent rural agricultural development, and urban settlement. The beauty of the area’s natural setting and the strong sense of community underpin the area’s identity and its future opportunities.

The *Community Plan* identifies a steady increase in the demand for housing, particularly for housing types other than detached dwellings, and an expected increase in the numbers of single person households as the population ages.

Greater Taree City Council’s website notes the trend for different population groups to be attracted to different areas for particular reasons. For example:

“With the variety of residential and rural locations, areas within the City of Greater Taree have developed different roles within the housing market. The traditional centres of Taree, Wingham and Cundletown attract some families, but lose significant numbers of young adults to areas outside of the LGA. Coastal areas attract a large share of retirees, as well as some younger adults. The rural areas attract families, fewer retirees and lose significant numbers of young adults as they seek employment and educational opportunities in larger centres. The variety of function and role of the small areas in Greater Taree City means that population outcomes differ significantly across the LGA”
<http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=233&pg=5520>

3.2 Existing community facilities and human services

A variety of community facilities and services and open space are available in the GTCC area to meet local, district and regional social infrastructure needs. An overview of existing services and facilities is provided in Appendix B. Key findings are:

- Overall, considerable capacity within public high schools and primary schools to absorb new students at least until 2016
- A modest range of tertiary education facilities (UNE Taree campus / study centre, Taree campus of North Coast TAFE, Taree Community College and University of the Third Age - U3A), many of which focus on employment skills. There is a need

to travel to larger centres for most other tertiary courses

- A network of well used community centres, but a need for additional meeting rooms and venue for service delivery
- A wide range of higher order medical and health facilities including Manning Valley Hospital and Taree Community Health Centre, private hospital facilities and services, mental health, community health, Aboriginal health services, rehabilitation, allied health services and private medical surgeries
- Many groups and clubs catering for young people’s sporting and recreational needs both after school and during holiday periods
- High demand for family and youth support services, provided by government, not-for-profit (church or community based) or private sectors. Programs support the needs of Aboriginal youth and families, or provide counselling and support for young people and families more generally. Housing, employment, education and community health and disability support services are offered through a range of agencies
- A large number of services and residential facilities for older people are available through State and local government, private sector, community and faith based organisations
- Council provides a range of cultural facilities and cultural support services, including libraries and performance spaces, and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for residents from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Many parks and sporting facilities mostly owned by Council with some operated by the private sector
- Some regular bus services serving the major centres, although many services are focused around school transport

3.3 Implications of the social context

Understanding the characteristics and needs of the surrounding area and its population is important in considering how Brimbin New Town might respond to its place in the region and integrate with neighbouring communities. The social context provides both opportunities and challenges with regard to the integration of Brimbin New Town within the local area.

The social composition of Brimbin New Town is expected to have some similarities to the populations of the surrounding areas outlined in section 2.1

above. These similarities will assist in fostering social cohesion between new and existing populations. This issue is discussed further in section 5.2.2 of this report.

In the early stages of development, Brimbin residents will continue to rely on local services and facilities available within Taree and the wider area. Consistent with its current status as a rural area, Brimbin itself currently has very little in terms of local community and recreation facilities, human services and public open space. The existing local level facilities in adjoining areas will not meet the needs of, or be readily accessible to, the Brimbin New Town population. This highlights a need for a range of new local facilities and services to be established within Brimbin New Town.

Implications for Brimbin:

While there are a many community services and a range of social infrastructure within Greater Taree, few facilities are currently located in the vicinity of Brimbin itself, reflecting its rural character and dispersed population.

This presents an opportunity to provide quality new facilities based on leading practice social sustainability principles. Social infrastructure will need to meet the particular needs of the future community and create a point of difference to attract new residents to this area. The Vision and planning objectives for Brimbin aim to create a township with a full range of local services and facilities, while maintaining rural features which are valued by the community and contribute to the local economic base.

Some district and regional facilities within Greater Taree are already in high demand, such as the many services for families, young people and older people living in the Taree area. Others, such as schools, parks and sporting facilities appear to have spare capacity. The existing network of district and regional facilities and services provides a solid foundation to support the new community of Brimbin New Town. Facilities such as the community centre, library and open space planned for Brimbin will provide much needed additional space from which new services could be offered.

4 Population projections

This section presents population projections for Brimbin New Town, to be used as the basis for considering requirements for facilities, services and open space.

Demographic projections have been prepared as the basis for the needs assessments and other analyses contained in this report. Population forecasts have been based on the project description and indicative housing yield and mix outlined in Section 1.2. For modelling purposes, it has been assumed that 22,000 people will be delivered (subject to market conditions) at the average rate of 270 dwellings per year over 30 years.

4.1 Brimbin dwelling mix and yield

According to the strategic planning documents discussed in Section 1.2, the rezoning for Brimbin New Town will cater for approximately 8,000 dwellings and a final population of around 22,000. The expected dwelling mix will comprise around 80% detached dwellings and around 20% multi-unit dwellings. Multi-unit dwellings will include all forms of affordable, adaptable and seniors' housing. The proposal also allows for a small proportion of large lot residential and primary production land which will contribute only a minor percentage to the overall dwelling numbers.

Based on this development profile, the project is expected to result in the following dwelling mix and yield:

Table 2: Proposed dwelling mix, Brimbin New Town

Dwelling type	Mix (percent)	Yield (no.)
Large lots / rural	1	100
Detached traditional lot dwellings	80	6,400
Attached multi-unit dwellings (apartments, terraces, townhouses, retirement self-care and aged care)	19	1,500
Total (approx)	100	8,000

4.2 Population numbers

4.2.1 Population growth

The population of the Greater Taree region is expected to continue to increase steadily over coming years in line with Department of Planning and Council forecasts. Council's population forecasts are based on a continuation of past trends, as shown by the following statement:

"The importance of Greater Taree as a destination for retirees from areas further south is expected to continue over the forecast period. As a result of this there is some pressure for residential expansion within Greater Taree from both existing residents and from people moving to the area.

It is assumed that this pattern will continue into the future, driving development on the outskirts of Taree and in the coastal townships. Another major development that will have a significant impact on population change in the City of Greater Taree is the development of the new town, Brimbin. While it is unlikely to be completed by 2031, it is likely to be competing with Wingham as the second largest centre of the City by this period."

<http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=233&pg=5000>

Forecasts are available for each year from 2006 to 2031 as shown below.

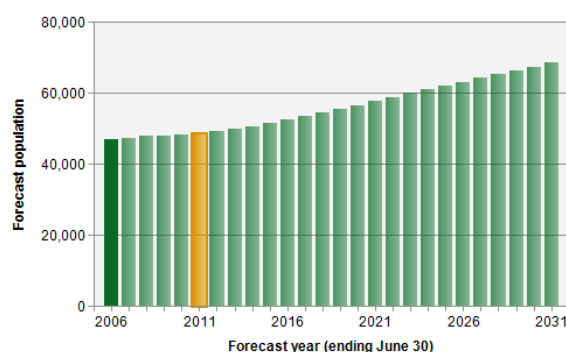
Table 3 GTCC Population Forecasts

Brief statistics	Greater Taree City
Forecast population 2011	48,695
Change between 2011 and 2031	19,758
Average annual percentage change between 2011 and 2031 (20 years):	1.72% per annum
Total percentage change between 2011 and 2031 (20 years):	40.58%

Source: Greater Taree Population and household forecasts

<http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=233&pg=5000>

Forecast population, Greater Taree City



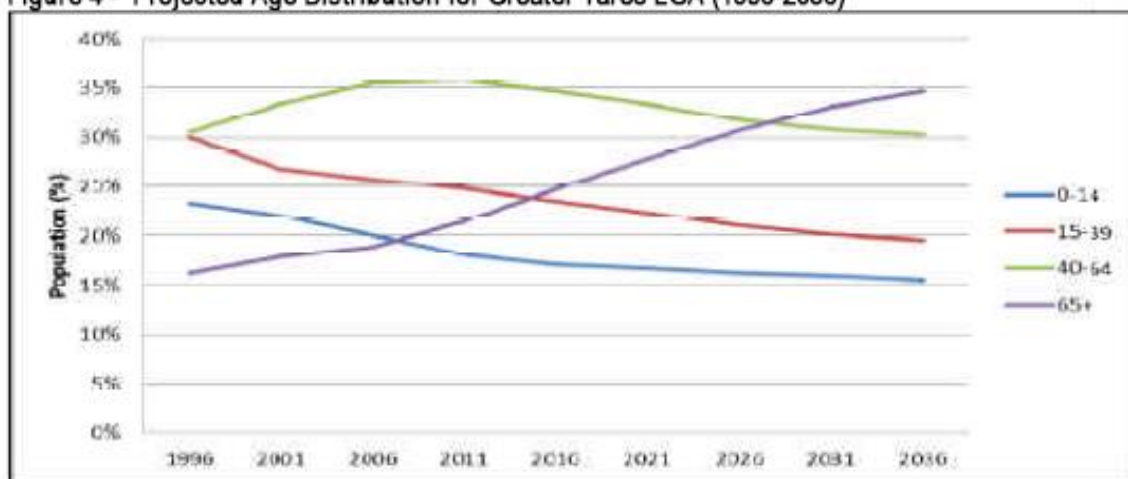
Information from the *Net Community Benefits Test* (Hill PDA, December 2010), provides further information about the expected population characteristics of the area.

“The trend towards an ageing population in Greater Taree is also exemplified by the increase in the proportion of the population in older age brackets. In forecasting the likely age distribution

within the LGA to 2036, from 1996 Greater Taree is expected to experience a significant decline in the proportion of the population aged 15-39 years (-10%) and a concurrent increase in the proportion of the population aged over 65 years (+19%)”

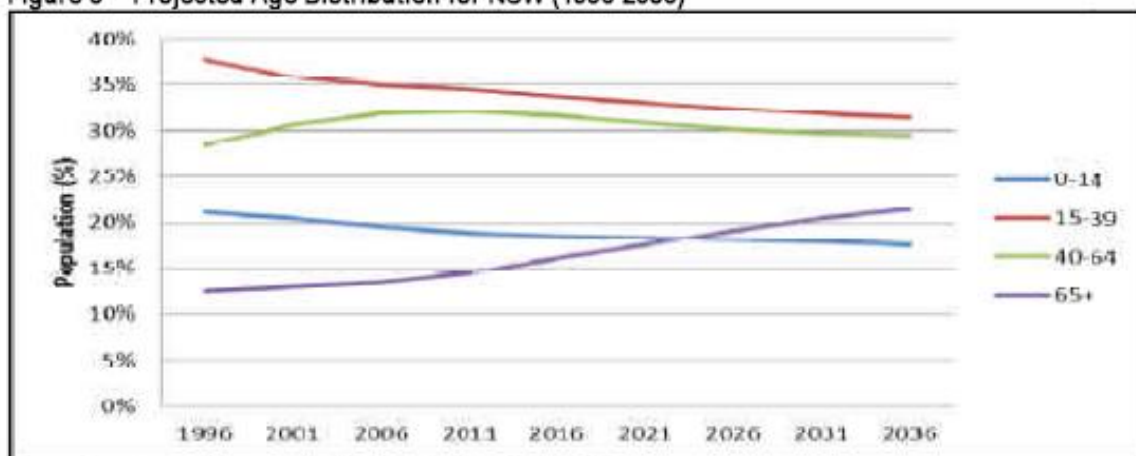
This trend is shown in the Figure below and is contrasted to the forecast age distribution in NSW:

Figure 4 - Projected Age Distribution for Greater Taree LGA (1996-2036)



Source: Department of Planning Population Projections (April 2010)

Figure 5 - Projected Age Distribution for NSW (1996-2036)



Source: Department of Planning Population Projections (April 2010)

4.2.2 Occupancy rates

Determination of occupancy rates upon which to base population projections for Brimbin New Town has been based upon the broad population estimates in the strategic planning documents and initial analysis of urban development potential, which has estimated the growth area could support a final population of approximately 22,000 people living in 8,000 dwellings. This equates to an occupancy rate of 2.75 persons per dwelling.

The *Brimbin Net Community Benefit Test* (Hill PDA, December 2010) prepared for Roche Group notes that this occupancy rate is higher than Taree’s occupancy rate at the 2006 census, which was 2.4 persons per dwelling. It argues that:

“as a new inland release area Brimbin is likely to attract a range and mix of dwellings, including a large proportion of family households... A larger household size is also supported by comparable inland regional and Sydney residential release areas which are

attracting a high proportion of families and therefore higher occupancy rates” (p. 19).

Examples of occupancy rates quoted are shown below:

Table 4 Average household sizes, recent development areas

Area / Development	Average household size
North west and south west growth centres, Sydney	3.0+ persons
Jerrabomberra release area, near Queanbeyan NSW	3.1 persons
Flinders, NSW, in Shellharbour LGA	3.0 persons
Tullimbar, NSW, in Shellharbour LGA	3.2 persons

An analysis of the average household size in Greater Taree for different dwelling types at the 2006 ABS Census shows considerably lower occupancy rates:

Table 5: Average household size, Taree 2006

Dwelling type	Greater Taree
Detached dwelling	2.6 persons
Attached dwelling	1.7 persons
Flat, apartment	1.5 persons

However, when household types are also considered, it is clear that family households in Taree have significantly higher occupancy rates than the LGA average, as shown in the following table:

Table 6 Household size by type, Taree, 2006

Family household type	Average size	Percent of families
Couple family, no children	2.0 persons	45
Couple family with children	3.9 persons	37
One parent family with children	2.7 persons	18
Total families	2.8 persons	100

By contrast, non-family households in Taree averaged 1.1 persons per dwelling and comprised about 28% of all households.

Therefore, to the extent that Brimbin New Town can attract family households with children to the area, the average occupancy rate of 2.75 and expected population of 22,000 is likely to be achieved. The relatively high proportion of detached dwellings will be attractive to families with children and encourage them to move to the area.

Using the occupancy rates of Greater Taree LGA and adjusting them for the additional dwelling types proposed for Brimbin New Town, the proposed occupancy rates adopted for this study are as follows:

Table 7: Proposed occupancy rates

Dwelling type	Average household size
Large lots / rural	3.0 persons
Detached traditional lot dwellings	2.9 persons
Attached multi-unit dwellings (apartments, terraces, townhouses, seniors living)	1.7 persons

4.2.3 Projected population

When these occupancy rates are applied to the dwelling yields indicated above, population projections for Brimbin New Town are as follows:

Table 8: Population projections - Brimbin

Dwelling type	Dwelling no.	Population no.
Large lots / rural	100	300
Detached traditional lot dwellings	6,400	18,560
Attached multi-unit dwellings (apartments, terraces, townhouses, retirement self-care and aged care)	1,500	2,550
Total	8,000	21,410

Thus, on the assumption that there will be a predominance (80%) of family households attracted to Brimbin New Town, in part due to the proposed dwelling types, the development of 8,000 lots will lead to a population of around 21,400-22,000 people. Overall, 80% of dwellings are expected to comprise detached dwellings and the remaining 20% will comprise medium density attached dwellings, including seniors' housing.

4.3 Age and household characteristics

In considering likely age and household characteristics for Brimbin New Town, both local and national trends need to be taken into account.

Demographic trends at the local level have been outlined previously in section 3. Key trends in the Taree area include in-migration, the high proportions of families both with and without children and smaller household sizes, including a high proportion of single person households, retirees, and smaller households associated with the ageing of the population. These factors have led to an increase in

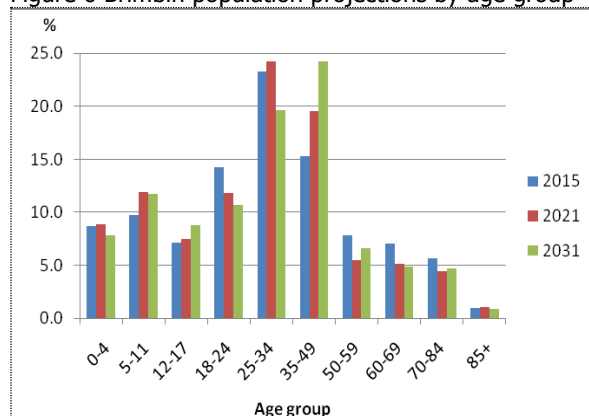
demand for smaller housing forms and greater choice in the range of dwellings. In the Manning Valley, as in other coastal and regional areas, there is a trend for older people to move into the area in search of a sea change or tree change. There is also a trend common to many rural and regional areas for people in their late teens and early twenties to leave the area in pursuit of higher education or employment elsewhere. These two trends alone skew the local population towards an older demographic.

Demographic trends in the wider population therefore include:

- Smaller households and declining occupancy rates
- Increasing numbers of people choosing not to have any children
- The increasing age at which people have children
- Increasing numbers of people choosing to live alone
- Rates of relationship breakdown, re-marriage and the formation of “blended families”
- The ageing of the population, increasing life expectancy and growing numbers of people in the oldest age cohorts
- Some children living at home for longer, creating demands for inter-generational housing
- Changing lifestyle trends, including increasing numbers of people working from home, and the extent to which the development might attract particular cultural or lifestyle groups.

Population projections by age group are available for Brimbin New Town from GTCC’s Forecast.id website and shown in Figure 6. These show growth and change over time as the community is developed between 2015 and 2031:

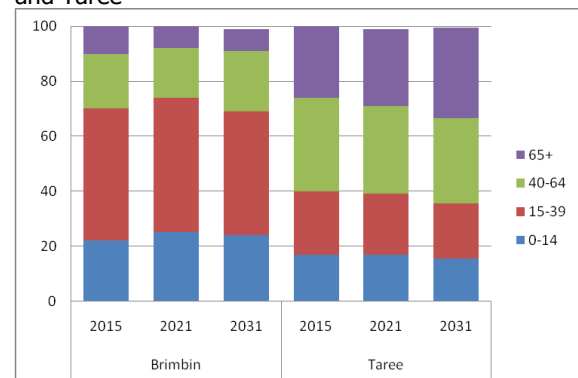
Figure 6 Brimbin population projections by age group



The forecasts show that the expected population structure will remain relatively stable over time, but with a growing proportion of middle aged people aged (35-49 years) from 15% in the early years, to 24% by 2031. There is also expected to be a small increase in the proportion of the population aged 5-17 years over that period (from 17% to over 20%). By contrast, the proportion of the population aged 18-34 and 50+ years is expected to decrease over time, as the population of the area grows. The 18-34 year age group is expected to decrease from 37.5% to 30% and the 50+ age group is expected to decrease from 21.6% to 17.1% of the Brimbin New Town population over time.

Combining data from Figure 4 for Taree and Figure 6 for Brimbin New Town, the expected age breakdowns of the two populations can be compared.

Figure 7 Comparison of population profiles – Brimbin and Taree



Although it is not possible with any degree of certainty to forecast what proportion of each household type or age cohort will make up the final population, it is fairly clear, that the population profile of Brimbin New Town may be considerably younger than that of Taree as a whole.

Approximately 70% of Brimbin New Town residents are forecast to be younger than 40 (compared with less than 40% in Taree) and less than 10% will be aged over 65 years (compared with 30% for Taree). On current forecasts, the age profile of Brimbin New Town will differ in this way from the existing Taree population, which will have implications for the types of social infrastructure and human service needed. In this sense, the population of Brimbin New Town will be similar to that of many new masterplanned communities across NSW.

The demographic characteristics of the future population of Brimbin New Town will directly reflect the type of housing offered, its market price and market segment. With its emphasis on detached dwellings, the majority of new residents are likely to be families with children of all ages in search of first or second homes, or couples planning to have children. However, the medium density dwellings will

be attractive to a range of other household types, including couples, older people, downsizers and singles, as well as some smaller families with children.

Families and couples from the local area will initially be attracted to the dwelling characteristics, lifestyle options and employment opportunities within Brimbin New Town, and the opportunity to buy into a new community. Retirees and downsizers from the region and sea/tree changers from the larger cities will also be attracted by the natural environment and the benefits of an active lifestyle within an urban centre in the rural fringe. Singles and younger adults seeking employment and affordable properties will also be interested in moving to this area. A diverse range of housing forms and affordability within the medium density areas will contribute to greater diversity in the types of households likely to choose Brimbin New Town.

Over time, as households grow and change, new households will form, with demands for new types of dwellings. Thus, while initially there may be relatively larger households, relatively higher income earners and relatively fewer human service needs, these characteristics will change over time as the community evolves.

A diverse population is likely to include:

- Young and growing families with young children (particularly in traditional detached housing on larger lots, but also in smaller medium density dwellings)
- Mature families with primary school and teenage children (particularly in traditional and larger lots)
- Young couples yet to start a family (including first home buyers attracted to smaller, affordable dwellings)
- Single parents with children (in smaller dwellings)
- Empty nester and retired couples (particularly downsizing to smaller detached or medium density dwellings)
- Young single people, living alone or in group households (particularly in medium density dwellings)
- Mature and older single people and older couples, (particularly associated with the provision of retirement housing and other smaller dwellings).

Nevertheless, the relative uncertainty about the population projections and age profiles at this stage of the planning process will give rise to a need:

- To provide housing choice to meet housing needs across the life cycle and income groups, including variety in lot sizes, dwelling types, adaptability in design and affordability
- To plan for flexibility in facilities to enable responsiveness to needs and life cycle changes as they emerge.

4.4 Socio-economic characteristics

The diversity of lot sizes and housing types to be provided in Brimbin New Town will appeal to a range of market segments, such that a population with some diversity in socio-economic characteristics is anticipated.

As noted above, some smaller dwellings and allotments will be affordable to those on moderate incomes, which make up a large proportion of existing households.

The majority of dwellings are likely to be owner occupied, particularly the detached dwellings. However, the inclusion of a number of medium density dwellings, may also appeal to some investors interested in providing rental accommodation. It is not possible at this stage to estimate proportions of owner occupiers / renters.

Overall, the socio-economic profile of Greater Taree and in-migration from other areas will strongly influence the characteristics of residents to be attracted to this area.

Implications for Brimbin:

Population projections for Greater Taree take into account the future development of Brimbin New Town, which will increase the regional population by around 40% over the next 20 years. The 8,000 dwellings planned (80% detached and 20% attached) will give rise to a population of around 22,000 people, with average occupancy rates of about 2.7. This is expected to attract a younger demographic than the average across Greater Taree, as people of working age are attracted to the area in search of work or housing. However, housing options for seniors, including couples and singles with and without children, will also be provided. Older people will be attracted to the area for its lifestyle options and to be near family and friends.

On current demographic trends, affordability is likely to be an important consideration in attracting both older and younger residents to the area. Creating an affordable, quality lifestyle supported by a range of employment opportunities, community facilities, recreational areas and environmental attributes will be key to Brimbin's future.

5 Creating a socially sustainable community at Brimbin

The vision for Brimbin New Town is articulated in the *Structure Plan Report* (Roberts Day, May 2013a).

5.1 Planning principles

The planning principles and vision for achieving a socially sustainable community at Brimbin New Town take into account the principles and strategic directions adopted by GTCC, and the planning principles contained in the NSW Government's *Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy*, the Hunter New England principles for building liveable communities and the Premier's Council on Active Living principles outlined in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

Brimbin New Town is intended to "complement, support, interact with, activate, reinforce and intensify the historic township of Taree".

The planning principles outlined in the *Structure Plan Report* state that Brimbin New Town will:

- Lay the foundation for a sustainable and self contained township for 8,000 dwellings
- Be a mixed-use community with a high level of jobs, education and community facilities
- Create an additional population catchment to support the ongoing growth capacity of Taree
- Compliment and support Taree
- Provide diverse employment opportunities close to where people live; both in the early stages of construction, through to longer term opportunities to service the new Brimbin New Town community
- Enable a connected community of residential neighbourhoods, adjoining employment lands, historical primary production lands and any potential future transit oriented mixed- use development
- Be a strategic hub at the nexus of freight rail and road transport as well as potential future transit routes connecting to Sydney and beyond
- Set aside a significant portion of the land holding for conservation to retain the natural landscape

and ecological values of the site and a regional corridor connecting 'River to River' and beyond

- Reflect the timeless principles of traditional neighbourhood design (TND) by promoting urban development in discrete neighbourhood units to limit the township's carbon footprint and to preserve natural bushland settings
- Establish a connected system of open space within the site that also links into the adjoining conservation areas and broader regional systems
- Provide extensive opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to experience the open space system, from the natural systems of the conservation area and riparian systems through to an integrated urban lake experience allowing variety and choice for users and promoting active lifestyles and wellbeing
- Provide for new schools and specialised education facilities centred around special needs students, environmental innovation, community health initiatives, agriculture and the local food movement
- Establish business and employment uses that complement and supplement Taree through the preparation of an employment vision and strategy aimed at establishing jobs upfront
- Utilise an integrated water management system to minimize potable water usage and reliance on regional service infrastructure
- Utilise 'Light Imprint' stormwater management techniques to provide low- impact sustainable solutions that reduce infrastructure, building footprint and stormwater runoff
- Be delivered through a genuinely collaborative process which will encourage contribution from all key stakeholders.

5.2 Social sustainability principles

Social sustainability strategies aim to ensure that a sustainable way of life and quality of life can be achieved and maintained, and that the community's social resources are developed and used in a way that builds a strong, healthy and resilient community. They are based on principles of inter-generational equity and aim to ensure that all members of present and future generations can attain a high degree of health and well-being, economic security and a say in shaping their future.

While community facilities provide an important platform for building strong and sustainable communities, there are also broader urban design and place making elements that can influence the

creation of the social networks and connections that can form a sense of community.

Sustainability principles underpin the planning and development of Brimbin New Town. Social sustainability principles identified in the *Structure Plan Report* include:

- Providing diverse, adaptable and affordable housing options that support ageing in place, residences for key health and education workers, quality lifestyle and architectural choices
- Creating a network of green spaces to provide a safe and connected environment for different ages and lifestyles
- Establishing social and physical links to surrounding areas including walking and cycling paths
- Reducing greenhouse emissions through building orientation and design and encouraging sustainable transport
- Encouraging local enterprise through infrastructure investment and management support.

Strategies for achieving these social sustainability objectives for Brimbin New Town are outlined below. Strategies in relation to the provision of social infrastructure and community development processes are discussed in the following sections.

1. Providing diverse, adaptable and affordable housing options

Local and NSW state planning strategies discussed in section 3 identify the need for a greater diversity in dwelling types to meet the needs of a changing and ageing population. Housing diversity will help contribute to a balanced and socially sustainable community, rather than one that segregates families with children from other household types. Diversity in dwelling types and allotment sizes will ensure a number of smaller dwellings types, including multi-unit dwellings and seniors' housing will be affordable to those on moderate incomes.

Life cycle housing allows residents to up-size or down-size as their needs change over time without leaving established social networks and communities. Adaptable housing enables residents to remain in their homes when they become less mobile and can accommodate wheelchair access, for example.

As outlined earlier, Greater Taree attracts large numbers of older residents and the existing population is ageing. Family and household types are changing and there is a need for a greater supply of smaller dwellings and for housing which is affordable

for smaller households including singles and couples without children.

The housing mix proposed will include a range of dwelling forms and size to meet the needs of a variety of household types. Dwellings will include walk up apartments, townhouses and villas, as well as cottages, houses and large estate homes. More compact housing types will be located near neighbourhood and local centres, allowing residents ease of access to daily convenience shopping needs, employment, public transport, education and community facilities. Areas of medium density housing will also be located near local parks, to provide access to open space for passive and active recreation.

In addition, the development will include some seniors' housing. The needs of older residents will be met through provision of all forms of seniors' housing (including affordable dwellings and adaptable dwellings), purpose built retirement accommodation and in future, residential age care facilities. This will help ensure that residents are able to age in place, either in their own homes or within this community. Homes which are affordable to low and moderate income households will help ensure further social diversity and social inclusion of less well-off groups within the population.

2. Creating a network of green spaces to provide a safe and connected environment for different ages and lifestyles

Brimbin New Town's natural environment will be incorporated into the urban design through a large open space network. Provision for open space will include parks, village greens, playing fields and community gardens throughout all neighbourhoods. Urban agriculture will preserve agricultural lands in proximity to the town and provide fresh and healthy food sources. Natural areas and riparian corridors will define and connect different neighbourhoods, centres and employment areas. A very large area of conservation lands will be dedicated for regional environmental purposes.

Areas of open space will be places for exercise and contemplation, destinations and places where people can meet, and will provide amenity for higher density residential precincts. Open space and sport and recreation facilities are outlined in section 7 of this report.

Proximity to open space has been found in a number of studies to encourage physical activity, while access to green space for relaxation is also important for psychological health and stress reduction.

A safe environment will be promoted through urban design and incorporation of the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Safe and creative spaces can also be promoted through urban design components which are directed towards children, older people and health lifestyles. Specific strategies to promote healthy, safe and accessible environments for all age groups will include:

- Child friendly design objectives:
 - Creating public spaces that are “child friendly”
 - Ensuring children can walk safely in the streets on their own
 - Ensuring children have the capacity to meet friends and have opportunities for exploratory play
 - Ensuring children have access to basic services such as health care, education and social support, and to diverse activities
 - Ensuring children have green spaces to play in contact with nature, plants and animals
 - Ensuring children live in an unpolluted environment with safe water and sanitation.
- Age friendly built environment design objectives:
 - Providing housing to suit the needs of older people
 - Designing neighbourhoods that encourage physical activity, an active lifestyle and social interaction
 - Providing easy access to public transport, shops and services
 - Providing accessible public facilities and infrastructure
 - Creating environments that are safe and foster a sense of security and sense of community
- Healthy Cities community objectives:

Establish physical and built environments conducive to good health through:

- Access to healthy food
- Environments that promote walking, cycling and incidental physical activity
- Access to public transport
- Focus on safety and sense of security
- Access to public space and to health and other local community services and facilities
- Access to employment opportunities
- Building communities that foster social cohesion and connectedness
- Access to clean water, air and uncontaminated land

Finally, a creative environment will be fostered through facilities and services available at the multi-purpose community hub, which will provide for activities such as dance, drama or art classes, exhibitions and other creative pursuits.

3. Establishing social and physical links to surrounding areas including walking and cycling paths

Brimbin New Town will be designed around a network of connected and walkable neighbourhoods or villages using traditional neighbourhood design. Households and workplaces will be within walking and cycling distance of the mixed use and neighbourhood centres and public transport services. The *Draft Structure Plan* provides a system of trails, footpaths and cycle paths through a variety of urban and rural settings.

Neighbourhood design will respond to the site’s natural topography.

A neighbourhood centre or village green will be located at the centre of each neighbourhood and neighbourhoods will be connected through a street and pathway network which encourages active transport (walking, cycling and public transport use) as well as vehicular movements.

Encouragement of incidental physical activity such as walking and cycling, through the provision of a network of safe paths that link key destinations will directly address many objectives of the Building Liveable Communities and Active Living programs outlined in section 3.

Establishing social networks can take time, especially in communities where people may not know their neighbours. The proposed mixed use neighbourhood centres and areas of open space will provide the physical platform for social interaction and community events within the development. The role of the mixed use centre as a meeting place will encourage new residents to attend events and activities and meet others in the area. The proposed community development program, outlined in section 9, will help to activate the community facilities, by providing activities, programs and events in line with community needs to foster social networks and community life.

In addition, social networks will be established through schools, places of employment and formal and informal sporting and recreational activities. A focus on social interaction will overcome the potential for social isolation and disconnection which can occur if people are unable to participate in daily activities.

4. Reducing greenhouse emissions through building orientation and design and encouraging sustainable transport

The Brimbin New Town mixed use centre will be situated on the western lake, benefitting from high amenity and accessibility. The location will offer a central node for connecting all transport modes and supporting the potential future provision of transit

oriented development (TOD), offering housing and employment at a public transport interchange, such as rapid public transport and a passenger rail station.

In addition to the encouragement of walking and cycling in the neighbourhood design, the Draft Structure Plan makes provision for an upgraded road connection directly to northern Taree.

The co-location of significant community, education, entertainment and residential uses in this highly accessible mixed use centre, will support the development of a socially sustainable and accessible community and limit the need for travel to other destinations. Neighbourhood centres based around a school, shops, parks and local amenities will encourage walkability.

5. Encouraging local enterprise through infrastructure investment and management support

Brimbin New Town will aim to provide a diversity of employment opportunities which capitalise on the economic strengths of Taree and the LGA as a whole. The development will complement and support economic activities already present in the area. Employment and training opportunities in close proximity to residential areas will reduce the need to commute to work and encourage young people to remain in the community.

Employment lands will encourage a balance of high intensity jobs in close proximity to the mixed use centre and good access to transport.

Employment will be generated through a range of activities, including:

- Emerging industry
- Urban agriculture – such as farming and food processing (eg cannery, bakery, dairy, boutique cheese factory), community markets, a culinary institute, Agricultural Research and Education Institute, Brimbin New Town Agricultural Academy, restaurant / café, aquaculture and eco-tourism
- Retail and commercial
- Construction
- Health related businesses.

It is estimated that the development will deliver \$4.0 billion in expenditure, create 20,000 full-time equivalent jobs during construction and produce 6,000 – 7,000 local full time and part time jobs once complete. This will provide substantial benefits to the local economy, which experiences relatively high unemployment, particularly for younger people.

5.3 Other strategies to encourage social sustainability

In addition to the strategies articulated in the vision for Brimbin New Town, a number of other strategies will support the social sustainability of Brimbin New Town:

- **Providing benefit to the existing community as well as the new** - The development will provide new areas of high quality open space, informal and formal meeting areas and walking and cycle paths which will be accessible to existing residents and the wider community. While the mixed use centre will mainly attract residents of Brimbin New Town, new areas of open space and conservation areas are community resources that will be necessary for all residents of the Greater Taree area and the region.

By expanding the choice of housing available in the area, including provision of some smaller dwellings for smaller households, and housing for different socio-economic target groups, the development will benefit existing residents of Taree. The large number of new employment opportunities will also increase options within the area for all residents, particularly employment for younger people.

The new population will also enhance the viability of services and facilities within the Greater Taree area, by increasing utilisation and making use of the spare capacity which currently exists in some local facilities. Retail, commercial services and public transport may benefit from increased patronage, providing stimulus to the local economy. Spare capacity in some regional facilities and local schools will be utilised, making better use of existing investment in facilities.

- **Implementation of a community development strategy** – A community development strategy will enhance community interaction and activity, sense of belonging and the establishment of community networks, initiatives and organisations. A recommended approach to community development is provided in section 9.
- **Resident health and well-being will also be promoted by developing a strong and cohesive community** - A key objective of the recommended community development strategy is to develop activities and programs to help build social cohesion and the integration of new and existing residents. This might be done by initiating social activities and community events designed to bring new residents together around issues of common interest or need, for instance through

hobby groups, kids' activities or celebration of local events.

- **Providing opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making** – Social integration can be promoted by ensuring that new residents are provided with opportunities to participate in the planning process and to express their views and ideas about the development. Understanding what is proposed for the site and having a stake in the planning outcomes will influence attitudes towards the project and acceptance of newcomers as they move into the area.

Opportunities for residents to participate in the planning of the development can be provided through community consultation processes. In addition, opportunities can be provided through the community development program, where the community development worker will work with incoming residents to identify and address their needs.

- **Promoting community identity and a sense of belonging** - Community identity and sense of place will be encouraged through physical and design elements including the Mixed Use Centre, a high quality public domain and its unique use of natural features and the use of public art.

Engaging existing stakeholders and new residents and employees of the area to help identify the particular identity and meanings associated with this area will be important in establishing a shared sense of place and belonging.

The ways in which Brimbin New Town will achieve these objectives are outlined in the remaining sections of this report.

Implications for Brimbin:

Brimbin New Town offers an important opportunity to integrate social infrastructure, placemaking and capacity building with good urban planning to support best practice social outcomes such as healthy active lifestyles, social interaction and inclusion and community wellbeing.

This section has outlined some specific ways in which the principles of social sustainability will be applied within Brimbin. Brimbin New Town will offer new social infrastructure for delivery of human services and activities, for those living or working in the community. In addition, the employment and mixed use areas will aim to attract retail, commercial, industrial and bulky goods uses. There is the potential for value added industries, such as processing, packaging, marketing, 'food tourism', education and research, to support and build on local agricultural products. Walkable communities will encourage active transport and accessibility within residential, mixed use areas and open spaces, while public areas and services will foster social interaction. Support for community development and opportunities for community engagement will assist in developing a sense of place and belonging for new residents.

Social infrastructure and activities which will stimulate a new community will include:

- Early provision of transport connections
- Staged development of a community centre (ultimately a community hub) and library, initially as part of a display centre
- Planning for the provision of other 'early attractors' such as elements of the mixed use centre, public art and landscaping of a public domain that uniquely identifies the Brimbin New Town centre, a picnic area and playground, employment lands and sports and recreational facilities
- Staged provision of schools in association with new residential areas, as these will provide an important focus in the early stages of the developing community
- Support for a community development worker to stimulate neighbourhood and community wide social and cultural events and community building activities, consistent with the new 'place' at Brimbin, including markets and food festivals
- Building on the agricultural and rural uses of the area through community gardens, productive landscaping (eg fruit trees and edible plants) and farm gate sales

Design for flexibility and multiple uses should be a key guiding principle to allow uses to adapt over time as the population changes.

6 Community facilities and human service strategy

This section identifies likely requirements for community facilities and human services for Brimbin New Town and strategies to provide for these needs, based upon:

- The demographic forecasts outlined in Section 4
- Assessment of capacity in existing facilities and services (Section 3 and Appendix B)
- Discussions with Council and a review of government agencies comments on service requirements
- The anticipated needs and preferences of the future population.

Open space and recreation facilities are considered separately in a following section.

Social infrastructure is provided by a wide variety of agencies, including all levels of government, non-government organisations and the private sector. At this phase in the planning process, the strategy needs to focus on the facilities which may have known land requirements, to ensure that sufficient land is identified in appropriate locations to meet future need.

6.1 Guidelines for service provision

As outlined in Section 2, GTCC does not have specific community guidelines for the provision of community facilities and services. Early comments from Council referred to the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) *Planning Benchmarks and Standards* (1998). Rates quoted are summarised in Table 9:

Table 9 LGSA *Planning Benchmarks and Standards*

Facility type	Provision standard
Aged care	50 nursing home beds (high care), 40 hostel beds (medium care) and 10 self contained (low care) places per 1,000 people aged over 70 years
Youth centre	1 per 10,000 – 20,000 people
Senior citizens centre	1 per 8,000 – 20,000 people

Health care services	Baseline for new release area – to be provided by private sector
Education	In accordance with DEC requirements
Community hub: - Neighbourhood services - other services	Baseline for new release area As needed
Community hall	Baseline for new release area

However, a review of numerical standards and benchmarks from several planning agencies covering greenfield or city fringe locations shows wide differences in rates of provision.

For comparison purposes, three alternative guidelines are shown below:

- The NSW *Growth Centres Development Code* notes the following guiding thresholds:
 - 1 community service centre per 60,000 people
 - 1 district library per 40,000 people
 - 1 performing arts / cultural centre per 30,000 people (site area 0.24 – 8 ha)
 - The NSW State Library standards recommend 1 major central library per 100,000 people
- The Victorian Growth Areas Authority *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas* benchmarks include:
 - 1 library per 30-60,000 people
 - 1 youth resource centre per 30-60,000 people
 - 1 level 3 multi-purpose community centre per 40-50,000 people
 - 1 level 3 community arts centre per 40-60,000 people
 - 1 regional arts and cultural centre per municipality
 - 1 community health precinct per municipality
 - 1 university / TAFE per two municipalities
 - 1 highest order performance arts facility for two or more municipalities
- The *Social Infrastructure Guidelines for South East Queensland* advise:
 - 1 art gallery per 30,000 – 150,000 persons with site area 1000-5,000 sqm
 - 1 civic centre per 30,000 – 120,000 persons with site area 1.5 ha
 - 1 exhibition / convention centre per 50,000 – 200,000 people
 - 1 central library for 30,000 – 150,000 people
 - 1 museum per 30,000 – 120,000 people
 - 1 performing arts space per 30-50,000 people, with minimum site area of around 3,000 sqm

It is clear from these benchmarks that standards for facilities can vary widely, and most have very broad population threshold ranges. The standards also provide little indication as to the size and nature of the facilities proposed.

Contemporary planning processes also take into account a variety of additional factors when assessing needs, including:

- The availability of, distance to, and capacity of existing services and facilities
- The size of the projected community
- The make-up of that community
- The scope to promote cost efficient provision by means of co-location or shared facilities
- Issues of transport access, funding, on-going management costs and facility ownership will also affect the nature of recommended provision.

6.2 Social infrastructure needs assessment

The future population of Brimbin New Town, estimated to be about 22,000 people by 2044, will be large enough to sustain a range of community facilities. Social infrastructure will be provided through the dedication of land for facilities such as schools and community centres. The facilities will then be handed over to other agencies or partnerships for ongoing operation. For higher order district or regional level facilities which require a larger catchment population, residents of Brimbin New Town will need to rely on facilities provided within Taree and the wider district.

At the local level, residents will require access to the following:

- Neighbourhood retail and commercial services
- Spaces for informal meeting and gathering, such as cafes and plazas
- Pre-schools, primary schools and a high school
- A community hub for community activities, programs and services
- Childcare and some family support services
- A range of family and individual support services, including youth services and aged care services, to be delivered through the Community Hub

- Private medical services and health providers such as GPs, chemists, physiotherapists, dentists and alternative therapy providers
- Local leisure and entertainment facilities, such as restaurants
- Information and library resources
- Places of worship.

In the wider area, residents will require access to:

- A range of higher order retail and commercial services
- Specialist medical, community health, allied health and hospital services
- University, technical and further education facilities
- Cultural and entertainment facilities (theatres, cinema etc)
- Employment opportunities.

Residents are likely to access many of these services within Taree itself, given the proximity of the city to the site and anticipated travel patterns.

The study considers the likely needs of Brimbin New Town, with a future total population of about 22,000 people. The ways in which these needs will be met are then described, in terms of local government, state government and private sector responsibilities.

6.2.1 Spaces for community activities and functions

Brimbin New Town residents will require access to spaces for a variety of community activities and programs (eg yoga, playgroups, craft groups, after school activities for kids, youth activities), for organisations and community groups to meet, for the delivery of community services and for private functions, such as birthday parties. Community centres can also provide sources of community information and a focal point for community interaction, community development initiatives and the building of community networks and support structures. A need for meeting rooms was identified in discussions with service providers.

Community centres may be provided at a variety of scales to meet the needs of different sized catchment populations. Local towns and villages with much smaller populations than Brimbin New Town have community facilities such as community health and early childhood services. However, in recent times, there has been a move away from providing small, stand alone community centres for local

neighbourhood populations, on the grounds of their high management and maintenance costs, lack of flexibility, limited use, security problems and lack of capacity for staffing. Instead, leading practice now supports the provision of larger multi-purpose facilities for a larger population catchment that can provide a variety of higher quality social and recreational amenities and combine a variety of functions. Larger centres are also able to provide accommodation for human services organisations, thereby enabling centres to be staffed and so increasing their levels of activity. In this way they are better able to meet the needs of their catchment population than multiple small centres offering limited facilities.

There are no hard and fast benchmarks for provision of community rooms and halls, and GTCC does not have set standards. Needs are affected by the make-up of the population and the availability of other facilities in the area, including private sector facilities. Standards adopted for other new developments are not always relevant and depend on the proximity of the area to existing urban areas. In the case of Brimbin New Town, there will be a need for a degree of self-containment, given the community's distance from Taree.

To meet as wide a range of needs as possible, a variety of spaces of different sizes is desirable, with scope for flexible division, e.g. capable of being subdivided to accommodate small groups. There will be a need for some large spaces with appropriate linked facilities (e.g. kitchens) capable of hosting larger gatherings, community events and private functions such as wedding receptions. There may also be a need for some specialist facilities – for instance wet and dry areas for arts and crafts, IT room for training activities, or sound studios / multi-media room for other cultural activities.

In principle, these facilities could be provided in facilities owned by Council, by the private sector, or by community-based organisations. A substantial, central accessible facility offering a range of spaces and associated facilities, which are co-located with other community uses, can provide a hub or focal point for the community and is preferable to a string of small local facilities.

Given the size of the proposed township, there will be a need for facilities that meet the needs of the township as a whole, and for some local provision to address basic neighbourhood needs.

6.2.2 Civic and cultural facilities

Higher level entertainment facilities (movies, art gallery, theatre) are available within Taree.

To support cultural development, it will be important that some space for cultural expression is provided within Brimbin New Town. Facilities to meet the

needs of Brimbin residents could be provided by the community or private sector and will include:

- Spaces to support local cultural activities (eg dance, music or drama groups, workshop space for artists)
- Exhibition space, attached to a community facility or library
- Areas for indoor or outdoor entertainment including cafes, restaurants, cinema, amphitheatres, markets and events.

6.2.3 Education

Schools

DEC has provided advice in relation to the capacity of existing schools within Taree to meet current and future educational demands, as outlined in Section 2.2.1.

DEC *Advisory Notes for School Site Selection* set out the following criteria for the provision of schools in areas of new residential development:

- One public primary school per 2,000 to 2,500 new dwellings
- One public high school per 6,000 to 7,500 dwellings
- Provision and timing of new schools takes account of a number of factors, including:
 - Possible diversion of some students in new areas to existing schools
 - The impact of existing or proposed non-government schools
 - The type and speed to residential development
 - Possible need for additional sites to cater for temporary enrolment peaks
 - The nature of the population.

On this basis, DEC has advised that Brimbin New Town will require three public primary schools, one public high school and possibly a special needs unit, based upon a dwelling yield of up to about 8,000 dwellings.

Site requirements for new schools are as follows:

- Primary schools require a site area of approx. 3 ha. There may be opportunities to vary the site size later as detailed planning occurs in response to specific sites and if joint use of facilities can be negotiated.
- High schools require a site of approximately 6 ha, although there is some scope to reduce this if schools are co-located with community sporting fields.

- Schools should be located relatively central to their residential catchment (within approximately 1.6kms by road) and on distributor or collector roads to alleviate noise and traffic problems.
- High schools should be located at a distance from commercial centres, especially where liquor outlets may be located
- Urban design features should include:
 - Has a number of frontage (three frontages required)
 - Main street frontage should not be located opposite a T-intersection
 - Desirable to be adjacent to a community playing field
 - Allows for security and privacy through visibility and appropriate surrounding development
 - Is not overly overshadowed by surrounding development
 - Considers future form and structure of centres, towns and future development.
- Land should not be located within or immediately adjacent to:
 - land zonings for: Industrial (IN1 – IN4), Conservation (E1-E4), Waterways (W1-W3)
 - Special uses such as: airports, correction centre, electricity substations, mobile phone towers, sewage treatment plants, sewage systems, transmission lines, waste disposal facility, waste or resource management facility, waste or resource transfer station, water recycling facility, water supply system, wind farms and the like
 - Inappropriate retail and commercial development such as bottle shops, brothels, home occupation (sex services), methadone clinics, pubs, registered clubs, restricted premises, sex service premises or the like
 - Development with potential undesirable impacts or risks such as: airport flight paths, bulky goods premises, crematorium, depots, freight transport facility, hazardous or offensive development, hostel, hotel or motel accommodation, intensive agriculture, mining and extraction industries, tourist and visitor accommodation, vehicle repair workshops or the like.

Other design requirements for new school sites include:

- Sites should have a slope no greater than 1:10
- Sites must not be located within or immediately adjacent to land mapped as within the 1 in 100 year flood level
- Sites should have a substantially regular shape

- Schools should not be within or adjacent to land mapped as Bush Fire Prone or on a site that requires an Asset Protection Zone
- Site will not give rise to significant issues associated with dust, smoke, odours or the like
- Sites must not be contaminate, waste filled, have high soil erosion, stability or acid sulphate concerns
- Sites should be free of ecological and heritage concerns or restrictions
- Site should allow for other socially inclusive uses such as election days, community markets, emergency meeting points etc.

Given that about one third of school students on average attend non-government schools, there will also be the potential for private / independent schools to establish facilities at Brimbin.

Tertiary facilities

The future population of Brimbin New Town will be too small to support a full tertiary education facility, but residents will support existing services within Taree and will benefit from access to the Taree Community College, the Taree campus of the North Coast TAFE college and the UNE campus / study centre. Residents will also be able to access tertiary university campuses in Port Macquarie and Newcastle.

There are opportunities, however, for tertiary training or research institutions to use agricultural land for educational purposes, or for value-adding research.

Life long learning

There may be opportunities to provide outreach or internet based services within the Brimbin New Town community. There may also be opportunities to deliver classes and life long learning material through a branch library or community hub.

Preschools

Preschool education facilities will be required for some of the 3-4 year olds at Brimbin New Town. Population forecasts in Table 11 indicate there may be up to around 300 children in this age group in 2031, although not all will enrol in preschool.

6.2.4 Library

Given the projected size of the future population and its distance from existing facilities, a branch library will be required, preferably co-located with the community hub and other facilities in the Mixed Use Centre. The library should have access to high speed internet facilities to overcome difficulties associated

with distance from major centres and meet modern expectations for communications and business.

Residents will also be able to continue to access Taree Library.

6.2.5 Health and well being

The future population of Brimbin New Town will expect access to medical and health facilities. The existing Manning Valley Hospital and Community Health Centre at Taree will meet the needs of Brimbin residents. Sessional or outreach community health services will, however, need to be provided once the population becomes established and needs emerge. Services and classes can be accommodated within rooms at the proposed multi-purpose community hub.

Initially, the focus on families, couples and independent retirees will limit the need for medical and community health services within Brimbin. However, community health services which focus on education for healthy and active living could be of interest to new residents, especially those attracted to the area for environmental and lifestyle reasons. Wellness centres have been successfully established in some communities.

The Brimbin New Town population will also be large enough to support a variety of private health services, such as medical specialists and general practitioners, pharmacists, dentists, allied health services and imaging and pathology services. A proactive approach will be required to attract the GP workforce required to service the growing population.

Some private practitioners will likely wish to set up in Brimbin once demand is demonstrated. Commercial space within the Mixed Use Centre or neighbourhood centres will prove attractive in this regard.

There will also be demands from residents and workers for fitness and healthy living classes, such as fitness training, yoga and meditation, cycling, running, dance classes and so on, from all age groups and interests.

6.2.6 Children's services

A range of children's services and child care facilities will be needed at Brimbin New Town. Recent trends have seen a reduction in the role of Councils in providing childcare. The private sector is now the provider of the majority of childcare centres in Australia.

Council has indicated that it will not be seeking to operate childcare services itself in Brimbin New Town. Instead, residents are likely to rely on community-based and private sector facilities.

Leading practice encourages planning of multi-purpose childcare centres and family centres, which can provide a mix of services or adapt as precise needs are identified. Other factors, such as proportion of parents working within and outside Brimbin New Town, family proximity to grandparents and other informal sources of care, and the affordability of childcare, will influence the final number of spaces required. Based on the traditional formula for childcare provision (one place for every 10 children aged 0-4) a need for about 60 long day care places by 2031 is identified, using Council population projections in Table 11.

A number of different forms of childcare and activities for young children are generally provided in a community, including long day care, family day care, pre-school, occasional care and playgroups. Additionally, services to support families with young children may be provided (eg parent education). It is not appropriate at this stage of the planning process to try to anticipate the need for the various types of services.

6.2.7 Facilities and services for older people

Once the population of Brimbin New Town has built up to a point where there is a significant older population, there will be a need for spaces for activities and care for older people and people with disabilities. Facilities will need to have flexibility to incorporate activities for different target groups as required.

Leading practice now steers away from providing age-specific buildings, such as senior citizens' centres, which can only be used by specific sections of the population and which thereby run the risk of being under-utilised for much of the week or as the population changes. Instead, the usual practice is to provide spaces within multi-purpose centres which have flexibility to incorporate activities for different target groups as required.

In keeping with the aim of creating a socially sustainable town for people of all ages, it will be important to recognise the needs of older people in the planning and design process. It will be especially important to ensure buildings and spaces are accessible and that a sense of safety and security is promoted. As outlined above, activities for seniors should focus on wellness and active living, as well as care and respite.

6.2.8 Facilities and services for young people

A key issue identified in discussions with service providers and reviewing Council documents is the trend for young adults to leave the Taree area in search of work or education opportunities. In addition, there is a need for affordable activities for young people who remain in the area, and those still

in school, to meet, socialise and participate in sporting and social activities.

New youth centres in NSW generally serve a population of 20,000 or more. Brimbin's population will, ultimately, be large enough to sustain such a centre. In the interim, until there is a large youth population, the needs of young people for space for social and leisure activities may be met at the local neighbourhood level through the proposed multi-purpose community hub, which will include meeting spaces and access to IT facilities.

In addition, the needs of young people will be met through the open space, sporting and recreation facilities described in section 7, and through the shopping centres and other public domain areas that will be designed and managed to be "youth friendly".

Young people will also be assisted to access support services which will be provided through the community hub and branch library, and to access leisure and entertainment facilities in the wider Taree area, which will be accessible through provision of affordable and regular public transport services.

6.2.9 Movement and access

Good access and transport systems are vital for a sustainable community. This is recognised in the planning and social sustainability principles for Brimbin New Town (section 5) and underpins the commitment to providing good access and public transport between Taree and Brimbin.

Good access and transport are particularly important in rural areas where distances between centres can be large and existing public transport services limited. Long distances between regional centres and villages can also result in relatively high transport costs, which further limit ease of access and affordability.

The new community will be approximately 8 km from Taree via the existing road network and Lansdowne Road, although provision of a planned northern link road will reduce the distance between the townships to around 2-3 kms. It will be essential that good public and private transport linkages are available from the early phases of development. Many residents of Taree already live on moderate to low incomes and cost of living pressures are increasing. A lack of affordable public transport was consistently raised in discussions with service providers as a growing need within the community.

Residents of Brimbin New Town will need to rely on at least some district and regional level services being provided from Taree, so accessible, affordable and regular transport will be the key to overcoming the potential for locational disadvantage. Locational disadvantage can unintentionally create areas of poverty and entrenched needs by limiting access to

the essentials in life such as social contact, employment, education, recreation, and health care.

6.3 Meeting identified social infrastructure needs at Brimbin

6.3.1 General approach

Roche Group intends to meet the identified needs in accordance with contemporary trends and leading practice. The following principles will therefore guide the provision of community facilities and human services within Brimbin New Town.

Community facilities will be designed to:

- Respond to local needs and reflect the local community's identity, values and aspirations
- Be flexible in their use, so they can respond and adapt as needs change. Where appropriate, buildings should be capable of delivering a range of services, rather than designated for single uses or specific target groups that may quickly become outdated
- Contribute to the health, well-being and quality of life of residents, support their lifestyle needs and choices and encourage the development of social capital
- Make the most efficient use of limited resources, where appropriate being multipurpose, co-located with other facilities and able to accommodate shared and multiple use arrangements
- Be provided in an efficient, timely and co-ordinated way, ensuring that they are available to residents as early as possible and residents are not disadvantaged through delays in delivery
- Promote equitable access for all sections of the population, through the distribution, design and management of facilities. In particular facilities should be affordable for their target population
- Provide environmentally and economically sustainable buildings
- Comply with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and reduce risks of vandalism and poor security through consultation with police concerning the design and location of facilities
- Promote innovation and creativity in the way agencies come together to deliver services, recognising the need for collaborative planning and partnerships to achieve effective and efficient delivery of human services

- Be accessible for all user groups, with all facilities meeting accessibility standards
- Promote integrated service delivery among related agencies, and
- Develop sustainable ownership, governance, management and maintenance arrangements for facilities.
- Toilet facilities and nappy change / breastfeeding area
- Adjacent outdoor space with children's play equipment, shelter and barbecue, to provide for spill over social events and activities for children.

6.3.2 Council facilities and services

Multi-purpose community hub

Discussions with Council staff have indicated a Council preference to provide one large multi-purpose community hub to service Brimbin New Town, rather than multiple small centres. This is consistent with the standards adopted by a number of NSW Councils of one multi-purpose community centre per 10,000 – 20,000 people.

Within Brimbin New Town, the large multi-purpose community hub could operate as a district level facility within the Brimbin New Town Mixed Use Centre. A typical district level facility would incorporate:

- A variety of large and smaller flexible spaces suitable for a range of social, leisure, learning and cultural activities. Spaces might include a hall suitable for large gatherings and functions, performances and physical activity such as fitness, gymnastics or dance classes, and rooms suitable for smaller groups
- Informal lounge / foyer area
- Foyers and larger spaces can be used for exhibitions
- Rooms for baby health clinic, counselling, health promotion, family support or youth services which may be delivered on an outreach or sessional basis from services based in Taree
- Meeting rooms, also suitable for adult education or training and outreach services
- Play space for children's activities
- Active indoor and outdoor areas for young people
- Hot desks for a community development worker, and for other human service providers
- "Reheat" kitchen suitable to support private functions such as birthday parties
- Plenty of storage to meet the needs of a variety of user groups

Greater Taree City Council does not have standards to guide the sizing of community centres. A review of other Council and State government standards shows a wide range of sizes depending on the centre purpose, role and catchment area, layout and inclusions. Based upon Council's preference for a single multi-purpose centre and our experience in other developments, it is proposed that a multi-purpose community hub of approximately 1,000-1,300 sqm is appropriate for the needs of 22,000 people. This will require a site area of approximately 1.0-1.3 ha of land, depending on opportunities to share parking and landscaping with co-located facilities and to integrate within the town centre location.

A facility of this size will not be warranted until a population of substantial size has been established in Brimbin New Town. Also it will not be feasible to build the community hub until the Mixed Use Centre has been established, and therefore its timing will depend on the overall staging of the development and sequencing of infrastructure servicing. It is therefore proposed that the facility be built in stages, starting with some space for meetings and activities as part of a central sales office for the development. This area could then be converted into a community centre, or expanded incrementally, when Stages 1 and 2 are completed.

Branch library

A branch library of the Taree Central Library will be provided within the Brimbin New Town Mixed Use Centre, consistent with Council's desire to see a branch library in the new community. This facility should be co-located with the community hub to act as a focal point for the community.

There are no firm standards as to the population level at which a branch library should be provided. Demand for these services can initially be met through visits to the central library, or use of local school or mobile library services in the interim period. However, the facility would be required when the population reaches about 15,000 residents, or 5,500 dwellings. Until such time, a mobile library service could initially visit Brimbin on a weekly basis for those unable to travel into Taree, dropping off and collecting books at the temporary community meeting room. As the population grows, it may be possible to share resources with the local high school, until the development reaches the threshold of 5,500 dwellings.

The proposed library should meet the spatial and design criteria of the NSW State Library, as outlined in its publication *People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in NSW (2005)*. Using the population-based benchmark methodology proposed in *People Places*, the size of the library would be based upon the standard of 42 sqm per 1,000 people, plus 20% for circulation and service space.

For Brimbin New Town an anticipated population of 22,000, would equate to a library of approximately 1,100 sqm. This calculation does not take into account use of the library by a non-resident workforce population.

The proposed library could be co-located with the multi-purpose community hub to create a civic focal point within the Mixed Use Centre. The co-location of both facilities provides opportunities for sharing, rather than duplicating, key resources such as meeting rooms, training rooms, exhibition and

display areas and café. These efficiencies may result in a building of lower gross floor area than outlined above, subject to detailed design.

The proposed library would contain all the functional areas appropriate for a contemporary branch library with a strong technology focus, recognising that libraries can be a key cultural focal point in bringing different groups together and building social capital. As activities for young people have been identified as a key issue for Brimbin New Town (as it is with other new development areas), a multi-media component of the library is one possible strategy to address this anticipated need.

Summarising from the above, the co-located multi-purpose community hub and library will include the following spaces:

Table 10 Space requirements for Community Hub and Library facility

Requirement	Functional outcomes
Multi-purpose spaces for community activities	Flexible and functional spaces of varying sizes to meet the needs of a variety of age and interest groups, including children, young people and older people To be suitable for: – community meetings – social and cultural events – social, leisure, learning, cultural and community development activities and programs – private functions such as birthday parties Spaces which are informal, safe, convenient, accessible and welcoming for all sections of the population, and which allow for multiple concurrent uses Resources and fit-out to support a range of activities for identified target and interest groups
Spaces to support staff in the delivery of community development and human services	Hot desks / office accommodation Spaces suitable for sessional services provided by government or non-government agencies eg counselling room, early childhood clinic, youth services Supporting amenities (eg storage, secure filing cabinet, room with sink)
Informal meeting and gathering spaces	Foyer / informal lounge area Cafe
Access to information about the local area and its resources and services	Appropriate information to be accessible to all residents Information to include local services, public transport, sustainability education initiatives, community initiatives and how residents can participate within the community
Display and exhibition spaces	Suitable for a variety of purposes to support information, learning and cultural development objectives
Training and learning spaces	Technology resources Training / study spaces
Branch library	To meet the library needs of residents, students and workers To provide access to material in a variety of forms Support for staffing Allows active use of facility for extended hours
Adjoining outdoor space	Suitable for overflow and children's play activities, outdoor cultural activities, youth hang out space
Supporting amenities	Kitchen to support private functions Plenty of storage for a variety of user groups Accessible toilets Nappy change and breast-feeding spaces Cleaner's storage

Local community spaces

In addition to the multi-purpose community hub, residents will need to have access to community spaces at the neighbourhood level for local activities. Some of these needs will be met by the community hub while at the neighbourhood level interaction will occur in neighbourhood parks and other open spaces (see section 7).

At the local level, there may also be opportunities to share school halls, although this will be a matter for individual school principals to determine once school have been built.

The 'schools as community centres' model should be considered as an important component of the planning for Brimbin New Town. Negotiations with DEC are recommended to identify how the primary schools planned for outside the Mixed Use Centre could be utilised as community space. If this is unlikely, then some alternative provision of local level community meeting space may have to be considered, such as use of shopfronts on a temporary or permanent basis.

6.4 State government social infrastructure

6.4.1 Education facilities

DEC has advised that Brimbin New Town will require three public primary schools, one public high school and possibly a special needs unit, based upon a dwelling yield of up to about 8,000 dwellings.

This arrangement would need to be monitored closely by DEC in conjunction with Roche Group to ensure students have access to schooling as and when required.

The Draft Structure Plan has made provision for three primary schools, each of three ha, and one high school of six ha, together with one additional ha for the special needs unit. It is proposed that one of the primary schools will be co-located with the high school and located within the Mixed Use Centre. The special needs unit will be co-located with one of the primary schools, to be determined in association with the DEC.

Leading practice principles suggest that where possible schools should be co-located with other types of community facilities, to create a community focal point and promote accessibility and convenience for families. In particular, co-location of primary schools with community centres and childcare facilities is considered to be generally advantageous.

Provision will be made for preschools to locate close to or within the neighbourhood and Mixed Use

Centres. Facilities may be delivered either by the private sector or by a non-government agency.

Where primary schools are to be co-located with other community facilities, there is potential scope for the sharing or joint use of facilities that would reduce the land required if each facility were to be provided separately (eg common parking areas, shared school / community hall).

Opportunities to co-locate schools with other community uses and open space will be explored in subsequent detailed stages of planning. The location of the high school within the Mixed Use Centre presents opportunities for some degree of co-location with the proposed library and community hub, with potential for some sharing of facilities.

Lifelong learning activities (eg community outreach programs, evening classes, University of the Third Age -U3A) will be accommodated in the multi-purpose community hub / library in the Mixed Use Centre, or by using schools out of hours.

The Brimbin New Town population will mainly rely on existing university and TAFE facilities in Taree, and in the wider region including Port Macquarie, Newcastle and beyond, as outlined in Section 3, to meet their requirements for technical and higher education. However, should a tertiary institution seek to establish a research or educational facility on rural land in the area, for example, training could be held in facilities within the community hub.

6.4.2 Public and community health services

The level of use of health facilities and primary care medical services is influenced by population composition. It is anticipated that the new community of Brimbin New Town will have a mix of young, middle aged and older people, with a focus on young and established families, couples and downsizers and retirees.

Health facilities and services are provided by the State Government. NSW Health, through the Hunter New England Area Health Service, has advised Roche Group that "Older people and children are big consumers of health services, so consideration should be given to the delivery of community services and facilities to ensure health and quality of life...".

Initially, levels of demand for community health services are likely to be limited, although educational, wellness and healthy living programs and activities could provide opportunities for education, fitness and interaction for the new community.

Brimbin New Town population will not be large enough to support a new hospital or community health centre in its own right. Instead, it will rely on

services available through Manning Hospital, the Community Health Centre in Taree and other community and privately provided services in town.

As the population becomes established, there will be a need for sessional or outreach community health services, such as early childhood clinic, health education activities or aged care programs. The proposed multi-purpose community hub will provide sufficient space to accommodate such services and programs.

In addition, there will be a need for a range of private health services such as doctors, dentists and other health care professionals, to provide some local health services within Brimbin New Town (see below).

6.4.3 Human services

While the Brimbin New Town population is not expected to be disadvantaged, over time residents may need access to a variety of individual and family support services, such as those funded by the Department of Human Services – Community Services (DOCS) and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC).

Both departments provide funding to a variety of community-based and non-government organisations to deliver welfare and support services. Most of these services are provided to larger district and regional population catchments. Brimbin New Town would be serviced by organisations currently based in Taree. Some organisations have expressed an interest in providing outreach services to Brimbin should there be a need and funding be available to expand services. The proposed multi-purpose community hub will provide spaces for sessional or outreach services, and some accommodation for community services (for example family counselling sessions, parenting advice classes or youth support activities).

The major requirements of welfare and support services to meet the needs of the growing population will be for additional recurrent funding to expand their existing services and programs, rather than for built facilities. Such funding will need to be provided through a variety of government programs (such as the Home and Community Care Program, Community Services Grants Program and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program). Funding for these programs will need to be increased in line with population growth in the area and departmental resource allocation processes.

6.4.4 Police and emergency Services

The NSW Police, the NSW Fire Brigade and the State Emergency Service have advised their requirements for the new community to be:

- A new police station will require a 3,000 sqm site in a visible location within the Brimbin New Town Mixed Use Centre. This will be required once the population reaches 500-1,000
- A new ambulance station will be required once the population reaches approximately 5,000 people, depending on the population mix and density. A site of 2,000 sqm is required, with good access to collector and arterial roads, but at a distance from schools
- Fire services will initially be provided by the Rural Fire Service at Taree, but NSW Fire Brigade has advised that as the population grows to around 4,000 lots, a Rural Fire Service station would be required. This will require a fully serviced 2,000 sqm site.

The Draft Structure Plan identifies locations for the new Police Station in Stage 2 of the mixed use centre. Sites for the Ambulance and Fire Stations are provided in Stage 1 of the Employment zone, having the land readily available for when it is ultimately required and in a very accessible location.

6.5 Social infrastructure provided by non-government and private sectors

6.5.1 Shops and commercial services

Retail services to satisfy local everyday needs will be provided in each of the three neighbourhood centres and the mixed use centre. Minor retail and commercial services will also be available within the employment area. Residents will also make use of regional shopping facilities in the wider Taree area.

6.5.2 Family and children's services

As noted in section 6.4.6, the provision of childcare has changed substantially in recent years, associated with shifts in government regulation and funding policy, such that the private sector is now the provider of the majority of childcare centres in Australia. As such, the provision of childcare in most new developments is commonly now largely left to market forces, once need can be demonstrated. This position is supported by Greater Taree Council, who has advised that they do not wish to own or operate childcare centres in Brimbin New Town.

Childcare centres are a permitted use within residential areas and do not necessarily require land to be designated at the master planning stage. However, the location of childcare centres should have regard to the following principles:

- Childcare should be provided in central and conveniently accessible locations, and primarily in centres to reinforce the role of the hub as the focal point for the community

- Childcare should be located adjacent to complementary land uses such as schools and community centres
- Childcare centres should not be located in residential areas that have amenity impacts on adjoining residents
- Provision should be made to meet the needs of sections of the population which are not as profitable for the private sector, such as children aged 0-2 years, children of shift workers and those with special needs.

Planning for childcare will also need to address the need for out of hours school care for primary school aged children. Such need is usually met through multi-purpose childcare centres, through before and after school programs co-located within schools or through vacation care programs in community centres.

Within Brimbin New Town, it is proposed that a number of sites for childcare centres will be identified in subsequent detailed planning of the Mixed Use Centre, subject to demand and commercial feasibility assessments. These sites will be available for development by private sector organisations.

Family support services currently provided by non-government agencies within Taree and Wingham have expressed an interest in providing sessional services within Brimbin subject to need and funding availability. There are currently high demands for family support, education and employment services and increasing needs from older residents for assistance with the basic necessities of life including transport, food and medical care.

6.5.3 Private / independent schools

As noted in Section 2, private or independent schools may wish to establish educational facilities within Brimbin New Town. Alternatively, some children from Brimbin may attend existing independent or private schools within Taree.

Schools are now permissible within residential land use zones, although other planning considerations (such as market demand, traffic impacts, site layout) would need to be assessed in subsequent stages of planning and development.

6.5.4 Medical services

The Brimbin New Town population will be large enough to support a number of general practitioners and a variety of allied health services such as dentists, physiotherapists and natural health practitioners.

Such services are generally accommodated in commercial suites in the Mixed Use Centre, without the need for purpose-built facilities. The proposed Mixed Use Centre within Brimbin New Town will contain sufficient spaces for such uses.

The Brimbin New Town population will also rely on health and medical services in the wider area, including those offered at Manning Hospital, the Community Health Centre or private facilities.

6.5.5 Aged housing and aged care

Housing for older people and aged care facilities, ranging from low to high level of care, will be needed to provide for the anticipated number of older people, including those aged over 65, who will move to live in Brimbin New Town.

As outlined in the LGSA Development Strategy (now somewhat dated), "The recommended standard is that for every 1,000 people over 70 years of age, there should be 50 nursing home places (defined to be high care), 40 hostel places (defined to be medium care) and 10 self contained packages (defined to be low care)." It is intended that self contained facilities will be provided in the first stages of the development. As the community grows, additional services may be required.

Residential care facilities are permitted uses within residential neighbourhoods (in keeping with the principle of integrating, rather than segregating older people and people with a disability) and so may be provided without the need to identify sites at this stage. Consideration of ready access to shops, services, areas of open space and public transport should be a factor in the proposed location of such facilities.

At this stage the precise way in which the aged housing will be provided has not been determined. It is likely, however, that it will be provided by a specialist aged housing provider. While the nature and form of the housing will be subject to further market and feasibility assessment and the preferred model of any selected aged housing provider, the aged housing component could include some communal facilities and support services to meet the needs of its residents, such as community activity rooms and recreation facilities, assistance with meals, and support and care services. The nature of any communal facilities or care and support services will depend on the approach adopted by the selected aged housing partner.

The incoming aged population will also have access to the community hub described above, and this may influence the communal facilities to be provided at an aged housing facility.

There will also be opportunities for the local home and community care service to expand their services

to include the new community at Brimbin New Town in order to support older persons within their homes.

6.5.6 Entertainment facilities

Leisure and entertainment facilities such as cafes, restaurants, pubs and clubs will be provided on a commercial basis according to market demand, with suitable land available within the mixed use and commercial areas within the Mixed Use Centre. Key considerations will include:

- Ways of encouraging the early provision of local entertainment facilities
- Ensuring entertainment opportunities are affordable, particularly for young people
- Including both indoor and outdoor entertainment opportunities
- Design to minimise potential noise impacts on surrounding land uses.

6.5.7 Places of worship

As well as providing places of worship, churches can provide an important base for community development, youth, volunteer and welfare support activities in new communities, and are important in building community spirit and identity. Churches may also provide halls and other spaces which can be utilised for community activities by the general community. Religious organisations may also be providers or partners in the provision of other community facilities and human services (particularly for young people, older people and disadvantaged groups). For these reasons, it is important that places of worship be established within Brimbin New Town.

The acquisition of sites for places of worship is generally left to market forces, according to their ability to purchase sites, and it is difficult to specifically identify sites in the concept planning process.

Ensuring that places of worship are provided within Brimbin New Town will be a matter for consideration in subsequent planning and development phases.

It is recognised that that not every religious organisation needs its own facility, and that such organisations may also utilise other community facilities for their meetings, (such as community centres and schools), particularly as these are often not used by others when demand for space for religious activity is at its highest (for example on a Sunday morning for Christian denominations).

The following issues should be taken into consideration in the future planning of places of worship within Brimbin New Town:

- Places of worship can contribute significantly to community identity and activity. They should be located close to other types of community facilities to create synergies and help provide a focal point for the community (eg located within centres)
- Places of worship need to be readily accessible and visible, and located so as not to impact on adjoining residential areas
- Given the limited utilisation of such facilities across the week, it is important that opportunities for shared or joint use be explored with other types of facilities, or multiple church groups, in the interests of making the most efficient use of land resources. This includes shared provision of parking and meeting/activity space
- Church design and placement can offer significant urban design benefits in terms of providing iconic buildings, landmark features, community identity and way finding

6.5.8 Movement and access

Brimbin New Town will have a high standard road network and connection as well as public transport services which will be provided from the early phases of development.

The road hierarchy is described in the *Structure Plan*. Road access from Taree will be provided from Lansdowne Road into residential and employment areas and the local and neighbourhood centres. The potential for improved connections to be provided into North Taree via a northern link is under investigation.

Public transport will include a high capacity bus network connecting to major destinations in Taree and other regional centres. There will also be a local public bus network to connect neighbourhoods to key community facilities.

In the longer term, there is the potential for a new passenger rail station to be constructed on the North Coast Railway, which passes through the site. This would enable rail services to be provided between Brimbin New Town and Taree.

The northern link options also provide a future opportunity for a cycle route between the Mixed Use Centre and Taree along the railway line.

These important measures will support the attractiveness of Brimbin New Town as a residential and employment centre and allow residents to continue to access services within Taree without relying on private motor vehicles.

6.6 Locational criteria for community facilities

The location of community facilities has been guided by the following criteria. Community facilities should be:

- Central to their catchment population and easily accessible by the majority of their users
- Visually prominent, with a central location and presentation to the street
- Accessible by public transport, and located to maximize access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Located to enhance a sense of community, vibrancy and local civic identity, and to help create a focal point or hub for the community. This includes places where people already have cause to congregate, rather than on standalone sites, for reasons of safety, accessibility and convenience. Shopping centres and schools are recognised as the key destinations where people tend to congregate within a neighbourhood. Locations within or adjacent to commercial centres also add to the activity level and critical mass needed to create a vibrant mix of activities and lively centre
- Where appropriate, clustered together or co-located on a single site to provide opportunities for shared use of resources (management, parking, meeting rooms, amenities, play equipment) and for convenience, visibility and capacity for a "one stop shop". Clustering will also create synergies that promote better utilisation of services (for example, through cross referral of clients, or young people being more inclined to use a service that is adjacent to a place they already know)
- Located to provide a high level of safety and security, particularly at nights and weekends. This is most usually associated with high levels of activity and casual surveillance, as well as lighting and proximity to public transport.
- Where possible, located adjacent to open space to allow for larger outdoor community events, spill-over activities and children's play. Locations adjacent to outdoor recreation facilities such as tennis or netball courts can also provide a leisure focus as well as space for community activities
- Located to ensure access to safe and convenient parking, including shared parking with surrounding land uses where appropriate.

Table 11 below provides a summary of the facilities required and proposed at Brimbin:

6.7 Delivery arrangements

Delivery arrangements and timing of provision are detailed in Table 11.

Key thresholds for provision of social infrastructure within Brimbin are as follows:

Completed dwellings / households	Facility
Initial works	Display centre / meeting room
180-360	Police station
1,800	Ambulance station
2,500-3,000	Primary school (subject to DEC Guidelines and assessment)
3,500	Small community centre, including room for library
4,000	Fire service
5,500	Branch library completion
7,000	Community Hub completion

Table 11: Social infrastructure needs for Brimbin

Community Infrastructure	Estimated size	Timing	Delivery method / Provider
COMMUNITY			
Multi-purpose Community Hub	1,000 – 1,300 m ² on 1.0 – 1.3 ha of land in Mixed Use Centre	Staged: • Temporary meeting room within display centre to serve initial residents • Expand to small community centre at 3,500 households • Completion at 7,000 dwellings	Developer to construct and hand over to Council through VPA Management by Council
Branch library	1,100 m ² Co-located with Community Hub in Mixed Use Centre	At 5,500 dwellings but can be staged: • Initially use mobile library service, using meeting room as drop off and collection point or consider opportunity to share local school library facilities • Expand to comprise part of the small community centre • Co-located facility required at 5,500 dwellings	Developer to construct and hand over to Council through VPA
Neighbourhood meeting areas	Up to 300m ² within areas of local open space, shops, school halls	Within neighbourhood shops	Developer
Police	3,000m ² in Mixed Use Centre	Population of 500-1,000 (180-360 dwellings)	To be owned and managed by NSW Police Service / State government
Ambulance	2,000m ² in Stage 1 Employment Zone	Population of 5,000 (1,800 dwellings)	To be owned and managed by Ambulance Service of NSW / State government
Fire services	2,000m ² in Stage 1 Employment Zone	Staged: Initially provided by Rural Fire Service at Taree Required when population reaches 11,000 (4,000 dwellings)	State government To be owned and managed by NSW Fire Brigade
EDUCATION			
Government primary schools	3 schools of 3 ha each Possible co-location of special needs school with one primary school Possible co-location of one primary school with the high school in Mixed Use Centre	Staged, in line with DEC Guidelines and existing enrolments at Taree schools	DEC / State Government
Government secondary school	1 school of 6 ha	Staged, in line with DEC Guidelines and existing enrolments at Taree schools	State Government
Independent or private school	Could be provided as alternative to one of the above schools if offered	Subject to independent assessment of demand	Private or independent school
Child care centre	Approximately 4 Could be co-located with primary school or	Subject to independent assessment of demand	Private or community sectors

Community Infrastructure	Estimated size	Timing	Delivery method / Provider
	Community Hub		
Preschool	Approximately 4 Within or in close proximity to neighbourhood and Mixed Use Centre	Subject to independent assessment of demand	Private or community sector
Lifelong learning	Within Community Hub	Subject to demand	By community sector within Community Hub
HEALTH			
General practitioners, dental and other health services	Commercial suites in Mixed Use Centre or neighbourhood centres	Subject to assessment of demand	Private sector
Hospital	-	Existing Manning Hospital	Government
Community Health Centre	-	Existing Community Health Centre Some outreach services may be offered at Community Hub	State Government
Residential aged care	50 high care beds per 1,000 70 yrs 40 hostel beds per 1,000 70 yrs 10 self-contained packages per 1,000 70 yrs	Self contained facilities to be provided in early stages as part of Mixed Use Centre	Private sector / aged housing provider
RETAIL/COMMERCIAL			
Mixed use centre	80ha in total	Over 4 stages	Private
Neighbourhood retail/commercial	3 of 2,500m ² each	Stages 2-4	Private
OTHER			
Places of worship	Subject to demand Ideally near mixed use or neighbourhood centres	Subject to demand of incoming population	Religious organisations
Leisure and entertainment facilities - clubs, pubs, restaurants and cafes	Subject to demand Within Mixed Use Centre, Neighbourhood centres and Employment Zone	Subject to assessment of demand	Private sector

7 Open space and recreational facilities

7.1 Open space needs

7.1.1 Broad Trends in Demand

Based on the available research on sport and recreation participation in NSW, it is predicted that the following factors will characterise the long term demand for recreation and open space opportunities in Brimbin New Town.

- National health issues will continue to stress improving opportunities within the built environment for everyday incidental physical activity within residential areas
- There is likely to be a sustained demand for health and fitness opportunities, requiring access to both indoor and outdoor facilities
- The quality of facilities and open space is as important as the quantity. Open space should be carefully designed and take into account a wide range of needs
- There is likely to be significant demand for recreation, entertainment and commercial leisure opportunities for young people. It is important to view young people as having a legitimate claim on public space and this should be addressed in the planning of the open space and public domain areas
- There will be demand for natural areas as places to experience the natural environment, away from the urban setting and for appealing areas to walk, cycle and relax in a natural setting. In particular, natural settings, creek corridors and larger bushland parks are valued
- Recognising that walking is the most popular recreation activity with the highest participation rates, there is increasing demand for walking and cycle networks, including track systems linked to key destinations, corridors and natural areas
- There is increasing demand for informal recreation opportunities for families, and for affordable facilities and activities
- There is an increasing demand for quality playgrounds with diverse opportunities for both older and young children
- For reasons related to contemporary lifestyles and changing patterns of work, people have less time and are choosing to partake in sport and recreation pursuits at different times. There may be an increase in the demand for early morning and after hours sport and recreation activities, requiring floodlit facilities in the future
- Sporting codes are increasing the duration of playing seasons and increasing demand for training as well as competition grounds. Coupled with climate change, consideration needs to be given to managing the use of grounds and optimising water use through quality irrigation systems
- Sporting clubs are demanding higher standards of provision, with change facilities, canteens, storage, field surface improvements and floodlighting being desired inclusions so sports can play and train in the evening and in winter
- Changing demand patterns suggests growth in adventure based activities such as artificial climbing wall, bmx, skateboarding, in-line skating, mountain biking, trail running and beach volleyball
- Amenities within parks are essential. Shade, water, seating, interactive play equipment and bike areas are core inclusions for parks to be used regularly
- The increase in community events within parks requires additional facilities and utilities such as toilets, power, water, and parking infrastructure
- There is a move towards establishing shared-use and multi-functional outdoor sport facilities to reduce duplication and manage costs
- With an increasing trend to indoor multi-purpose facilities, consideration should be given to the design of community centres to ensure that they can accommodate a range of leisure and recreation programs, for example dance, yoga, exercise and martial arts.
- Transport to sport is often difficult for young people due to lack of public transport, pointing to a need for sporting facilities to be located on public transport routes or near other uses such as schools.

7.1.2 Local trends in demand

In considering the future open space needs, GTCC has identified a number of relevant demographic features of the LGA which include:

- A relatively low proportion of migrants (7.7%)
- A high proportion of Indigenous peoples (4.3%)

- A large proportion of owner occupancy (43.1%)
- An ageing population (26% > 60 years of age)
- A low household income (46% earning < \$650/week)
- A low level of school attainment (61% no > than year 10).

Other general trends described in sections 2.1.1 and 3.2 include:

- Increased lone person households
- Increased single parent families
- Decreased families with young children
- Continued ageing population
- Decreased household size
- Stability in owner occupancy
- Out migration of young adults
- In migration of retirees and families

7.1.3 Participation rates

Research commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission in 2010 suggests that the sport and recreation activities with the highest participation rates for persons aged 15 years and older in NSW were:

Table 12 Participation rates in sport and recreation

Activity	Participation rate (%)
Walking	34.0
Aerobics/fitness	22.4
Swimming	13.6
Cycling	10.6
Running	9.1
Golf	7.6
Tennis	6.8
Outdoor football	6.5
Bushwalking	4.8
Touch football	4.4
Outdoor cricket	3.4
Netball	3.0

Most participation in physical activity is in non-organised activities. Participation in non-organised activity has been increasing over the past decade, while participation in organised physical activity has remained fairly stable since 2001 (ABS, 2010).

Amongst children, a recent ABS survey found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of all children participate in organised sport, with swimming the most popular

sport (19%), followed by soccer (13%), Australian rules football (9%) and netball. Bike riding is the most popular non-organised activity, with about two thirds of children riding bikes at the national level. Participation rates have remained relatively steady over time, with only minor fluctuations between 2003 and 2009 (ABS, 2009).

7.1.4 Likely needs

While precise needs cannot be identified at this stage, based on the above it is likely that the broad needs of the Brimbin New Town population will include the following:

- A variety of accessible local parks for informal play and passive recreation that support family and community activity and that provide a diversity of recreation settings and opportunities for all age groups and all abilities
- High quality parks with well maintained facilities such as paths, play equipment, fencing, landscaping and shelter from sun, wind and rain
- Outdoor areas for larger gatherings and cultural events e.g. extended family and group picnics, amphitheatre, markets
- Multi-purpose playing fields suitable for a variety of field sports, and able to accommodate both junior and adult sporting activities for males and females
- Access to both outdoor and indoor courts for court sports
- Indoor spaces for activities such as dance, martial arts, yoga, fitness, gym
- Access to recreation, entertainment and leisure opportunities and meeting places that target young people, including public spaces that are safe and welcoming and allow for social interaction and informal games
- Access to aquatic facilities that include a variety of leisure and fitness activities and programs consistent with local needs and preferences
- A network of walking and cycling tracks linked to key destinations and recreation areas
- Options to enhance fitness in parks and trails
- Opportunities for adventure based activities, such as mountain biking, trail bikes, horse riding, rock climbing. This should include opportunities for adventure play for primary school aged children as well as young people – for instance informal tracks and mounds for BMX and active games,

observation places and structures, flying fox, skate park/bowl

- Opportunities to enjoy bushland, water and other natural settings, for picnics, bushwalking and as spaces for reflection, rest and relaxation
- Opportunities that increase incidental physical activity, through design of footpaths, road networks and accessible, safe and well lit walking and cycling tracks.

Some of these needs will be satisfied by local facilities to be provided within Brimbin New Town, while others will be addressed by accessing district and regional facilities provided within Taree and the wider region.

7.2 Open space planning objectives

Recreation facilities and open space should contribute to the achievement of a range of social objectives such as:

- To provide a range of local opportunities for sport, passive recreation and leisure related activities to satisfy the needs of all age groups
- To promote the health and well-being of the community and encourage physical activity
- To foster social interaction amongst residents and promote social integration between the new community and existing residents
- To contribute to sense of place and local identity
- To provide accessible recreation opportunities to minimise car travel and promote active transport means such as walking and cycling.

The provision of recreation facilities and open space within Brimbin New Town should contribute to the goals outlined in the GTCC *Draft Open Space Strategy 2011*, as detailed in section 3.2.2 and described further in section 7.3 below.

Other best practice planning principles which have been adopted elsewhere are also applicable to planning for open space and recreation facilities within Brimbin New Town. These include:

- Parks and facilities should be provided in a way that ensures equity of access for all the community, in terms of the nature, design, location, distribution and accessibility of open space and facilities.
- Quality and usability of open space are key considerations. Sites should not be constrained by the slope, flooding, stormwater management,

contamination, service easements or conservation values. The emphasis should be on achieving a quality and connected open space system that supports an active community.

- There should be flexibility in the design of open space and sporting facilities to allow for changing needs, priorities and preferences.
- Open space should be designed to accommodate use by families, young people, older people, as well as personal fitness, new activity trends and community gathering space.
- Open space should recognise and respond to the natural values of the site, including riparian corridors and views.
- Recreation opportunities should complement rather than replicate existing opportunities in the surrounding area.
- Parks should be located in areas that are easily accessible and linked to pedestrian path and cycle way access. Provision should be based on walkable catchments so most residents are able to walk to a local park. Major facilities should be located on public transport routes. Areas of open space have road frontage to ensure there is surveillance to improve safety.
- Playgrounds should provide a range of opportunities and experiences for children and provide a level of amenity for carers including seats, water bubblers and shade.
- Where appropriate, passive recreation areas could be considered in areas within or adjacent to riparian and drainage areas where this can increase access and create activity nodes for passive surveillance.
- Sportsgrounds should cater for a number of sports, to improve their viability and meet community needs. They should also be accessible to the general community for casual sport and recreation.
- Active recreation areas for competitive sport should be designed to ensure they are not affected by flooding and are available year round for sporting competitions.
- Where possible, sportsgrounds and recreational open spaces should be integrated and incorporate trees and shade.
- Clustering and co-location of open space and recreation facilities with other community facilities is encouraged where appropriate, to achieve economies of scale and promote convenient access, usability and community identity. Dual use

agreements which permit sharing of community and school facilities, and in particular playing fields, should be pursued.

- Areas of open space should be linked, where possible, through linear connections to create a network of open space that links with the broader regional network.
- Provision should be made for recreational cycling tracks and a safe street bike network.
- Recreation facilities and open space should be safe and appealing and comply with CPTED principles (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).
- Recreational and open space facilities should be planned taking into consideration the long term maintenance requirements and costs.

7.3 Council open space standards

7.3.1 Calculation of open space needs

GTCC has recently exhibited a Draft Open Space Strategy. The Draft Strategy classifies open space according to three main functions:

- Conservation
- Passive Recreation
- Active Recreation.

In addition, open space and recreational facilities are classified according to the catchment level for which they are designed:

- Local
- District
- Regional.

The following standards of provision have been recommended by Greater Taree City Council to guide the planning of open space:

- There should be an overall provision of 2.83 ha of open space per 1,000 people, broken down as follows:
 - 1.03 ha per 1,000 people for passive recreation ie playgrounds, neighbourhood parks, linear parks, district parks, regional parks
 - 1.8 ha per 1,000 people for active recreation ie sports fields.

Council has advised that local parks need to be a minimum of 1-2 ha in size. District parks should range in size from 3-20 ha.

The above benchmarks exclude areas of 'restricted open space' such as:

- Natural and cultural features
- Urban water management measures such as swales/detention basins
- Artificial lakes/ permanent drainage ponds
- Natural wetlands.

Although these areas may have some passive recreational qualities, they are unlikely to be accessible to the broad community and can contribute in only a minor way (not to exceed 2% of the developable area) to meeting to the needs of a community for open space.

Council's Draft Open Space Strategy sets out criteria to define the appropriate qualities of its open space and minimum standards to meet community expectations. These Criteria for Open Space are reproduced in Appendix A, and relate to features such as:

- Physical size, shape, location, slope
- Flooding
- Landform and hazards
- Bushfire risk
- Community access
- Environmental features
- Cultural heritage.

For the purposes of assessing open space needs, the GTCC is divided into nine Community Planning Areas (CPAs). On the whole, Greater Taree is found to be well serviced for open space overall, particularly given the large tracts of State Forests, Crown Land and National Parks, which dominate supply.

Brimbin falls into a large rural area known as 'Taree Balance'. In this area, which greatly exceeds the area of Brimbin alone, there is currently a shortfall of active and passive recreational opportunities, as the majority of land is held in private ownership on rural holdings.

Where gaps in provision have been identified, the Draft Strategy contains specific strategies and objectives which can be used to meet identified needs. Strategies relevant to planning for Brimbin's open space and recreational needs are summarised below:

Table 13 GTCC Open space strategies and objectives
GTCC Strategies and objectives to meet needs and address gaps

Strategies	Objectives
1. Assess open space contributions based on open space strategy principles and community demographic needs	Additions to the open space network need to meet the standards set out under the criteria in Appendix 1.
2. Open space located in effective and efficient locations.	- Co-locate Medium and High Use open spaces in greenfield sites. - Consider open space in greenfield in context of regional value.
4. Reduce the financial burden on ratepayers for the maintenance and development of open spaces	- Decline developer contributions of open space for drainage purposes without receipt of associated maintenance costs. - Decline developer contributions of open space that does not meet the standards that are set out in Appendix 1 and have not been identified in a strategy or in a rezoning process. Developer to provide section 94 contributions instead.
6. Maintain the environmental amenity of the Manning Valley	- Retain open space of environmental significance. - Install open space amenities that are sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

7.3.2 Current provision within Brimbin

It is clear from discussions with GTCC's Open Space Planner, that the Brimbin New Town area has been specifically excluded from the assessment contained within the Open Space Strategy and described above. No Brimbin sites are included in calculations of existing open space, and the population on which planning for this CPA has been undertaken is forecast to increase from 5,416 in 2011 to only 5,676 in 2021 and 6,087 in 2031. Furthermore, calculations of the adequacy of existing open space exclude private land and the new population which will live here.

As a result, there is currently no public open space provided within the Brimbin New Town site.

This report has used the available information and discussions with Council to develop recommendations for open space requirements for this new community.

7.3.3 Quantum of open space required

For Brimbin New Town, it is proposed to adopt the above standards of provision of open space across the whole development.

Consistent with the population projections outlined in Section 4, Brimbin New Town will require a minimum of 62.26 ha of quality, usable open space, comprising:

- 22.66 ha for neighbourhood, district and regional parks (passive open space)
- 39.6 ha for active open space/sports fields.

For reasons of equity, there should be a consistent level of provision across the development as a whole.

7.4 Proposed open space provision

The open space and recreation opportunities incorporated within the *Draft Structure Plan* draw on the area's natural vegetation and topography to provide a distinctive character to the development and substantial social benefit to that community. Facilities will meet the local recreation and sporting needs of residents and promote an active, healthy lifestyle for all age groups.

The location and design of proposed open space within Brimbin New Town are described within the *Draft Structure Plan* and summarised in Table 14.

Features include:

- Passive open space – comprising local and neighbourhood parks and the recreational lake. Local parks will be located within 200 m of surrounding dwellings, while neighbourhood parks will typically be located in the centre of neighbourhoods, within 400 m of dwellings at the intersection of important roads. Parks may include facilities such as barbecues, seating and shelter, as well as landscaping, public art, water sensitive urban design, shade, community gardens and other potential agricultural uses (minimum 22.66 ha)
- Active open space – will be co-located with schools and other community uses, between neighbourhoods and adjacent to riparian corridors. Facilities will include sporting fields, netball and tennis courts, a health club and bowling greens. Embellishments may include

shade structures, pavilions, change facilities, fitness circuits and playgrounds (minimum 39.6 ha)

- Conservation lands – including large areas of existing native vegetation in the west and south west of the site and land to the eastern part of the site. Access to the Dawson and Lansdowne Rivers will be possible. Public access to walking trails will be controlled (1,080 ha).
- Private recreation – a golf course and recreational facilities will be provided adjacent to the Mixed Use Centre (52 ha).

Corridors and environmental reserves are generally not counted towards the open space required by councils unless they provide recreation amenity. Nevertheless, in addition to the above areas of public open space, the development will provide:

- Riparian corridors and steep land – including land along creeklines and ridges. These areas will provide opportunities for informal passive recreation through the provision of trails and paths, lookouts, play areas and public art. Pedestrian and cycleways will provide access linkages to schools, neighbourhood and Mixed Use Centre.
- Space for community gardens and urban agriculture. Community gardens have been found to provide important opportunities for the development of community networks and social capital in new communities, as well as opportunities for local food production. The inclusion of community gardens will reflect the farming heritage of the area and contribute to its sense of place and identity.

GTCC Open Space Guidelines do not provide guidance on the embellishments to be provided for the different types of open space and recreational areas. However, GTCC would expect similar levels and types of embellishment as is provided at other facilities within the LGA.

The proposed areas of open space and recreation facilities will be designed and constructed by the developer and provided as works in kind to Council to own and manage, with specifications and arrangements included in the VPA. The private recreation facility will be privately managed and maintained.

7.5 Access to regional facilities

Future residents of Brimbin New Town will also rely on existing regional open space and recreational facilities available within Taree, Wingham and surrounding areas. These are likely to include:

- Taree Recreation Centre
- Queen Elizabeth Park – toilets, open space, cycle paths, picnic tables and jetties

Residents are also likely to make use of district open space in surrounding areas, including sportsgrounds.

Discussions with Council indicated that there may be a need for a new district open space facility and a site has been identified in North Taree. However, demand for a new district open space facility could alternatively be met through dedication of land within Brimbin New Town.

At this stage, it is not proposed that Brimbin New Town will contain either an indoor sports centre or an aquatic centre as public facilities. Both these types of facilities require a larger catchment population to make them viable than will be available at Brimbin New Town.

In addition, access to these types of facilities will be readily available to the Brimbin New Town population, at the Taree Recreation Centre. Council has advised that this facility will have spare capacity to accommodate the needs of the Brimbin New Town population.

However, in the longer term, the population of Brimbin New Town may have a population large enough to support indoor sports courts and an aquatic centre, as part of a commercial fitness centre, for example. This would be subject to a detailed demand and feasibility assessment and would more than likely form part of the private recreation facility.

7.6 Delivery, ownership and management arrangements

Arrangements for the delivery of open space to be owned, managed and maintained by local government will be specified in a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Greater Taree Council for the open space. The VPA is discussed in more detail in section 10.

Arrangements for the ownership and management of open space that will not become the responsibility of local government are subject to on-going negotiations with relevant agencies.

Table 14 Open space and recreational requirements for Brimbin

Community Infrastructure	Estimated size	Timing	Delivery method / Provider
RECREATION			
Passive open space	Minimum of 22.66 ha for local, district and regional parks as per GTCC Draft Open Space Guidelines Neighbourhood parks within walking distance of homes	As part of each of 4 stages	Developer to construct and hand over to Council through VPA for Council management
Active open space / sports fields	Minimum of 39.6 ha Could include a district level facility if demand warrants	To meet demand. Scope to share use with schools	Developer to construct and hand over to Council through VPA for Council management
Conservation lands	1,080 ha	As per timing stipulated in the VPA. Possibly at rezoning, and will be provided at the one time	Developer to hand over to Office of Environment and Heritage / National Parks and Wildlife Service through VPA
Riparian lands	Additional to above	Progressively available	Developer to hand over to Council through VPA
Private recreation – golf club	52 ha	Stage 3	Developer / community organisation

8 Social issues and social impacts

8.1 Key social issues

Discussions with GTCC's social planners, comments during preparation of the Development Strategy and information from a range of other service providers, planning documents and sources have assisted in identifying the major social issues relevant to planning for the future of Brimbin New Town.

Key social issues associated with the current population and community which need to be considered in planning for Brimbin New Town include:

- The community strongly values the lifestyle, opportunities and natural assets within the Greater Taree region
- The population within the municipality is ageing and growing through in-migration from 'sea changers' and 'tree changers'. The proportion of older people will continue to increase as a proportion of the total population.
- There are relatively few young adults as a proportion of the population, and limited activities for teenagers and young adults.
- The population is characterised by a relatively low socio-economic base
- The area experiences relatively high unemployment relative to other parts of NSW (10.5% in 2006), and particularly high levels of unemployment for young people (over 20%)
- There is a lack of public transport
- Crime rates are relatively high
- There is the potential for community concerns to be raised in relation to development of a rural area for urban uses.

These factors point to the following needs which will be important to the success of Brimbin New Town:

- A need for diverse, affordable and adaptable housing which will address the needs of this changing population

- A need for quality social infrastructure, services and open space and recreational facilities to support new development, at no cost to Council
- A particular need for activities and support for young people
- As the population ages, there will be a need for increasing levels of care and support, particularly for older residents with lower incomes
- Continuing demands on existing regional and district level community services provided from Taree and a need to plan for how these services can expand to accommodate future demand from residents of Brimbin New Town
- A need for access to local employment and training opportunities and for economic activities at Brimbin New Town to support the Taree economy without attracting business away from the Taree centre
- A need to identify ways in which people living in Brimbin New Town can be encouraged to interact and engage with one another and their new community. This includes the need to provide activities which encourage active living and foster community involvement and interaction
- A strong need for transport connections between Brimbin New Town and Taree to ensure the area is accessible and residents can reach services, facilities, employment, recreation and other activities in Taree, to avoid potential locational disadvantage
- The need to engage the local community and stakeholders in planning for the new town, to understand community concerns and draw on local knowledge and skills.

These issues will be addressed by Brimbin New Town as discussed below.

8.2 Social impacts

Having considered the key issues and needs above, and the strategies for developing a socially sustainable community discussed in previous sections, it is considered that the following factors will have the potential to adversely impact on members of the community:

- Effects of the development on the character of the locality
- Social integration of the development
- Potential for social isolation

- Interface issues between zones
- Traffic impacts
- Visual amenity
- Cultural issues
- Security and safety issues.

These issues are examined in the following sections.

Change in the character and amenity of the local area

There will be a significant increase in the local population and employment over the development period, as well as provision of services and facilities to support that population. A rural environment will be transformed into a series of neighbourhoods, local and neighbourhood centres, employment areas and recreational and open spaces.

Brimbin New Town is identified on State and local government plans as a future urban growth centre. However until recently there has been little public discussion about the characteristics and size of Brimbin New Town. Development of the site may raise a number of issues or concerns for residents of nearby properties and villages, for others with an interest in the natural environment, for representatives of the local agricultural and tourism industries, and or for those from other areas identified for future development.

Potential issues and impacts which have been identified in other studies include stress and anxiety, degradation of the local environment, loss of culture and identity within communities, additional demands on existing community services, increased demands on rural industries, and community breakdown, as well as delays and financial costs (Learmonth et al, 2007, pp.4, 24). In addition, there is potential for existing rural industries to impact on the land uses proposed in Brimbin New Town through factors such as air quality (odour, dust, pesticide use, smoke and particulates, machinery noise and visual impacts) (p. 23).

There are a large number of techniques and strategies which can be adopted to avoid or minimise the potential for social impacts from development, including use of buffers, zoning, planning and communication. The identification of the Brimbin site on strategic plans as an area of future urban development, its size, the State and local government planning legislation, the single ownership of the site and the Structure Plan will contribute to a holistic and well planned development. Design in accordance with best practice planning principles, State and local government legislation, and with no costs to Council, will mitigate against adverse social impacts on the

broader community, while contributing to a high quality environment and community for new residents of the area.

In addition, Roche Group has developed a community engagement plan, which aims to ensure open communication with local stakeholders throughout the planning and development process.

Social integration

An important principle of social sustainability is to provide opportunities for integration of new and existing communities. Brimbin New Town will need to become integrated over time with its rural socio-economic and natural setting and establish a strong and supportive relationship with the regional centre of Taree. While most new residents are expected to be drawn from the GTCC region or larger cities, with similar backgrounds to others in the region, some residents may be 'tree-changers', with high expectations for the quality of facilities, services and amenities. Facilities such as a private golf club may contribute to perceptions of 'us and them', and make opportunities for social interaction and integration important. In addition, the new population is likely to differ from the current rural population of the local area, as discussed in Section 2.

Principles for encouraging social integration were discussed in Section 5 and include physical design of the neighbourhoods and provision of community facilities, services, employment and areas of open space which all residents (from Greater Taree and Brimbin New Town) can access.

Recreational areas and public open space (such as the lake, conservation area, trails and cycleways) will be of interest to residents of the wider region and will encourage interaction between these populations and assist with social integration. Residents from the region and the local area will mix in places of work within the new employment areas. There will also be some mixing of children in schools and use of common facilities in the wider area, and interaction through families, work and other networks.

It is recommended that gateway treatments do not send messages of segregation or exclusivity or highlight social differences between neighbourhoods, or the town and its surrounding region.

Connectivity and permeability can be encouraged with the traditional neighbourhood design. Legible signage will encourage permeability and highlight the area's unique features of interest to visitors.

In these ways, the proposed development will become integrated over time into its rural setting and develop its unique character to the towns and villages within the Manning Valley.

Potential for social isolation

Families, couples, young single people and older households are expected to make up a significant proportion of the population in Brimbin New Town in its early years. Some may experience social isolation in this new community, despite its relative proximity to Taree, if factors such as limited mobility, lack of affordability and/or limited support restrict social contact and participation in social activities.

The proposal provides a range of features to encourage and support social inclusion for residents, to foster development of social networks and to reduce the potential for social isolation (see section 5). These include:

- A design with a focus on public amenity, to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle
- Smaller dwellings including apartments and seniors' living centrally located near the Mixed Use Centre and areas of public open space
- The Mixed Use Centre will provide a centrally accessible focal point for business, retail and community activities and encourage informal meeting and social interaction
- Provision of community and social infrastructure within each of the neighbourhood centres will include a school, small group of shops and community facilities (such as childcare) within easy walking distance of homes. This will provide opportunities for social interaction and organised community activities
- Regular, accessible and affordable public transport services within Brimbin New Town and linking to Taree
- The proposed community development program will address the needs of all members of the community, providing community activities and events that encourage social participation.

These design and community development features will encourage interaction and minimise the potential for social isolation to occur.

Interface issues between zones

While the benefits of a mixed use, active and integrated community are strongly supported, such developments can nevertheless create impacts on the amenity of residents living near or in the mixed use areas, such as the Mixed Use Centre. For example, a design which encourages activities in the evenings or the through movement of pedestrians could equally generate lighting impacts or noise from groups of people passing by, or congregating in public areas. Community facilities or parks used for gatherings can generate noise, traffic or parking

impacts, which may disturb residents living in nearby medium density dwellings.

It will also be important that areas adjacent to employment zones are appropriately buffered to avoid potential issues such as noise and odours, vehicle traffic, visual amenity, hours of operation or lighting, which could adversely impact on residential neighbours.

These factors are addressed in the design of Brimbin New Town.

Traffic

Traffic will increase in line with construction and population growth. Traffic studies have been undertaken to ensure the standard of both existing and new roads meet future needs.

Major road upgrades will be undertaken. In addition, a transport corridor along the rail line will be retained for future rail services and a cycleway, and a dedicated area will be provided for a possible new train / light rail station. Cycleways and walkways will also be provided throughout the town to encourage active transport. Public transport will link residents within Brimbin New Town, Taree and other local destinations.

Visual amenity

The hilly topography will create areas with views and vistas. However, it will also make Brimbin New Town visible from some surrounding areas. Opportunities and concepts to minimise visual impacts have been considered as part of the formulation of the *Draft Structure Plan* and will need to be further considered as development of the site proceeds.

Security and safety issues

The relatively high crime rates were raised as an important local issue in discussions with social planners.

Security and safety can be addressed in a number of ways, including through design and the strategies to engage people in community life.

Good design including use of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles will encourage community ownership of public areas and deter anti-social behaviour. These have been discussed in section 5.

Strategies to engage people of all ages in the new community have been considered in planning for the role and functions of the proposed community hub and the community development strategy outlined in section 9.

8.3 Summary assessment of impacts

In summary, it is anticipated that Brimbin New Town will contribute the following real benefits to the region:

- Enhanced supply of housing – including diversity and affordability of housing, to meet increasing demand associated with future population growth in the region, consistent with the objectives of the *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy*. Matching supply with demand is critical to help maintain housing affordability and to meet the needs of the future community
- Enhanced housing choice – by providing a diversity of housing types suited to the needs of a range of households across the lifespan, helping to create a balanced and sustainable community with capacity to respond to the varying demands of a changing society
- Increased local employment opportunities – through commercial and light industrial employment lands, ongoing agricultural production and the construction process
- Provision of quality, publicly accessible community facilities and open space and recreation opportunities in the Brimbin New Town area
- Provision of accessible and affordable transport services within Brimbin New Town and connecting to Taree.

In considering possible social impacts of the development on adjacent communities, this assessment has found that there will be no significant impacts in terms of local character, social composition, integration and isolation, traffic impacts, visual amenity and neighbourhood safety.

There will be changes to the character of the area, as it moves from rural to urban uses. However, community concerns about this change can be alleviated by developing Brimbin New Town as a

quality, masterplanned community in accordance with the Structure Plan with a mix of dwelling types and styles, workplaces, a range of community facilities, a strong focus on open space and recreation and on maintaining areas of agriculture.

There will also be changes in demand for social infrastructure arising from projected population growth. Brimbin New Town will include a variety of new local services and facilities that will satisfy local needs, ensuring that existing residents are not disadvantaged in their access to services and facilities, but are also able to enjoy access to the new social infrastructure. In terms of regional human services, there will be some ongoing needs for services delivered from Taree commensurate with population growth.

There is some limited potential for negative visual impacts for adjoining residents, as existing distant rural outlooks are replaced by urban development. Members of the wider community may experience feelings of dislocation relating to the proposal for membership of the private golf club. There will be increases in traffic during construction and from residents and workplaces. Strategies to address these potential impacts have been discussed above.

It is recommended that an ongoing program of communications and consultation with the surrounding community be implemented as planning for the site continues. This should include regular updates (for example via a project website or through local media) to keep people informed of the progress of the project, and further consultation with key stakeholders around the detailed design of the development. Involvement of stakeholders and community members in planning aspects of the development and establishing its unique sense of place will encourage the development of community networks and a sense of 'ownership' of the new town.

9 Community development strategy

In new communities, it can take some time for social networks to develop, for community needs to be identified and for activities and services to be established. Built facilities by themselves will not bring people together and create an active, resilient and truly sustainable community at Brimbin New Town. What makes an authentic community is the actions of people - the relationships they form, the sense of identity and ownership they develop, the ways in which they interact with each other, how they come together to celebrate their place, and the opportunities they have to cooperate with others to influence what happens around them. A community development strategy will be required to identify needs and to develop activities, programs, services and voluntary organisations to support community building. Although buildings and spaces are necessary to provide the platform for establishing networks, it is necessary to move beyond the physical design and look at how community development can be woven into the planning and design process to ensure that people are involved in the planning, design and lived experience of a place.

A community program is one initiative that has proven successful in other areas in helping to foster social interaction and to build a sense of community in new areas. As part of its commitment to the development of socially sustainable communities, Roche Group will develop and implement a community development strategy, with involvement from Council and the community, which focuses on establishing and building social relationships, networks and support mechanisms (social capital).

Components of this community and cultural development strategy are likely to include:

- A welcome kit, providing residents with a range of resources to draw on that help them connect with their community and get to know their local area
- Community development worker: the role of the community development worker will be to implement a community development program in partnership with local residents, GTCC, the developer and local community organisations. The program would involve a range of community development activities, from supporting the establishment of social groups and classes to community festivals and events, education and environment programs that could include

sustainable gardening, support for public art, cultural development and place-making strategies.

- Research and consultation to identify community needs
- Allocation of seed funding for community initiatives identified by local people that could focus on community building and integration of the new and existing communities.

Further consideration of the nature and resourcing of a community development strategy for Brimbin New Town will occur as planning for the project proceeds.

The exact role of the proposed Community Development worker will continue to be refined during preparation of the community and cultural development strategy. However, the position will be funded from the project's early stages through until the new community is well established. The position would initially be a part-time role (from sale of the 100th standard residential lot), with a full-time worker being funded as demand increases a full-time worker (anticipated between 200-500 lots depending on rate of dwelling construction on these lots). This position would continue to be funded as new precincts are developed, for the first 10 years of the project, at which time approximately 2000 dwellings are expected to have been completed.

A program of community consultation will also be undertaken to ensure existing and new residents are informed and involved in the planning and development process. It is recommended that the community consultation process already initiated by Roche Group be continued through subsequent phases of the planning and development process to provide an opportunity for existing communities and new residents to participate in the planning and to reduce uncertainty related to the development. The community consultation program will also be a key component of the broader community development strategy, in providing a mechanism to foster the social integration of new residents and to facilitate people getting to know each other and establish local networks.

An important way to engage new residents in the community and to build a sense of ownership is to provide opportunities for community participation in the ongoing design and development of the area. Examples include involving new residents in the design for local parks and playgrounds, the proposed community facilities such as the multipurpose community hub and other community initiative such as tree planting, community gardens, creek restoration and local conservation initiatives.

As noted above, the community strategy and community development worker will be appropriately resourced from early in the project through the first

10 years. Funding will also be required to support local community building activities, events and initiatives for some years until they are established and self-supporting, or secure alternative sponsorship (eg local business sponsorships).

10 Voluntary Planning Agreement

It is proposed that community infrastructure required to support the new population within Brimbin Roche Group will be developed by Roche Group and handed over to GTCC for ongoing management through a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA). The facilities proposed for provision by Roche Group through this VPA will be subject to detailed negotiations. Facilities identified through discussions with Roche Group and Council in preparation of this Community Plan are listed in Table 15 below.

Table 15 Summary of Roche Group offering in VPA

Facility	Details
Multi-purpose Community Hub	1,000 – 1,300 m ² on 1 – 1.3ha in Mixed Use Centre
Community development worker	Initially part time (from 100 th standard residential lot sale), then full-time as demand increases (anticipated at between 200-500 lots depending on rate of dwelling construction) for 10 years
Branch Library	1,100m ² co-located with Community Hub
Passive open space (local, district and regional parks)	22.66 ha minimum
Active open space / sports fields (including district level facility)	39.6 ha minimum
Conservation lands	1,080 ha approximately
Riparian lands	tba

Ownership, management and maintenance responsibilities for facilities and open space will also set out in the VPA. It is anticipated that:

- Council fund the ongoing maintenance of open space areas and community and recreational facilities, once dedicated.

In addition, there are options to explore the delivery of additional facilities through commercial operators. The Mixed Use Centre will certainly accommodate a range of facilities with a leisure focus (eg. cafés) and some of the open spaces offer possibilities for commercially run events and activities, eg. markets, bike hire.

- The Community Hub and Branch Library will be owned and managed by GTCC
- The passive open space, active open space, sports fields and conservation lands will be owned and managed by GTCC, Office of Environment and Heritage / National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Embellishment and improvement of open spaces will be carried out by Roche Group under the VPA
- The proposed level of embellishment will be consistent with GTCC Draft Open Space Guidelines and other facilities within the municipality

11 Conclusions

This report has provided an analysis of the social context for the Brimbin New Town proposal and an assessment of the community infrastructure and service needs and potential social impacts it might generate. It has described how the project to create a new community of 8,000 dwellings and 22,000 people will address key social issues in the region and how social sustainability will be achieved.

The report identifies that the social infrastructure that will be required to meet the needs of the future population and workforce of Brimbin New Town includes:

- A multipurpose Community Hub within the Mixed Use Centre. The facility will help fulfil a wide range of community needs including spaces for activities, meeting rooms, areas for delivery of outreach community health and support services, places suitable for functions and gatherings, youth and seniors' activities, playgroups, community education and life long learning, and other social and cultural activities. Development will be staged, with a temporary meeting room to be provided within the display centre for initial residents, followed by expansion to a small community centre at 3,500 households and completion of the facility at 7,000 dwellings
- A branch library to be co-located with the community hub
- Spaces for local activities at the neighbourhood level
- Three primary schools, one high school and a provision for a special school. This may include independent or private schools subject to the level of interest from providers
- Police and emergency services
- Commercial spaces for provision of private medical and other services, entertainment, dining and social outings
- Places of worship
- Large areas of employment
- Public transport services linking places within Brimbin New Town and Taree.

A community development worker will be employed, initially on a part-time basis, to implement a

community and cultural development plan over a 10 year period.

Recreation and open space requirements for the future population and workforce will include:

- A minimum of 22.66 ha of local and district parks
- A minimum of 39.6 ha of active open space / sports fields, including provision for a district level facility if demand is proven.

These allocations will be provided through a network of local and neighbourhood parks linked with cycleways and paths, lakes, community gardens, sporting fields, netball and tennis courts, bowling greens, a private golf course and a substantial allocation of conservation lands.

The community facilities and services will be designed and delivered to contribute to a socially sustainable community in its own right, but which has a relationship and interaction with existing communities, especially Taree.

Strategies have been proposed to minimise potentially negative social impacts which could be created through development of the new community. These include measures to minimise the potential for social isolation, assist with social integration and overcome impacts from traffic and construction. Community development strategies, place making initiatives and engagement of local community stakeholders will help build the social fabric of the new community and ensure residents and the workforce are engaged and able to enjoy the lifestyle and amenities which the new town will provide.

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Appendix A – Population characteristics

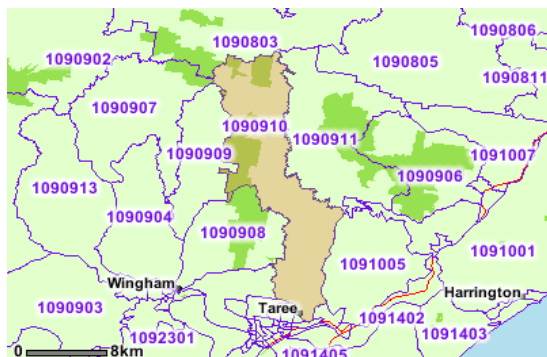


Figure 1 Area of CCD 1090910

Source: ABS Census data on-line www.abs.gov.au



Figure 3 Area of Taree Local Government Area

Source: ABS Census data on-line www.abs.gov.au

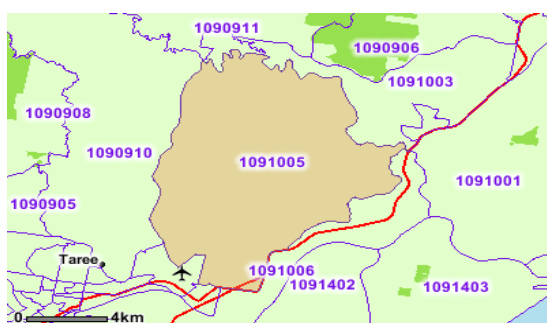
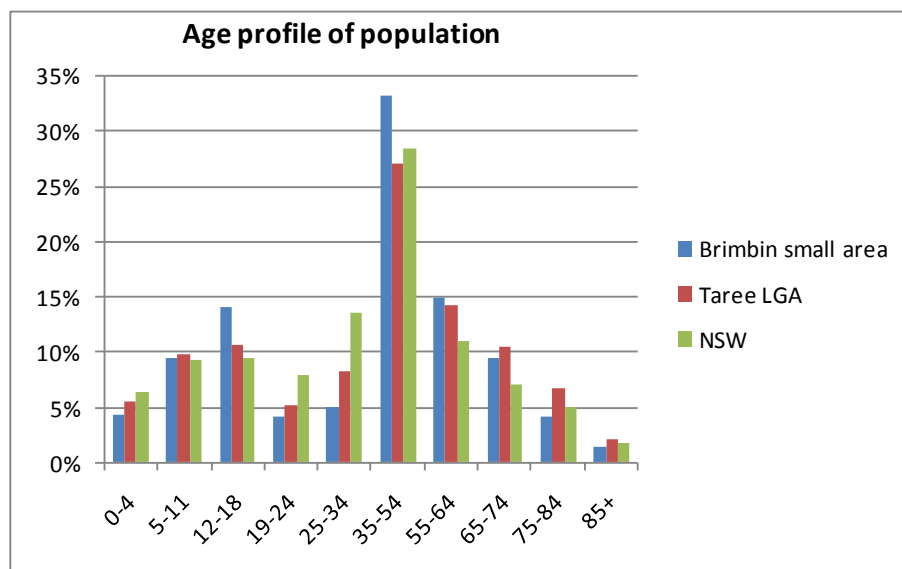


Figure 2 Area of CCD 1091005

Source: ABS Census data on-line www.abs.gov.au



Brimbin small area (CCDs 1090910 and 1091005)

Compared with Greater Taree LGA, key features of the Brimbin small areas are summarised below:

Age

The area has a relatively older population (median age 44 years, compared to 37 years for NSW as a whole) although this is very similar to the Taree median age of 43. One third (33%) of the Brimbin population is in the 35-54 age group compared with around 27% for Taree LGA. The proportion of older

people (aged 55+) in Brimbin, at 30% of the population was slightly lower than that of Taree, which has just over 33% in this age bracket. About 14% of residents are of high school age (12-18 years), compared with under 11% in Taree.

Household and family structure

Residents of the Brimbin live in slightly larger households than in the rest of Taree LGA (average 2.8 persons per household compared with 2.4 for the LGA). The area is notable for its very high proportion of family households (81%, compared to 70% for the LGA). The proportion of couples without children, at 47%, is similar to the LGA figure of nearly 45%. Couples with children account for around 43% of the Brimbin population, compared to approximately 37% for the Taree LGA. Conversely, the proportion of single parent families in Brimbin is relatively low, at only 10.5% compared to 17.5% in Taree LGA.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

With only 8% of residents born overseas, there is a similar level of cultural diversity in the Brimbin area to that of Taree LGA. Most residents speak English at home. Of the 4% who speak a language other than English at home, the most common languages spoken are Dutch, Croatian, Arabic and Italian. Approximately 2% of the area's population identifies as Indigenous, which is around half the proportion of Indigenous residents in Taree LGA.

Income and employment

Median weekly household income, at only \$700, is higher than the LGA average of \$635. Median individual income, at \$325-\$330 is similar to the Taree LGA.

In 2006 the area had an unemployment rate of 10.4%, almost identical to the Taree average at 10.5%.

Housing

The area has a very different tenure pattern to the rest of the Taree LGA. Nearly half of the dwellings in this area are fully owned, compared with 43% for the Taree LGA. The proportion of houses being purchased in the area, 34%, also exceeds the Taree average of just over 27%. Only 12% of dwellings in this area are rented compared to nearly 25% in Taree.

Almost all occupied private dwellings in the area (98%) are detached houses, compared with 86% in Taree LGA. No dwellings in the area were recorded as flats, apartments or semi-detached.

The Brimbin area is quite stable, with 59% of the population living at the same address 5 years ago. This compares with just over 52% for the Taree LGA.

Taree LGA

Compared with NSW as a whole, key characteristics worth noting for Taree LGA include:

- Taree's population is older than the NSW average, with the proportion of older people, aged 55+ (33%) significantly higher than for NSW (25%). However, the median age of residents of Indigenous descent is considerably lower than Taree's median age (18 years, compared with 43 years)
- The most prevalent households in the LGA are family households (70%), although Couples without children make up nearly half (45%) of these households (36% for NSW). Lone person households are slightly more common than the NSW average (25% in Taree vs 23% in NSW), reflecting the ageing population in the area. The proportion of single parent families (18%) is also slightly above the NSW average. In line with these statistics, average household size in Taree (2.4%) is slightly below the state average (2.6%)
- The proportion of detached dwellings (86%) is significantly greater than the NSW average (70%), while the proportion of flats and apartments is particularly low. Rates of home ownership are approximately ten percentage points higher than the NSW average (43% compared with 33%), but a smaller proportion of dwellings are being purchased (27% compared with 30%)
- The Taree LGA has significantly lower levels of cultural diversity than NSW as a whole, with less than 8% of residents born overseas, compared to the state average of 24%. However, the proportion of Indigenous residents is more than double that of NSW (4% compared to 2%)
- Median weekly household income levels are significantly lower than NSW overall, \$635 compared with \$1,036
- Taree has a significantly higher unemployment rate than NSW (10.5% compared with 5.9%)
- Taree has a smaller proportion of its working population employed in management and professional occupations but nearly half the population engaged in trades, clerical, labouring or machinery occupations.
- The proportion of Taree residents with tertiary qualifications is significantly below the NSW average, as is university attendance. Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Certificate qualifications are however greater than in NSW as a whole.

Appendix B – Existing community facilities, human services and open space

Services and facilities which could serve residents of Brimbin are concentrated mainly in the regional centres of Taree and Wingham, although some are also dispersed throughout nearby towns and villages, including:

- Cundletown, which is closest to Brimbin, being 4km to the south
- Purfleet, which is more than 12 km south of Brimbin.

Schools

Public schools

There are currently four public schools in Taree including the Taree Public School, Taree West Public School, Manning Gardens Public School and Chatham

Public School (which provides special education services). Cundletown and Purfleet also have one primary public school each.

There are two public high schools in Taree: Chatham High School and Taree High School.

DEC has advised that enrolments in these schools are currently under-capacity and that there would be room to accommodate new students living in Brimbin, at least in the early years. Public school enrolments for the schools nearest Brimbin are shown in the following table.

School enrolments and Utilisation rates

School Enrolments and Utilisation Rates							Utilisation (%)
School	Enrolments						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
High schools							
Taree High School	985	977	977	1,099	1,018	1,024	92%
Chatham High School	708	682	648	647	643	624	87%
Primary schools							
Taree Public School	72	71	69	68	67	66	47%
Taree West Public School	532	545	543	558	571	565	100%
Manning Gardens Public School	179	177	173	172	176	176	62%
Chatham Public School	321	333	357	354	339	351	100%
Cundletown Public School	254	230	229	225	229	232	83%

Key findings of this analysis are that on current projections:

- Taree High School could accommodate a small increase in enrolments but the site is considerably smaller than current benchmarks for new high schools
- Chatham High School could accommodate another 330 students and is on a particularly large site
- Spare capacity in the three high schools (which also includes Wingham High School) indicate available capacity for an additional 480 students in 2016
- Taree Public School could accommodate another 200 students with existing spaces but is on a very small site
- Taree West Public School and Chatham Public School are facing very high demands and will need additional classrooms by 2016
- Manning Gardens Public School could accommodate another 200 students and is located on a very large site
- Cundletown Public School could cater for another 80 students, although it is located on a small site
- Overall, Taree Public, Manning Gardens Public and Cundletown Public School are projected to have spare capacity for up to 480 students in 2016.

DEC regularly monitors enrolments, changing demographics, economic trends, and other socio-economic indicators and amends its plans for new schools accordingly.

Non-government schools

There are also several non-government schools in Taree and surrounding towns including:

- Taree Christian College which is a K-12 Christian School
- Manning River Steiner School, which is an independent school providing primary, kinder, pre-school and playgroup services
- Manning Valley Anglican College, located in Cundletown, provides Kindergarten to Year 12 education
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Taree
- Manning Adventist School, operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church provides education from kindergarten to Year 6 in Taree.

Tertiary education

The following tertiary education services would be available to residents of the Brimbin New Town area:

Technical and Further Education (TAFE)

Further education services are currently provided by the Taree Campus of the North Coast TAFE and also the Taree Community College (which operates out of Taree High School). They provide a range of vocational, leisure and work readiness education programs for individuals and the wider business community.

University

The University of New England (UNE) has a campus/study centre in Manning Street, Taree.

The Manning Valley U3A (University of the Third Age) provides learning opportunities and activities for older people.

Students wishing to access other tertiary education facilities need to travel to Port Macquarie (60 kms north) or Newcastle (150 km south) or beyond.

Community centres and halls

There are a number of Council operated community centres and halls within GTCC. Ormsby House is the main location for the Manning Valley Senior Citizen's Association and the Tareebit RSL Day Club. It is also available for hire.

The Visitor Information Centre on Manning River Drive offers a full range of visitor information services and also contains a theatre which is available for hire.

Manning Valley Neighbourhood Cottage on Marjorie Street provides a place for residents and community based groups to meet, but also delivers assistance and outreach services to improve the quality of life of residents in the community.

Outside of Taree, the Harrington Function Centre accommodates 300 people and is available for social functions and conferences. In Wingham, the Court House and memorial Town Hall are regularly used by community groups and for social and cultural events.

The Cundletown Progress and Soldier's Memorial Hall is a function hire facility. A number of sporting, recreational and religious groups also have facilities in the GTCC which are accessed by the broader community.

On the whole, the community centres appear to be well used by a wide range of groups accessing a variety of programs and activities. Feedback from one community service provider noted however that there is a need for additional meeting rooms or

venues from which to run activities or outreach programs.

Child care centres

Many councils are now deciding to no longer provide childcare facilities, given changes in funding and policy and in particular the large-scale provision of childcare facilities by private sector providers.

In the vicinity of Brimbin New Town there are the following child care services:

- Nine Taree based services, including long day care and pre-school for children 0-6 years of age
- Two Taree based schools, Manning Gardens Public and Manning River Steiner, also provide pre-school services
- Cundletown Pre-School and Long Day Care Centre
- Girrawong Pre-School in Purfleet.

In addition to the above child care centres, family day care is available through the Taree Great Lakes Five Star Family Day Care organisation. This is an accredited professional home-based childcare scheme.

Health services and facilities

Brimbin falls within the area managed by Hunter New England Health Service, which operates the Manning Valley Hospital. The hospital is a 166 bed facility which operates as a Day Hospital and Public Hospital. A Community Health Centre is co-located on the site. The Manning Hospital provides services including day surgery, obstetrics, occupational therapy, oncology, palliative care, pathology, pharmacy, physiotherapy, rehabilitation, health education and social work services.

The Bushland Health Group operates the Mayo Private Hospital in Potoroo Drive. This is an accredited private hospital which provides medical, surgical, paediatric and psychiatric services. The Group also provides a range of other services in the region including the Mayo Home Nursing Service and Mayo Injury Management and Northern Rehabilitation Services.

The Taree Community Health Centre, which is located in Pulteney Street, Taree, offers a range of community based health services including Aboriginal health, aged care support, audiometry, drug and alcohol, mental health, immunisation, nursing and HIV, hepatitis and sexual health services. Support Groups such as the Manning Prostate Support Group and the Manning Valley Breast Cancer Support Group are also operated out of this centre.

The Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia organisation located in Victoria Street, Taree, provides Housing

and Support Initiatives (HASI) and Recovery and Resources Services Program (RRSP) to people aged 16-65 with mental health illnesses and disorders.

There are also numerous doctors' surgeries and allied health services and facilities within Taree.

The Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre operates at Manning River Drive, Purfleet.

Libraries and cultural facilities

The Taree Library located in Victoria Street, Taree is currently the most accessible library service to Brimbin. Other libraries in the GTCC LGA are not within easy reach of Brimbin, being located in Halliday's Point, Harrington, Wingham and Old Bar.

The Manning Entertainment Centre on Manning River Drive offers significant facilities for the performing arts, both for local use and to accommodate visiting artists.

The Manning Regional Art Gallery provides both cultural, artistic and educational facilities and programs.

Places of worship

Places of worship in the surrounding area are predominantly of the Christian faith, including Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches. Several churches and other faith groups operate out of local community halls.

Cultural support services

Council provides services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Greater Taree Council co-funds (in association with the Department of Community Services) an Aboriginal Community Officer position. In addition to being the Council's key liaison point in relation to Aboriginal affairs, this officer provides community information and education, supervises the Council's Aboriginal Youth Service, assists with organisation of NAIDOC week, and provides support and resourcing to local Indigenous organisations. Council also hosts the annual Manning Indigenous Community Awards.

Council provides services to assist people from a wide range of cultures and helps to promote inclusiveness and cultural diversity within the broader community. This includes language services and multicultural community services.

Youth services

The Taree Police Citizen's Youth Club (PCYC) located in Commerce Street, Taree, offers a range of sport, recreation education and school holiday programs for youth. The Woombarra Wunggan Youth Services also operate out of the PCYC and is a NSW Community Services funded Aboriginal Adolescent Support Program.

The Ghinni Ghinni youth and Culture Aboriginal Corporation in Taree provides an Aboriginal Parent's Program for young Aboriginal parents, a Links to Learning program for 14-17 year olds who have left school, and health and nutrition programs for Aboriginal Youth aged 11-30.

The Taree based Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service provides a range of services for Aboriginal youth including a service for youth leaving foster care, mental health assessment and counselling and a Young Mum's Group. Their Purfleet Youth Service provides numeracy and literacy support, holiday programs and after school care for Indigenous young people.

There is also an Open Door Youth Refuge in Taree.

There are many groups providing leisure activities for youth in Taree and areas surrounding Brimbin including Guides NSW and the Scout Association of Australia.

The Hunter New England Area Health Service, operating out of the Taree Community Health Centre also offers the Children, Young People and Families Counselling service.

The 'Taree Street Beat Program' is funded by Greater Taree City Council and the Department of Justice. This program operates in three locations on a Friday and Saturday night where youth workers, among other things provide young people with free transport home or to a safe place.

Family and children's support services

A range of family support services are provided by government, not-for profit, church and community based and private operations in greater Taree.

The Department of Community Services Northern NSW Regional Office has a Community Services Centre in Taree.

Housing NSW, located in Victoria Street Taree provides public housing advice, referral and assessment and public housing for the GTCC LGA.

The Taree Community Health Centre operates an Early Childhood Centre and immunisation clinic.

Manning Support Services in Wynter Street, Taree, is a not-for-profit group that has operated in the Manning Valley for 20 years and provides services for the frail aged, young people with disabilities, carers, young parents and those experiencing crisis.

Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services Inc is a community development and emergency relief organisation that resources and empowers individuals, groups and the community in the

Manning Valley and surrounding LGAs through provision of information, referral services and support. It also operates outreach services from the Manning Valley Neighbourhood Cottage.

Manning and Great Lakes Early Intervention in Florence Street, Taree provides services to children from birth to six years experiencing delayed development or a diagnosed disability.

Emergency accommodation is provided for women and children in Taree at Lyn's Place Women's and Children's Refuge and Support Services. As mentioned previously, emergency youth accommodation is provided by the Open Door Youth Refuge in Taree.

Employment assistance services are provided in a number of Taree based organisations including Centrelink, Nova Employment, CRS and Break Thru Employment Solutions, which assists people with disabilities to obtain training and employment, and Wesley Uniting Employment, which is a Job Services Australia member.

In addition to employment assistance, there are a number of services for people with a disability in the greater Taree area. These include accommodation, advocacy, health and home support, transport services, social and leisure activities and respite care.

Aged care services

Residential aged care facilities are available in Taree and the wider district. These are operated by a combination of private sector, community and faith based organisations and offer accommodation including hostel suites, residential aged care and independent living units, nursing home facilities, rental accommodation for seniors and respite care.

Within Taree itself, there are more than six such facilities, including Storm Retirement Village, Bushland Place facilities, Catholic Care Hunter Manning, Taree Gardens, Mayo Private Hospital facilities and Frank Whiddon Masonic Homes. Closer to Brimbin, St Paul's Hostel in Cundletown is a Catholic aged care facility with 40 places for low level permanent and respite care. Bishop Tyrrell Place, part of Storm Retirement Villages, is a not-for-profit organisation run by the Anglican church which provides a facility with a range of services for 75 people, structured so that residents can age in place. A 'care farm' adjoining the facility provides activities and enjoyment for residents and visitors.

Greater Taree Council operates a number of frail aged and disability services, including community based support services under the Home and Community Care Program.

Other support and resource groups for the aged in the area include community based aged care

services provided by Hunter New England Health, Aged Care and Rehabilitation Services. There are also support programs for elderly persons who are isolated, medically dependent or with disabilities; social programs; and programs for those with dementia. The Manning Home Modification and Maintenance Service, funded by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, has an office in Taree and provides affordable home modification and maintenance services for HACC eligible clients. Private aged care services are also available through agencies and the Mayo private hospital.

Emergency services

The Greater Taree Fire Control Centre operated by the Rural Fire Service is located at Muldoon Street, Taree. The NSW Fire Brigade Taree Fire Station is in Pulteney St, Taree.

The Taree police station located in Albert Street Taree would be the nearest station for Brimbin. In the greater Taree region there are also Police stations located at Coopernook and Wingham.

The volunteer based Greater Taree City State Emergency Service operates out of Muldoon Street, Taree. Ambulance NSW Taree branch is located at Elizabeth Avenue Taree.

Greater Taree City Council also has a Local Emergency Management Officer and the Council is part of the Local Emergency Management Committee which is also represented by Police, Fire Brigade, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and relevant State Government agencies.

Transport

Three local bus companies offer public transport within Taree, and between Taree, Wingham and other local towns.

- Eggins Comfort Coaches operates 11 routes incorporating Taree West (Route 313), Taree North (311, 312), Chatham (311, 312), Cundletown (311, 312), Wingham (319), Harrington, Kendall, Manning Point, Old Bar, Blackhead and Forster
- Tinonee Bus Company operates two services each weekday as a school bus between Taree and Tinonee via The Buckets Way. During school term and on Fridays in school holidays, the bus continues to Krumbach. There is also a Thursday shopper's run
- Wisely's Bus and Coach Service operates several services within Wingham and between Wingham and local villages. During school terms the services operate morning and afternoons, while in holidays, only morning services are available
- Each company also offers school services:
 - Eggins Comfort Coaches also operates school bus services to over 3,500 school students at 34 local schools. The school buses serve Taree, Forster, Hallidays Point, Old Bar, Wallabi Point, Taree West, Chatham, Cundletown, Coopernook, Hannavale, John's River and Moorland
 - Tinonee Bus Company provides school buses to around 19 primary, high schools, colleges and TAFE via seven bus routes.

Three taxi companies operate within Taree and another two within Wingham (GTCC Community Directory).

Countrylink rail services operate from both Taree and Wingham stations.

Manning Valley and Area Community Transport Group, based in Wingham, provides community transport to those in need. The Hallidays Point Senior Citizens Association also provides some community transport.

Community services and facilities in the wider region

Some additional community facilities and services are provided in towns in the region surrounding Brimbin, such as Wingham, Old Bar, Harrington, Coopernook and Tinonee. Of these, Wingham and Old Bar are comparatively larger towns and as such, have a greater range of facilities and services.

Wingham

Wingham, with a population in 2006 of 4,812 is one of the larger regional towns, approximately 21 km northwest of Taree.

Wingham has two public primary schools and one public high school. St Josephs Catholic Primary School is the only non-government school located in Wingham.

The town has a number of child care facilities including four pre-school services (one being a mobile service for rural and remote families) and two long day care services.

The Wingham Community Hospital, operated by Hunter New England Health Service, is a rehabilitation unit providing rehabilitation and dementia care specifically for older persons.

An early child health service also operates in Wingham.

In addition to the central library in Taree, Greater Taree City Council operates a library in Wingham. The Moreland Gallery hosts exhibitions of local and visiting artists.

Wingham has some additional youth services to those offered in Taree, including the Taree Street Beat Program and Wingham Street Reach, a church-run youth outreach service operating on weekends.

The majority of family support services are operated out of Taree. There are however a small number of locally based services in Wingham. This includes Community Housing Ltd, a community based organisation providing safe, affordable housing to medium to low income tenants.

The town also has an aged care complex, along with home based aged care services. Leisure and support services for older people are provided by the Wingham Senior Citizen's Care Association and the Wingham Brush RSL Day Club.

As discussed above, the Manning Valley and Area Community Transport Group is based in Wingham and provides community transport to those in need.

Old Bar

Approximately 25 km southeast of Brimbin lies the coastal town of Old Bar, which had a population of 3,358 at the 2006 census.

Old Bar has one public primary school, two pre-schools and one long day care centre. It also has an early childhood health centre.

The Taree Street Beat Program also operates in Old Bar.

The Manning Valley Great Lakes TPI Social and Welfare Club Inc provides welfare advice, social activities and outings for totally and permanently disabled veterans and their dependents.

Banyula Lodge and Banyula Village in Old Bar, provide aged care facilities which include individual living units and low dependency care.

Harrington

Harrington is another coastal town in the greater Taree region, around 29 km east of Brimbin. In 2006 the town had a population of 1,753 people.

Harrington has one public primary school, one child care facility and an early childhood health service. There is also a Council operated library.

Harrington Community Health Centre provides a range of community health services including adolescent and family counselling, community nursing, occupational and speech pathology.

There are a number seniors leisure and support networks operating in the towns around Taree, including the Senior Citizen's Association in Harrington.

Coopernook

Coopernook, approximately 19 km north east of Brimbin, had a population in 2006 of 495 people. Being a relatively small town, it has only one public primary school and there is currently no child care service.

Tinonee

Tinonee, with a population of 734 people in 2006, is located about 19 km south west from Brimbin.

Tinonee has one public primary school and one child care facility.

Open space

Recreation and open space facilities in Taree

The GTCC operates a range of recreation facilities including the Manning Aquatic Leisure Centre, which is home to indoor and outdoor pools, a health club and creche. 'Learn to swim' classes are operated at the centre.

GTCC's Community Directory lists 21 parks, six of which are in Taree, and two are in Cundletown. Of the Council operated playgrounds, four are in Taree. There is also a skate park at Johnny Martin Oval.

The Council maintains a number of sports grounds which host a diverse range of sport and recreation activities. In Taree these include:

- Johnny Martin Oval in Albert St which, in addition to the skate park has a playground, cricket and soccer facilities
- Muscio Park in Stevenson Lane, has a cycleway and cricket facilities
- Omaru Park on Muldoon St, has a soccer pitch
- Taree Rugby Park on Urara Lane, is a rugby union ground and has a BMX track
- Wrigley Park on Commerce Street, has a playground, soccer training, cricket and cycling facilities.

In addition to Council owned parks and sporting facilities, there are numerous sporting and recreational groups and facilities in the greater Taree region. For example, the Saxby Stadium in Taree hosts basketball. There is the Taree RSL and Golf Club, the Taree Wingham Race Club and Taree Indoor Sports which provides indoor cricket, netball, volleyball, and soccer. Various tennis courts and clubs are in operation, including one in Cundletown. There are also boating and fishing groups, and a number of surf clubs in the greater Taree area.

Recreation and open space around Taree

Wingham

Greater Taree City Council operates a number of parks and playgrounds in the towns surrounding Brimbin and central Taree. These include at least two parks and three playgrounds in Wingham.

There are also a number of sporting facilities operated by GTCC. In Wingham, these include a recreation reserve, with facilities for cricket, polocrosse, a gun club and model aero club and the Central Park, which also has cricket facilities and a playground.

The Wingham Sports Complex has facilities for go karting, soccer, rugby league and cricket. Council also provides a skate park in the town, along with a swimming pool which has 'Learn to swim', aqua aerobics and swim clubs.

Old Bar

In terms of leisure and open space facilities, there is one park and two playgrounds in Old Bar. In addition to a skate park, there are also two sports grounds offering cricket, rugby union, rugby league, soccer, netball and athletics. There is also an unsupervised pool.

Harrington

Council provides a park with playground facilities, and the Esmond Hogan Park is a sports ground with baseball, cricket and rugby league facilities. There is also a skate park in Harrington.

Cooperbrook has a Council run playground.

GTCC maintains the **Tinonee** Recreation Ground which has soccer, netball and cricket facilities and a playground located elsewhere in the town.

Closer to Brimbin is the **Cundletown** Oval which hosts soccer and cricket.

There is also a bike path from Taree and into the Brimbin Nature Reserve in the Brimbin National Park.

However, there are currently no public parks or recreation areas in close proximity to the land subject to this proposal.

Appendix C - GTCC Criteria and Standards for Open Space

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE INTENDED FOR ACTIVE & PASSIVE RECREATION

Criteria	Standard
Location	Must not: - Be located within 100m of a major industrial area or activity. - Primarily serve as a buffer to a major transport corridor. - Be isolated from the community it is to serve Must meet the following location standards: - Local active and passive open space must be located within a neighbourhood and accessible by most of the residents in that neighbourhood - District open space for active and passive recreation must be located so that is accessible from one or more neighbourhoods within a CPA or one or more CPAs - Regional open space for active recreation must be located in a major town and near a regional transport route.
Access / Usage	Must not: - Be restricted by physical barriers such as fenced service utilities, arterial routes or motorways. - Be compromised by stormwater infrastructure or discharge. - Be impeded by slope, shape or size. - Be enclosed by residential development. Must: - Have 50% road frontage - Be open and accessible from at least 3 sides. - Be linked to a network of cycle ways and/or walk ways.
Service utilities	Must not: - Be constrained by public service utilities; i.e. must not contain power, oil, communication, water, sewage or gas easements. - Contain services and infrastructure associated with residential, industrial or other development.
Size	Must meet the following size standards: - Passive recreation - Regional 5ha + - District 2- 5 ha - Local 1- 2ha - Linear and Linkage - Regional 5km + - District 1-5km - Local up to 1km - Active Recreation - Regional 10ha + - District 5-10ha - Local 5ha
Shape	Must not: - Be less than 10m in width at any point Must: - Be of a regular shape and of sufficient dimensions to accommodate any current, proposed or potential uses.

Criteria	Standard
Slope	Must: Be suitable to accommodate any current, proposed or potential uses.
Contamination	Must not: Be contaminated or adjoining a contaminated site
Flooding	Must: - Be above the 1 in 5yr flood Interval for active recreation and passive recreation, unless identified by Council that the provision free from regular inundation and below the 1 in 5yr flood interval would benefit recreation, i.e. flat land for sports fields - Be above the 1 in 100yr flood interval where buildings such as club houses are proposed to be located.
Buffers	Must not: - Be part of an Asset Protection Zone. - Be a buffer to a road corridor, major industrial area/estate, heavy industry or mining activity.
Security	Must meet the following: - Park land design facilitates safety for all users - Design of new facilities maximises security and minimises the potential for vandalism and break-ins - Design for new facilities maximises safety for all uses.

Source: GTCC DRAFT Open Space Strategy 2011, Appendix 1

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF NEW ADDITIONS TO OPEN SPACE INTENDED FOR ACTIVE & PASSIVE RECREATION

Criteria	Standard
Level of embellishment	Must: Meet the minimum embellishment standards, which are to be identified in the implementation plan, for regional, district and local active and passive recreation open space.
Environmental	Must not: - Be restricted by Property Vegetation Plan, Biodiversity Certification or Bio Banking Agreement. - Contain an area of native vegetation greater than 10% of the land that is being contributed for active or passive recreation. - Contain any significant natural or physical features that will restrict the use of the open space. - Be restricted by any flora or fauna species or vegetation community identified in the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act that will impact on the use of the open space. - Be restricted by any flora or fauna species or vegetation community identified in the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act that will impact on the use of the open space.
Cultural heritage	Must not: Be restricted by European or Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.
Maintenance	Open space contribution must: Be accompanied by an achievable and appropriately costed maintenance plan.
Contributions	Must include: A financial package that will meet the cost of maintenance for the first 20 years.
Slope	Must not: - Contain any escarpments, cliffs or steep banks. - Exceed 10% across 20% of the total land area.
Erosion	Must not: Contain any areas that are subject to active erosion processes.

Source: GTCC DRAFT Open Space Strategy 2011, Appendix 1