

Brimbin

Net Community Benefit Test

PREPARED FOR:

Roche Group Pty Ltd

July 2013

**Hill PDA**

ABN 52 003 963 755  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor 234 George Street Sydney  
GPO Box 2748 Sydney NSW 2001  
t. +61 2 9252 8777  
f. +61 2 9252 6077  
e. [sydney@hillpda.com](mailto:sydney@hillpda.com)  
w. [www.hillpda.com](http://www.hillpda.com)

feasibility analysis retail analysis strategic asset management feasibility analysis retail analysis  
analysis policy analysis Hill PDA retail analysis economic appraisal policy analysis market research  
financial modelling retail analysis market research and analysis property valuation feasibility analysis policy analysis market  
analysis market research and analysis property valuation financial modelling economic appraisal policy analysis market research  
urban property valuation financial modelling urban planning strategic asset management feasibility analysis retail analysis  
feasibility analysis retail analysis strategic asset management feasibility analysis retail analysis

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

### REPORT CONTACT:

VICTORIA TOMPSETT  
B. Land Econ./B. Arts International Studies  
**Principal, Property Economics**  
Victoria.Tompsett@hillpda.com

### QUALITY CONTROL

This document is for discussion purposes only unless signed and dated by a Principal of Hill PDA.

### REVIEWED BY



VICTORIA TOMPSETT  
B. Land Econ./B. Arts International Studies  
**Principal, Property Economics**  
Victoria.Tompsett@hillpda.com

July 10, 2013

### REPORT DETAILS:

Job Ref No: C10187  
Version: Final  
File Name: C10187 Brimbin NCBT FINAL 100713.docx

## CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	What is a NCBT? .....	9
2.2	The Base Case: Retain the Brimbin Urban Release Area as Existing.....	9
2.3	Alternative 1: The Development Strategy and Structure Plan.....	10
2.4	Background Information.....	12
<b>3.</b>	<b>RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy (2009).....	13
3.2	Draft Conservation and Development Strategy (2005) .....	14
3.3	Manning Valley Community Plan (2010-2030) .....	15
3.4	Key Findings .....	15
<b>4.</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	Existing and Forecast Population .....	17
4.2	Existing Employment Profile .....	18
4.3	Household Occupancy and Families .....	19
4.4	Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage .....	20
4.5	Age and Cultural Diversity .....	21
<b>5.</b>	<b>POTENTIAL NET IMPACT ON COMMUNITY WELFARE .....</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1	Contribution to Housing Supply and Mix.....	24
5.2	Job Creation .....	25
5.3	Retail Lands.....	28
5.4	Infrastructure.....	29
5.5	Broader Investment Stimulus.....	30
5.6	Community Cohesion and Social Equity.....	30
5.7	Environmental and Social Amenity .....	31
5.8	Environmental Impacts .....	31
<b>6.</b>	<b>NET COMMUNITY BENEFIT TEST ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>36</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Brimbin Release Area.....	10
Figure 2 - Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage 2006 (Greater Taree).....	21
Figure 3 - Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage 2006 (NSW).....	21
Figure 4 - Projected Age Distribution for Greater Taree LGA (1996-2036).....	22
Figure 5 - Projected Age Distribution for NSW (1996-2036).....	22

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Medium Growth Scenario Forecast Dwelling Growth to 2031 .....	18
Table 3 - Employment Generated by Construction (job years) .....	25
Table 4 - Economic Multipliers .....	26
Table 5 - Assessment of Net Community Benefits .....	33

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Australian Bureau of Statistics	ABS
NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water	DECCW
Draft Conservation and Development Strategy	CADS
Ecological Sustainable Development	ESD
Gross Lettable Area	GLA
Hectares	HA
Local Environmental Plan	LEP
Local Government Area	LGA
Net Community Benefit Test	NCBT
Net Lettable Area	NLA
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure	DPI
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	OECD
Socio-Economic Index for Areas	SEIFA
Statistical Local Area	SLA
Square Metres	SQM
Transport Data Centre	TDC

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

A Net Community Benefit Test (NCBT) seeks to identify the merits of a planning proposal to the community. The test is conducted against alternative scenarios such as a Base Case or a 'Do Nothing Scenario'. Hill PDA has been commissioned to assess whether the proposed rezoning and subsequent development of the Brimbin release area for a mix of uses would result in a net benefit for the community of Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region. We have undertaken our assessment against the Base Case, being the area identified as Brimbin release area retaining its current use and level of intensity.

The 3,763ha Brimbin release area is located in the Greater Taree Local Government Area approximately 8km north of Taree. The area is privately owned by Roche Group Pty Limited (Roche Group) and is presently zoned in the Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan (2010) as RU1 Primary Production, RU4 Rural Small Holdings and E2 Environmental Conservation. In line with its current zoning the Brimbin release area is largely used for pastoral purposes. It also has some significant areas of native vegetation, much of which are proposed to be retained and conserved. There is currently no public access to the Brimbin release area. Whilst there are a few houses on site, it does not presently provide any significant housing or employment opportunities.

Roche Group proposes the staged development of Brimbin to provide a mix of housing, employment, retail and service facilities. The development would span a 30 year period (from 2015 to 2044) providing an estimated 8,000 dwellings and more than 2,500 jobs<sup>1</sup>.

For the purposes of this assessment we have tested:

1. The Base Case: as the do nothing scenario being the retention of the designated area in its present use, form and intensity; and
2. Alternative 1: the rezoning and subsequent development of Brimbin to a mixed and sustainable community in keeping with the parameters of the Brimbin Structure Plan Report and associated Structure Plan (2013).

In preparing this study, Hill PDA have reviewed and considered a range of local and regional planning policies and documents. We have also consulted with officers of Greater Taree Council and the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure. Based on our discussions and assessment, the following net community benefits have been identified.

## Summary of Net Community Benefits

**Contribution to Housing Supply and Mix:** in comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would facilitate the net increase of approximately 8,000 dwellings to the benefit of the Region's growing population. In support of changing demographics and housing need, Alternative 1 would also provide a mix of housing types, densities and price points to create a socially mixed and integrated community.

---

<sup>1</sup>Hill PDA estimate based on Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment and Brimbin Retail Lands Assessment (2013)

**Contribution to Employment:** in comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would facilitate the net increase of in excess of 2,500 jobs within employment lands in Brimbin. The generation of new employment would enhance the number and diversity of local employment opportunities available to the existing community of Greater Taree and the broader Mid North Coast Region. Given there is forecast to be around 5,000 working residents living in the Brimbin release area upon full development, the proposed development is providing around half of the required number of jobs. The remaining jobs are assumed to be located within other employment lands (e.g. Taree retail centre, Taree South industrial precinct or elsewhere within the Mid North Coast Region) and due to home working. The provision of jobs in Brimbin is also expected to attract workers who reside elsewhere within the Mid North Coast Region for the betterment of Greater Taree (e.g. increase the proportion of worker spend available to retail centres within the LGA).

**Retail and Services:** Alternative 1 seeks to provide a mix of retail and commercial services to meet the daily shopping needs of Brimbin's population. The provision of retail and business services would have social and environmental benefits by reducing the need to travel and enhancing the choice and range of goods available. It would also generate active and thriving centres for community interaction. The scale and nature of the proposed retail facilities would seek to reinforce, rather than compete with the existing centre hierarchy. Around half of all available retail expenditure will still escape the Brimbin release area to higher order centres such as Central Taree.

**Provision of Infrastructure:** in comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would require the funding and provision of a wide range of hard and soft infrastructure in Brimbin and connecting locations. The scope, staging and location of the infrastructure would need to be agreed in consultation with local and state government authorities during the more detailed development of the Brimbin Structure Plan. From a broader perspective, the growth in the LGAs resident base would support the use and efficiency of existing infrastructure such as Manning Hospital and Taree Airport to the benefit of the broader community and Central Taree's regional status.

**Investment Stimulus:** the implementation of a development of this scale (Alternative 1) would attract investment to Greater Taree by enhancing demand for services and the availability of the local labour force. This would in turn enhance the appeal of operating and investing in businesses to the benefit of the local economy and community. These benefits would not be realised by the Base Case.

**Community Cohesion and Social Equity:** an appropriately designed release area with a mix of employment and housing options helps to integrate the new community with the existing and creates a balanced community. Furthermore this structure would assist in creating an urban area that positively engages with and complements the existing urban area of Taree and its community.

**Environmental and Social Amenity:** whilst the Base Case presents a largely open, vegetated and undeveloped area, from a community perspective the space is not publicly accessible and therefore unusable. Alternative 1 would facilitate part of Brimbin's development for a mix of uses, including a large portion of land set aside as public open space and private open space. Over 1,000ha is proposed to be set aside for conservation purposes and ultimately dedicated to National Parks and Wildlife, to provide a significant extension to the Brimbin Nature Reserve. It is envisaged that parts, if not all of this land will also be publically accessible by way of formal and informal walking tracks and utilised for other bushland activities and education purposes.

**Environmental Impacts:** in comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would require the redevelopment of the existing pastoral land having some localised environmental impacts. To minimise the local impacts, Alternative 1 seeks to link the Yarratt State Forest and the Brimbin and Goonook Nature Reserves to the West with the larger habitat areas to the east of Brimbin. The creation of this corridor would benefit local flora and fauna. From a regional perspective, the development of Brimbin would assist in preserving alternative locations (with a greater level of environmental sensitivity) from development pressures.

## **Conclusion**

Overall this assessment has found that Alternative 1 would result in a range of benefits for the existing and prospective community of Brimbin, Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region.

In comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would provide significant opportunities for a mix of housing and employment opportunities in support of regional targets and socially mixed communities. The provision of a range of jobs and services close to new homes would also support objectives for sustainable urban areas and reduce the pressure for growth in coastal locations.

The provision of a mix of uses in Brimbin would also seek to enhance access to jobs, retail and community uses whilst reinforcing the important role of Central Taree as a Major Regional Centre in the Mid-North Coast Region. A mix of passive and active land uses would also create opportunities for recreation, healthy living and sustainable lifestyles thus making Greater Taree a more attractive location in which to live. In turn these benefits would have positive wider flow on social and economic benefits including a reduction in the level of road based congestion, the generation of economic multipliers on account of investment and the resulting direct and indirect generation of employment from construction.

In summary, the potential benefits of Alternative 1 to the existing and prospective community are considered likely to significantly outweigh those of the Base Case. Alternative 1 is therefore considered favourably and within the public interest. To ensure that the full potential of Alternative 1 is achieved we recommend the ongoing testing and refinement of the Planning Proposal, Structure Plan Report and associated Structure Plan in consultation with local and State government authorities, community and industry stakeholders.

**This NCBT supplements, and should be read in conjunction with the Employment Lands Assessment (2013) and Retail Lands Assessment (2013) also prepared by Hill PDA for the proposed Development Strategy and associated Structure Plan.**



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Hill PDA has been appointed by Roche Group Pty Limited to undertake a Net Community Benefit Test (NCBT) to support a Planning Proposal and inform the Structure Plan Report and associated Structure Plan for the Brimbin release area.

This NCBT supplements, and should be read in conjunction with the Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment (2013) and Retail Lands Assessment also prepared by Hill PDA (2013). These Assessments inform the quantum and type of retail and employment lands proposed for the site and its outcomes will be incorporated into the Structure Plan as currently being prepared by Roche Group in cooperation with the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure and Greater Taree City Council.

### 2.1 What is a NCBT?

The concept of a Net Community Benefit Test (NCBT) has been emerging in various planning policies over recent years. The NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure guide<sup>2</sup> to preparing planning proposals identifies that “*The Net Community Benefit Test should be used to help assess the merits of a planning proposal*”. The guide identifies that any such test should:

- Provide a level of detail and analysis proportionate to the size and likely impact of the project;
- Only consider the costs and benefits that have a **net** impact on the community welfare against a Base Case or cases as opposed to transfer costs that do not result in a net change to the community; and
- Undertake an assessment of impacts against the matters specified in the project’s justification.

The guide adds that consideration must be given to changes that reflect a higher community benefit. An example is given where as a result of changes in rent caused by a proposal, there is a change in the value the community places on a land use.

### 2.2 The Base Case: Retain the Brimbin Urban Release Area as Existing

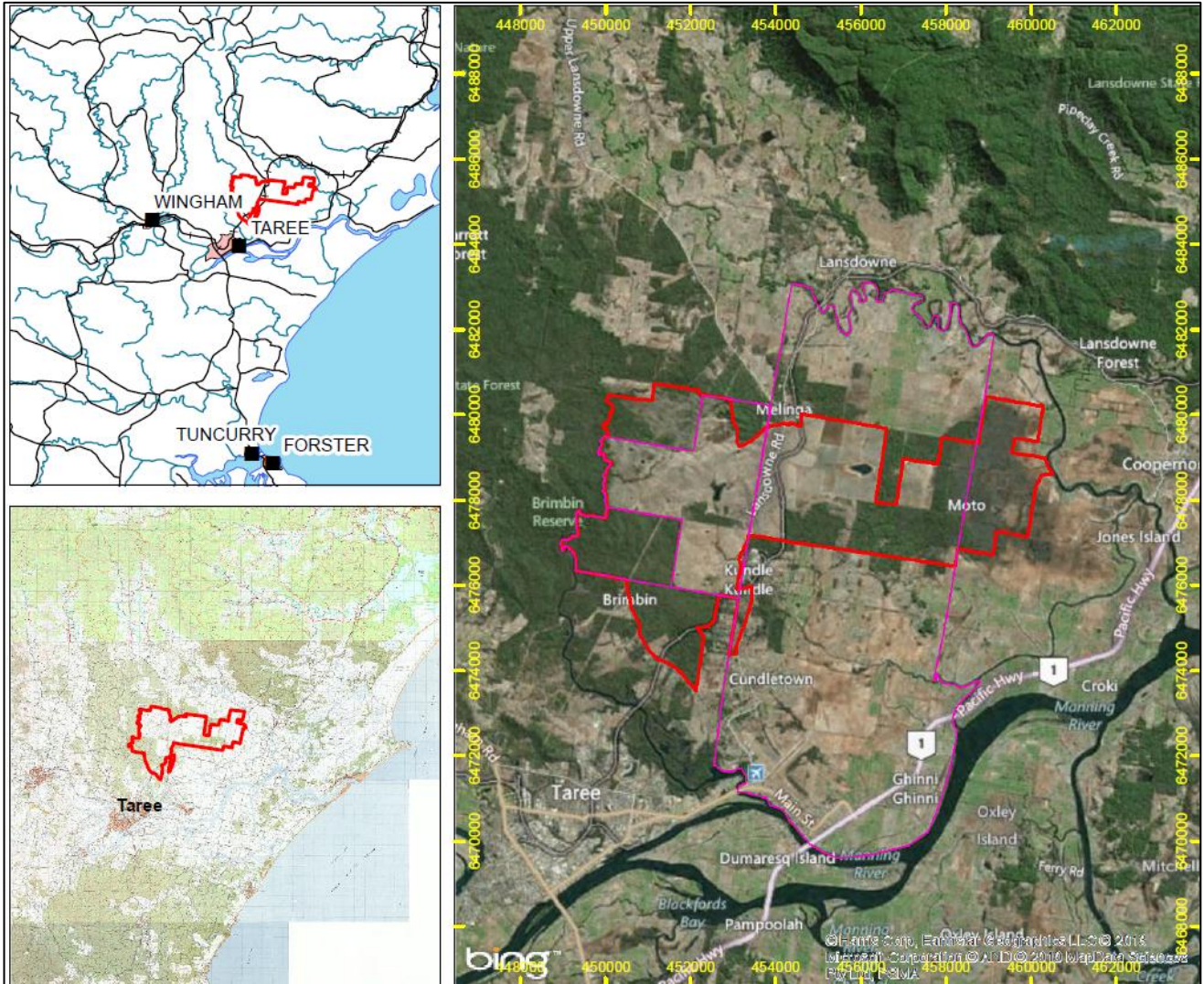
For the purpose of this NCBT, the Base Case has been defined as the retention of the Brimbin release area in its current form (or “Do Nothing”). The 3,763ha site is privately owned by Roche Group and is presently zoned within the Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan (2010) as RU1 – Private Production, RU4 – Rural Small Holdings and E2 – Environmental Conservation. It lies approximately 8km or a 15 minute drive north of Central Taree.

In line with its current zoning, and as can be seen from the following map, the Brimbin release area is largely used for pastoral purposes. It also has some significant areas of native vegetation much of which are proposed to be retained and conserved. There is currently no public access to the release area and we understand from Roche

<sup>2</sup> Guide to Preparing Planning Proposals, NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure July 2009

Group that the area designated as the release area does not presently provide any significant housing or employment opportunities. For the purposes of this assessment, the Brimbin release area in its current state and planning designation has been nominated as **the Base Case**.

**Figure 1 - Brimbin Release Area**



Source: Niche Environment and Planning (2013)

## 2.3 Alternative 1: The Development Strategy and Structure Plan

This NCBT supports the Planning Proposal and informs the associated Structure Plan that would facilitate the rezoning of the Brimbin release area to accommodate the land uses contained in the Structure Plan, pursuant to the Department’s Standard Instrument LEP Template.

The rezoning would enable the development of Brimbin as a major growth area for the Greater Taree LGA with the potential to accommodate around 8,000 dwellings and 22,000 residents. In accordance with the Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy (2009), the development would also provide a range of employment lands, retail and service facilities as well as conservation land and open space for recreation.

The latest Structure Plan for Brimbin (2013) proposes a range of employment, residential and commercial uses including a retail centre, neighbourhood shops, education (primary schools and a high school), commercial centre, industrial lands, recreational centre, rural residential, aged care, medium density residential and public open space. A breakdown of all land uses proposed by the latest Structure Plan is provided below:

- 874ha of residential land split between large lot residential, low density, medium density and seniors' living in order to provide a range of allotment sizes to facilitate a range of dwelling types to accommodate a mix of age and socio-economic groups;
- 740ha of environmental living land, with the majority proposed for private conservation;
- 26ha of retail, commercial and civic land;
- 112ha of employment lands allocated for bulky goods retailing, warehouse and distribution, and general industrial uses;
- 400ha of land for primary production, with some of that land possibly being used as an extension of the employment lands;
- 52ha of private recreation land to be used as a golf course and for other recreational facilities;
- 1,142ha of conservation land;
- 18ha of land for the re-aligned railway corridor; and
- The balance includes riparian corridors and steep land intended for public or private open space or conservation.

However, it's recognised Hill PDA's Employment Lands Assessment (2013) and Retail Lands Assessment (2013) further refined the retail, commercial and employment lands uses nominated above. Specifically that:

- Excluding new working residents in Brimbin, there is sufficient supply of zoned employment lands (420.4ha) to meet demand (396.8ha) from a regional catchment which includes Greater Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes local government areas to 2036. However, future resident workers in Brimbin will demand an additional 47.36ha of zoned employment lands by 2036, which results in a potential shortfall of supply of 23.76ha. As Greater Taree will need to consider the provision of new or expanded employment lands to meet this demand, the most appropriate location will be in proximity of the new working residents in the Brimbin release area.
- Whilst a small proportion of the employment lands component of Brimbin could serve a local role, the size and location of the site is of strategic importance to Greater Taree and the broader Mid-North Coast Region. The site presents a unique opportunity to plan for the future success of the local economy through the protection of sufficient and flexible employment land for a range of new and emerging industries (e.g. new technologies and lean manufacturing, research and development, diverse and value added agriculture and so on). These industries are generally not accommodated in traditional and local industrial precincts due to the size and nature of their site requirements, their need for significant buffer areas, and the lack of large available and vacant land. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the amount of land that should be planned for to meet this type of demand, additional employment land in excess of provision for local urban services should be provided for in Brimbin.

- The result of Hill PDA's retail demand modelling indicated the Brimbin release area should accommodate 12ha (net) of retail centre land to 2044 to meet the shopping needs of local residents and workers. This would include a town centre (8ha) plus 4 smaller neighbourhood centres (4ha). One of the neighbourhood centres should be located within the proposed employment lands component of the release area, however this is unlikely to include more than a few shops.
- In addition 5.7ha (net) of land appropriate for a bulky goods precinct should be accommodated in the employment lands component of the release area to meet demand for such land uses in-line with new residents moving into the residential component of Brimbin.

## 2.4 Background Information

In order to inform this desktop assessment, we have drawn on and referred to a range of documents including (but not limited to):

- Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment, Hill PDA (2013)
- Brimbin Retail Lands Assessment, Hill PDA (2013)
- Brimbin Structure Plan, Roche Group (2013)
- Brimbin Development Strategy, Roche Group and Edge Land Planning (2010)
- Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy, NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure (2009)
- Draft Centres Policy, NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure (2009)
- Guide to Preparing Planning Proposals, NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure (2009)
- Manning Valley Community Plan 2010-2030, Greater Taree City Council (2009)
- Introduction to Cost-Benefit Analysis and Alternative Evaluation Methodologies, Commonwealth of Australia (2006)
- Draft Conservation and Development Strategy, Greater Taree City Council (2005)

In preparing this NCBT, Hill PDA and Roche Group have consulted with the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure and Greater Taree City Council (Community and Wellbeing Department) to identify the key issues to be addressed.

The NCBT is also informed by the results of Roche Group's preliminary consultation with a variety of Government Departments including the Department of Education and Training, NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Police Force and the Department of Health-Hunter New England.

Roche Group proposes to implement a comprehensive community consultation programme (including workshops with local residents and Community Interest Groups) prior to the Planning Proposal and associated Structure Plan being lodged with Council and the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure.

### 3. RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

This Chapter provides an overview of the planning policy framework relevant to the NCBT. Building on the policy framework outlined in Hill PDA's Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment (Chapter 3), this Chapter identifies additional socio-economic considerations to ensure that all 'welfare effects' of the development can be assessed within its strategic context.

#### 3.1 Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy (2009)

The Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy sets the target for the Region to accommodate an additional 59,600 dwellings and 48,500 new jobs by 2031. In planning for this growth, the Regional Strategy recognises that '*Taree in particular has sufficient unconstrained land to respond to this migration-driven increase*'.

Drawing on the findings of Hill PDA's Employment Lands Assessment, the following key considerations and objectives are relevant to this assessment:

- To achieve the Mid-North Coast Region's job target by 2031, 232ha of additional industrial land and 210ha of commercial land is required;
- The Manning Valley – Great Lakes Subregion (Greater Taree and Great Lakes LGA's) has been designated to accommodate a minimum of 39ha of this industrial land;
- Commercial growth should be focussed within four Centres including Taree;
- Specifically, Brimbin has been identified as one of the Region's ten Growth Areas with capacity to provide 8,000 dwellings and potential for up to 380ha of employment lands upon completion (acknowledging that its development is likely to go beyond the 2031 planning period of the Regional Strategy); and
- The preparation of a detailed Development Strategy (now Structure Plan Report) and associated Structure Plan is required for Brimbin to address conservation values, infrastructure provision and to maximise the locational opportunities of the release area.

The Regional Strategy also raises a number of social issues that must be addressed if growth is to be accommodated across the Region in a socially sustainable manner. Key challenges include the anticipated rate of population growth, the ageing population, declining occupancy ratios, tourism trends and requirements.

The Regional Strategy identifies that over the next 25 years the median age of the Region is likely to increase from 45 years in 2001 to 55 years in 2031. Over the same time, the proportion of the Region's population aged 65 years and over is likely to double whilst the proportion of children under 15 years is likely to decline from 21% to 14% of the Regional population.

In line with the Region's changing demographic profile a shift in dwelling stock is required. Accordingly, with over 80% of dwellings detached housing, a greater proportion of multi-unit dwellings should be provided to ensure accessible, affordable and adaptable housing choices.

The Strategy also mandates that in achieving the Region's dwelling target, 60% of new housing should be accommodated in Greenfield locations and 40% in existing areas. New development is to enhance the character

of the Region whilst ensuring that new buildings are designed to maximise adaptability for changing demographic trends and alternative future uses.

The Regional Strategy outlines a number of 'neighbourhood planning principles' designed to promote social interaction and provide a range of housing choices. These principles stress the importance of providing open space whilst planning suburbs and streets to maximise social interaction and provide community meeting places.

Emphasis should also be placed on ensuring that residents can walk to local shops, minimising the need for travel and promoting neighbourhood centres as a forum for community interaction. These centres should be multifunctional, mixed use areas, catering for diverse community needs.

### 3.2 Draft Conservation and Development Strategy (2005)

The Draft Conservation & Development Strategy (Draft CADS) aims to achieve the Council's vision to be a *"city of rural towns and villages responsive to the desires of the community"*.

The Strategy aims to guide land use planning over the next 25 years so that the Greater Taree LGA is able to accommodate sustained population growth. A number of options are discussed within the Strategy to accommodate dwelling growth. The Brimbin release area is identified as the preferred option to meet this need.

Of relevance to this assessment, the Draft CADS recognised that:

- The Brimbin release area has a good level of access with the North Coast rail line passing through it along with close proximity to Taree Airport and the Pacific Highway; and
- The Brimbin release area has capacity to provide up to 300ha of land for employment generating uses in addition to 8,000 dwellings (18,000-20,000 residents) in an attractive environment benefiting from its proximity to the Dawson River and Lansdowne escarpment.

In addition, the Draft CADS raised a number of important economic objectives in relation to Brimbin being:

- To ensure development provides a diversity of employment opportunities which capitalise on the economic strengths of the Manning Valley; and
- To develop strategies to build on key industry sectors, retain existing businesses and continue to build on the current diversity of economic activity.

From a social perspective, consistent with the Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy, the Draft CADS recognises a growing social challenge for the Region will relate to the ageing of its population comparative to other areas in NSW and the correlating decline in younger residents. Accordingly, a key recommendation was the promotion of housing opportunities and support services for the aged in locations which are well serviced and connected.

An overarching principle of the Draft CADS is Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD), ensuring that development considers the interrelationship between society, the economy and environment. In accordance with ESD principles the Draft CADS aims to plan for a growing population whilst minimising the impact on the road system. It also aims to provide a choice of living opportunities and settlement types whilst ensuring that services and infrastructure are provided close to home to minimise travel and meet the needs of the community.

The Draft CADS recognised that with the forecast ageing population there would be a need to provide for a range of lifecycle groups to support and maintain a diverse community. To achieve this, it is necessary to target job opportunities and education in order to retain young people in the community.

### 3.3 Manning Valley Community Plan (2010-2030)

The Manning Valley Community Plan (Plan) provides a 20 year vision for the future of the Greater Taree LGA. The Plan raises a number of important social objectives and considerations relevant to the assessment of net community benefits. The Plan is driven by five key areas covering the environment, economy, lifestyle, key actions and protecting Greater Taree's existing qualities, services and identity.

A key objective of the Plan is to develop a strategic land use planning framework that strikes an appropriate balance between development and conservation and accommodating economic investment and lifestyle change demands.

The Plan also recognises that promoting a strong economy requires the provision of infrastructure that supports businesses. In this regard the Plan identifies the need to support investment and access to communications technology, vocational training and importantly to ensure there is an adequate supply of suitably zoned land. Key to this is working and connecting with other Councils and partners to capitalise on the Region's employment strengths and encourage economic growth. The Plan recognises that collaboration, suitable planning strategies and efficient development assessment processes are central to supporting economic growth in Greater Taree.

Promoting and maintaining a great lifestyle for both the existing and future community was a central social matter identified by the Plan for Greater Taree LGA. To achieve this, the Plan identified the need to address the requirements of the ageing population as well as the need to provide a range of suitable and affordable housing options. Closely linked is the need to build strong community ties and to forge a sense of community identity.

### 3.4 Key Findings

In light of the policy summaries provided above, some of the key considerations relevant to the NCBT include:

- The need for a diversity of housing types in the Region and more specifically Greater Taree in order to accommodate forecast population growth, declining household occupancies and the needs of an ageing population. A range of new housing opportunities should also be encouraged to ensure accessible, affordable and adaptable housing choices.
- New development is required to provide an appropriate balance between conservation and the needs of the existing, future and visiting population whilst considering changing lifestyle preferences and the local economy.
- In new development areas adequate infrastructure and community services should be provided to meet the needs of the community. New areas should be designed to maximise the accessibility of residents to services by walking and minimising the need for travel whilst promoting neighbourhood centres for community interaction. These centres should be multifunctional mixed use areas catering for diverse

community needs. Open space, new suburbs and streets should also be planned to maximise social interaction and provide community meeting places.

- A diversity of employment opportunities should be provided in Greater Taree in order to capitalise on the economic strengths of the Manning Valley. Land use planning should also aim to build on key industry sectors, retain existing businesses and continue to build on the current diversity of economic activity.
- The Brimbin release area has the potential to provide employment lands suitable for a range of employment types and workers thus promoting economic diversity in the Region whilst assisting the Region in achieving its job target by 2031.
- The Brimbin release area also has the capacity to provide for 8,000 dwellings towards achieving the DPI target for an additional 15,000 dwellings in the Manning Valley-Great Lakes Subregion.



## 4. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

Building on the demographic and employment profiles in Hill PDA's Employment Lands Assessment and Retail Lands Assessment, this Chapter seeks to provide important contextual information to inform the NCBT. It provides additional, in depth analysis of the socio-economic, lifestyle and social characteristics for Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region.

### 4.1 Existing and Forecast Population

Based on the ABS 2006 Census, the Greater Taree LGA had a population of 44,632 persons. Over the ten year period from 1996 to 2006 the population grew by 2,222 persons at a rate of 0.51% per annum. In comparison the Mid-North Coast Region grew at a rate of 0.90% per annum and Non-Metro NSW grew at a rate of 0.59% per annum.

When examining individual LGA's within the Mid-North Coast Region, strong population growth was recorded over the same period in Port Macquarie-Hastings (1.76%) and Great Lakes (1.47%). This is a likely reflection of the attraction of these locations to the retiree market owing to their coastal locations as well as the significant residential and employment release areas in and around Port Macquarie.

#### **NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure Projections (April 2010)**

According to the Department of Planning & Infrastructure's population projections (2010), Greater Taree LGA could reach 53,200 persons by 2036. This represents an increase of approximately 6,200 residents over the 30 year period from 2006 (annual compounded growth rate of 0.58%). It appears however that these estimates do not account for the full population capacity of Brimbin.

#### **Greater Taree City Council Projections (Updated March 2010)**

The projections published by Greater Taree City Council in 2010 forecast a slightly higher level of population growth for Greater Taree increasing from 47,006 to 68,456 persons by 2031 (annual compounded growth rate of 1.52%).

Greater Taree is split into 10 areas, which includes Brimbin. These areas are different to the derived suburb boundaries in the 2006 ABS Census. The projections assume that the Brimbin release area will provide 2,500 dwellings between 2012 and 2031 as indicated in the following table.

**Table 1 - Medium Growth Scenario Forecast Dwelling Growth to 2031**

Year	Dwelling Commencements Per Annum	Cumulative Dwellings (including existing)
2007 to 2012	<1 to 2	126
2013	52	178
2014	75	253
2015	100	353
2016 to 2021	125	1,128
2021 to 2031	150	2,628

Source: Greater Taree City Council (2010)

The table indicates that the first residents will move into Brimbin in around 2014. Based on the above assumptions, ultimately Council predicts that there will be 7,055 persons in Brimbin by 2031, which represents an annual compound growth rate of 8.7%.

### **Roche Group Projections (Brimbin at Full Capacity)**

Initial analysis of urban development at Brimbin estimated the release area could provide up to 8,000 dwellings over a 30 year timeframe. This suggests a take-up of an average of around 267 dwellings per annum between 2015 and 2044. This would be equivalent to a future population of 22,000 residents assuming an occupation rate of 2.75 persons per dwelling. These population and growth assumptions for the Brimbin release area are indicated in the following table.

**Table 2 - Brimbin Release Area Growth Assumptions**

Year	Cumulative Dwellings	Cumulative Population
2015	267	734
2016	534	1,469
2021	1,869	5,140
2026	3,204	8,811
2031	4,539	12,482
2036	5,874	16,154
2041	7,209	19,825
2044	8,010	22,028

Source: Roche Group, Hill PDA (2012)

## 4.2 Existing Employment Profile

The key employment characteristics of Greater Taree LGA and the Mid-North Coast Region as identified by Hill PDA's Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment include the following:

- There are an estimated 51,700 working residents within the three LGA's of Greater Taree (15,975), Great Lakes (25,108) and Port Macquarie-Hastings (10,618). All LGA's have high containment rates, with only a small proportion of working residents travelling to neighbouring LGA's for employment.
- In 2006 the most prominent industries of occupation for residents of Greater Taree were technicians and trades workers (15.6%) and professionals (14.9%). The Mid-North Coast Region had a similar breakdown of occupations.

- As of 2006, the industries of employment for Greater Taree residents (irrespective of where they were employed) were retail trade (14.5%), health care and social assistance (14.3%) and manufacturing (11.3%).
- In 2006 the majority of jobs generated in Greater Taree LGA (employing both residents from Greater Taree LGA and other areas) were in health care and social assistance (15.7%), retail trade (15.5%) and manufacturing (12.2%). By comparison, most jobs in the Mid-North Coast Region were in retail trade (15.8%), health care and social assistance (13.8%) and accommodation and food services (9.8%).
- According to 2006 ABS Census Data, when comparing the number of working residents in Greater Taree (15,795 persons) to the number of jobs available in the LGA (14,053), there was a shortfall of some 1,742 jobs.

A full breakdown of the key employment characteristics can be found in Hill PDA's Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment (2013).

### 4.3 Household Occupancy and Families

Household sizes have almost halved in Australia over the last century, but biological necessity suggests that it cannot fall much further without a major demographic implosion. Accordingly despite the decline, there is evidence that the rate of decrease has slowed in recent years. This trend is particularly evident in Greater Taree LGA.

Based on the 2006 Census, the average household size for Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region of 2.4 persons was slightly lower than that of Non-Metro NSW (2.5 persons). In addition, over the ten year period from 1996 to 2006, household sizes within Greater Taree LGA declined at a faster rate (-7.7%) than Non-Metro NSW (-3.8%).

Indicatively, the proportion of couples without children was relatively higher in Greater Taree (44.6%) compared to Non-Metro NSW (40.5%). This trend may be attributed to a number of factors including the ageing of the population, declining fertility rates, changing social trends and the LGA's growing popularity with retired couples without children or 'empty nesters'.

As mentioned previously, initial analysis of urban development at Brimbin estimated the release area could provide up to 8,000 dwellings over a 30 year timeframe. This would be equivalent to a future population of 22,000 residents assuming an occupation rate of 2.75 persons per dwelling.

It's recognised that the assumed occupation rate is higher than Taree's occupation rate at the 2006 Census, being 2.4 persons per household, which although having decreased since 1996 (2.6 persons), was higher than Great Lakes LGA (2.2 persons), Gloucester LGA (2.3 persons) and Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA (2.3 persons).

However, it is expected 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, especially given the rising costs of living in nearby coastal locations and the 'sea-change' effect.

A larger household size in Brimbin 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. The North

West and South West Growth Centres of Sydney are achieving over 3 persons per dwelling<sup>3</sup>. The Jerrabomberra release area, 6.5km south-west of Queanbeyan, and which has developed over the last 5 years has a household size of 3.1 persons per dwelling. Similarly in Shellharbour LGA, Flinders (2.5km west of Shellharbour City Centre) has achieved 3 persons per dwelling, and Tullimbar (3.5km west of Albion Park) 3.2 persons per dwelling.

Furthermore, the inclusion of significant employment land, together with additional educational, recreational and retail facilities as proposed for Brimbin are viewed as attractors for family households.

## 4.4 Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage

With an unemployment rate in 2006 of 10.6%, Greater Taree experiences higher levels of unemployment compared to the Mid-North Coast Region (9.82%). Further to this, Greater Taree LGA comprises a relatively high proportion of households within the lower income brackets.

Indicatively, 53% of households have an average weekly income between \$0-799. Comparatively, only 34% of households in Non-Metro NSW earn within the same income brackets. This is relatively consistent with the occupational profile of the LGA, with the proportion of residents employed in 'blue collar' occupations.

Analysis of weekly household incomes alone does not however shed light on the affluence of retired residents who may have a more substantial asset base. Accordingly we have applied an alternative means of assessing the socio-economic character of the Greater Taree LGA being the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA).

The SEIFA is produced by the ABS and compares geographic areas (LGA's and derived suburbs) with respect to advantage and disadvantage. The SEIFA Index of Socioeconomic Disadvantage (the 'Index') is derived from the attributes of an area's residents such as income, educational attainment, rate of unemployment and labour force skill.

Accordingly, the SEIFA shows where the affluent (as opposed to just high income earning) live; where disadvantaged (as opposed to the unemployed) live; and where the highly skilled and educated (as opposed to the tertiary educated people) live. The findings can be used to facilitate research into the relationship between socio-economic status and various health and educational outcomes, to determine areas that require funding and services and to identify new business opportunities.

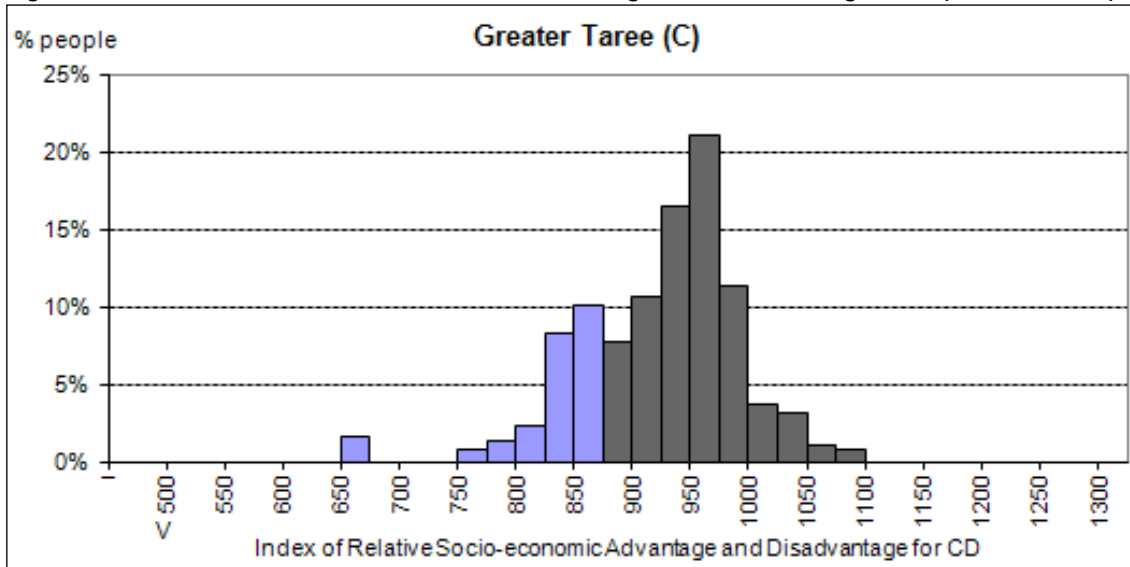
The Index refers to the area in which a person lives, not to the socioeconomic situation of the particular individual. For the Index, every geographic area in Australia is given a SEIFA score which shows how disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas in Australia.

The following figures provide a comparison between Greater Taree and New South Wales. Higher indexes indicate higher levels of advantages.

---

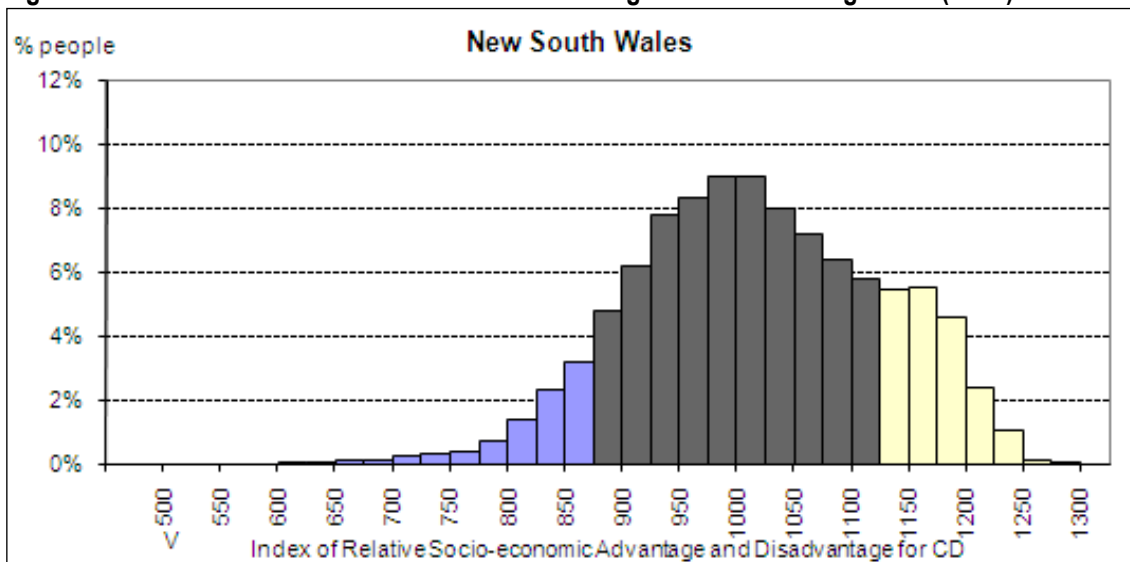
<sup>3</sup>For example: Rouse Hill (3.3 persons), Beaumont Hills (3.4 persons), Kellyville (3.4 persons), Stanhope Gardens (2.8 persons), Kellyville Ridge (3.4 persons).

**Figure 2 - Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage 2006 (Greater Taree)**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, SEIFA (2006)

**Figure 3 - Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage 2006 (NSW)**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, SEIFA (2006)

The index shows that Greater Taree LGA has a higher proportion of residents with lower SEIFA scores than NSW. It also indicates the relative disparity experienced within the LGA between the proportion of the population falling within middle and lower SEIFA scores (i.e. the spike showing the less disadvantaged residents).

The SEIFA Index profile for the Greater Taree LGA indicates that there is a considerable mix of households within the community experiencing varying levels of social advantage and disadvantage. This increases the need to plan and provide for a range of needs, requirements and demands.

## 4.5 Age and Cultural Diversity

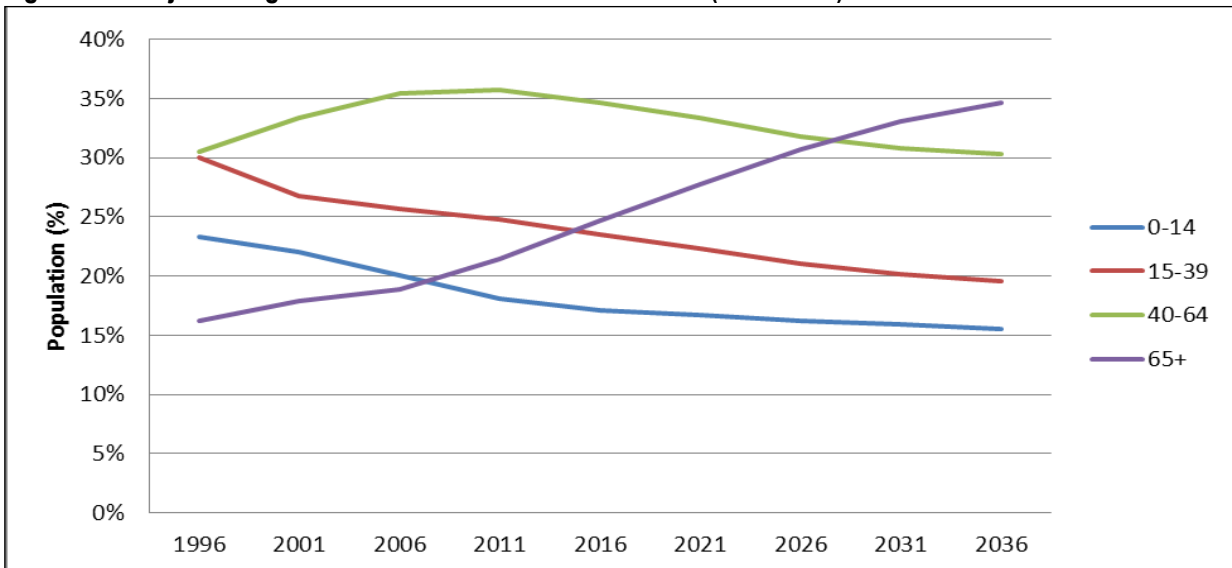
Greater Taree is a relatively established locality. Although the LGA experienced a marginal shift towards a greater diversity of cultures over the past Census period, its population continues to be dominated by residents born in Australia and Oceania (88%) compared to Non-Metro NSW (68%).

This finding is largely consistent with the higher proportion of residents born in Australia and Oceania in both Great Lakes LGA (85%) and Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA (85%).

The population of Greater Taree LGA and the Mid-North Coast Region is also characterised as significantly older than Non-Metro NSW whilst also ageing at a faster rate. Over the period from 1996 to 2006, the median age for Greater Taree rose from 37 years to 43 years, whilst the median age for Non-Metro NSW rose from 35 years to 39 years.

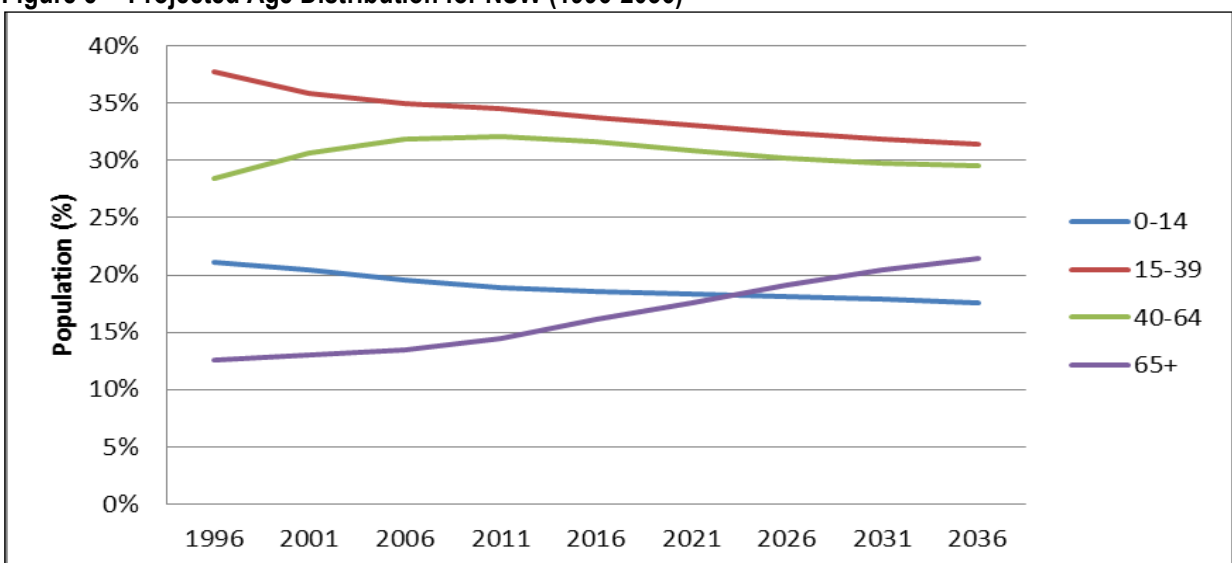
The trend towards an ageing population in Greater Taree is also exemplified by the increase in the proportion of the population in older age brackets. In forecasting the likely age distribution within the LGA to 2036, from 1996 Greater Taree is expected to experience a significant decline in the proportion 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 Figure 4 below and can be contrasted to the forecast age distribution of NSW in Figure 5.

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



Source: Department of Planning & Infrastructure Population Projections (April 2010)

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



Source: Department of Planning & Infrastructure Population Projections (April 2010)

Whilst the trend towards an ageing population is projected Australia wide, the decline in the proportion of residents aged 15-39 in Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region may be attributed to a number of factors. Specific to Taree, these factors are likely to relate to in-migration of older residents attracted to the area as a popular retirement location, especially to coastal areas. There may also be some out-migration or movement of younger residents from the area for education and/or employment opportunities in addition to the attraction of residing in areas with a greater mix of entertainment and cultural activities.

In addition, should current trends continue, it is anticipated that the proportion of children in the 0-14year's age bracket will continue to decline. This indicates that the demographic composition of Greater Taree is likely to experience a shift away from young families towards more mature families, couples without children and empty nesters. Accordingly, the changing demographic profile of the LGA is likely to necessitate a greater number and wider range of dwellings including apartment buildings and townhouses in appropriate locations.

## 5. POTENTIAL NET IMPACT ON COMMUNITY WELFARE

Drawing on consultation with the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure, Greater Taree City Council and other Government organisations, this Chapter identifies potential costs and benefits associated with Alternative 1 that has the potential to impact community welfare. This Chapter compares the Base Case to Alternative 1 as described in Chapter 2, and informs a summary table of the net community benefits provided in Chapter 6.

### 5.1 Contribution to Housing Supply and Mix

The Brimbin release area is presently used for pastoral purposes and as open land. Accordingly as discussed in Chapter 2, the release area does not presently provide any significant housing. Should the area be retained in its existing zoning and land use, it is unlikely to provide any additional opportunities for housing or services for residents in the foreseeable future.

Alternative 1 designates approximately 874ha for a mix of housing types including medium density housing, rural residential and seniors living. A further 740ha of environmental living land is proposed however the majority proposed for private conservation. Altogether the new community at Brimbin would comprise approximately 8,000 new homes over the period 2015 and 2044.

Population growth in the Greater Taree LGA over the past census period was relatively slow (2001-2006) when compared to the broader Mid-North Coast Region. However, should the land be rezoned in accordance with the Structure Plan and Alternative 1 implemented, around 22,000 residents could occupy the site upon full development.

These forecasts are to a large degree reflected in the Regional Strategy which establishes a target of 15,000 additional dwellings for Greater Taree and Great Lakes LGA's over the period 2001-2031 of which more than 50% would be provided within the Brimbin.

**Increasing the supply** of housing within the Region is in line with key strategic planning policies. The intent for many of these policies is to **relieve existing pressure for housing in the environmentally sensitive coastal areas** of the Region and to accommodate future growth within a mix of housing types. If future growth is not accommodated, issues of housing affordability are likely to be exacerbated due to the restricted supply of housing forcing prices to increase as a result of limited supply compared to increasing demand.

**Providing a variety of housing types at a range of price points** would help ensure the development is accessible to the existing community of the Greater Taree area as well as attracting new residents to the Subregion.

Implementation of Alternative 1 would enable the Brimbin release area to cater for the **needs of smaller households (based on existing trends in the LGA) as well as larger family households** that may be attracted to the area by the relative affordability when compared to other coastal locations.



Consultation has indicated the family housing market constitutes a reasonable proportion of the population in the lowest income brackets who are also likely to have low levels of car ownership. It is important that as the detailed design of the residential element emerges, some **affordable housing that is suitable for families** is provided in locations where shops and services (including public transport) can be easily accessed.

Similarly with the proportion of Greater Taree's population aged over 65 years expected to double over the next 30 years the **needs of the ageing population** should be met. Alternative 1 will provide a senior housing facility and as detailed designs emerge, care should be taken to ensure the facility is suitably located with convenient access to local shops and services such as medical facilities.

## 5.2 Job Creation

### Construction Related Employment

The proposed development will generate employment in two ways – through construction and through retail and commercial operations upon completion. It is estimated that one full time construction position for 12 months is created for every \$199,500 of construction work undertaken.

Hill PDA has been advised the estimated total construction cost of the proposed development is around \$4billion (inclusive of GST). As a result, the development will create 20,050 job years directly in construction related activities. Note that 1 job year equals 1 full time job for 1 year.

**Table 3 - Employment Generated by Construction (job years)**

	Direct Effects	Production Induced Effects		Consumption Induced Effects	Total
		First Round Effects	Industrial Support Effects		
Multipliers	1	0.33	0.45	2.33	4.11
Employment No. per \$million	5.01	1.65	2.26	11.68	20.60
Total job years created	20,050	6,617	9,023	46,717	82,406

\* Source: ABS Australian National Accounts: Input-Output Tables 1996-1997 (ABS Pub: 5209.0). Shows 9 construction industry jobs directly created for every \$1 million of construction output. This equates to 1 employee for every \$111,111 of construction output in non inflated terms. Inflated to June 2010 dollars based on the Average Building Price Index for the eight Australian Capital Cities (Rawlinsons Construction Handbook 2011), this equates to \$199,500 per construction employee.

The 1996-97 ANA Input-Output Tables identified employment multipliers for first round, industrial support and consumption induced effects of 0.33, 0.45 and 2.33 respectively for every job year in direct construction. Including the multiplier impacts a \$4billion development will therefore have potential to generate 82,406 jobs years.

Note that the multiplier effects are national, and not necessarily local. The ABS notes that "Care is needed in interpreting multiplier effects; their theoretical basis produces estimates which somewhat overstate the actual impacts in terms of output and employment. Nevertheless, the estimates illustrate the high flow-on effects of construction activity to the rest of the economy. Clearly, through its multipliers, construction activity has a high impact on the economy."

### **Economic Multipliers during Construction**

The construction industry is a significant component of the economy. The industry has strong linkages with other sectors, so its impacts on the economy go further than the direct contribution of construction. Multipliers refer to the level of additional economic activity generated by a source industry. There are two types of multipliers:

*Production induced* made up of:

- First round effect – all outputs and employment required to produce the inputs for construction; and
- An industrial support effect – the induced extra output and employment from all industries to support the production of the first round effect.

*Consumption induced*: which relates to the demand for additional goods and services due to increased spending by the wage and salary earners across all industries arising from employment.

It is important to note however when reviewing these estimates that multiplier effects have a national impact and not necessarily a local impact. At this stage, it is not possible to quantify with precision the state or local benefits of the development as a result of its multiples because factors that feed into the assessment of multipliers (such as the origin of materials and construction contracts) are yet to be determined.

However the table below indicates that the \$4billion development will generate a further \$3.6billion of activity in production induced effects and \$3.8billion in consumption induced effects. Total economic activity generated by the construction of the proposed development is therefore approximately \$11.5billion.

**Table 4 - Economic Multipliers**

	Direct Effects	Production Induced Effects		Consumption Induced Effects	Total
		First Round Effects	Industrial Support Effects		
Output multipliers	1	0.466	0.438	0.962	2.866
Output (\$million)	\$4,000	\$1,864	\$1,752	\$3,848	\$11,464

\* Source: ABS Australian National Accounts: Input-Output Tables 1996-1997 (ABS Pub: 5209.0).

### **Job Generation**

We understand that the use of the Brimbin release area for pastoral purposes does not presently generate a significant number of jobs. Should the existing zoning and use of the area be retained, it is unlikely to provide a notable increase in the number or range of jobs provided over the study period.

Economic modelling undertaken by Hill PDA<sup>4</sup> with respect to Alternative 1 indicates that based upon the provision of 29.46ha of local employment lands by 2036 (inclusive of industrial and bulky goods land), 1,293 jobs would be accommodated in Brimbin. The range of jobs generated by future industry at Brimbin through the development of Alternative 1 could include the likes of construction (252 jobs), transport/postal/warehousing (93 jobs), manufacturing (79 jobs) and so on.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment, Hill PDA (2013)

Furthermore, 1,250 full and part time jobs would be provided in Brimbin's town and neighbourhood centres upon full development. This would increase with jobs in planned education facilities, aged care and seniors living accommodation, community facilities and so on.

Based on the above, in comparison to the Base Case, Alternative 1 would facilitate the net increase of in excess of 2,500 jobs within Brimbin. Given there is forecast to be around 5,000 working residents living in the Brimbin release area upon full development<sup>5</sup>, the proposed development is providing around half of the required number of jobs. The remaining jobs are assumed to be located within other employment lands precincts in Greater Taree, where vacant employment lands are still available (e.g. the Taree South precinct). The generation of new employment would enhance the number and diversity of local employment opportunities available to the existing community of Greater Taree and the broader Mid North Coast Region.

However, it should be recognised that the employment lands demand modelling undertaken by Hill PDA was based on a forecast of resident workers. Whilst a small proportion of the employment lands component of Brimbin could serve a local role, the size and location of the site is of strategic importance to Greater Taree and the broader Mid-North Coast Region. The site presents a unique opportunity to plan for the future success of the local economy through the protection of sufficient and flexible employment land for a range of new, large scale and emerging industries (e.g. new technologies and lean manufacturing, research and development, diverse and value added agriculture and so on).

As a result, whilst it is difficult to quantify the amount of land that should be planned for to meet this type of demand, additional employment land in excess of provision for local urban services should be provided for in Brimbin.

Therefore, a mixed use and sustainable urban area of the nature proposed by Alternative 1 would also generate a **wide range of other employment opportunities for the likes of new and emerging industries**. Accordingly, employment generation of this scale is likely to enhance **the employment diversity** within the area furthering key strategic planning policies, and may also reduce the propensity for younger people to leave the LGA in pursuit of new and varied opportunities.

The generation of jobs creates opportunities for prospective residents of Brimbin as well as existing residents of the LGA and Region. With respect to the former, the provision of a range of **employment opportunities close to home** would support a number of benefits to community welfare and the environment. The generation of jobs within Brimbin would support a reduction in journey to work travel times and a reliance on private cars. Key welfare benefits associated with jobs closer to home relate to reduced stress and increasing the time available for leisure activities. To exemplify this point, economists Frey and Stutzer found that commuters who travel for more than an hour to their place of employment would need to earn 40% more money than they currently do to be as satisfied with their lives as non-commuters<sup>6</sup>.

An allowance has been made in the Structure Plan (2013) for up to 144.75ha of employment land for the likes of bulky goods retailing, warehouse and distribution, industrial, commercial offices and local business (and excluding primary production land). The Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy (2009) nominates up to 380ha of employment generating land for the Brimbin Release Area. Both significantly exceed the 39ha target for the Great Lakes-

<sup>5</sup> Source: Brimbin Employment Lands Assessment, Hill PDA (2012)

<sup>6</sup>Ania Wieckowski, 'Back to the City', Harvard Business Review, May 2010

Manning Valley subregion to 2031 as set within the Strategy itself. Either way, the employment lands precinct through the implementation of Alternative 1 would make a major contribution to the employment needs not just of the local area but the whole Mid-North Coast Subregion.

## 5.3 Retail Lands

### Improved Retail Offer and Convenience

Hill PDA's retail demand modelling completed in the Brimbin Retail Lands Assessment (2013) suggests up to 12ha (net) is required for a town centre and four neighbourhood centres in Brimbin.

The retail facilities would be provided in a focal centre to provide convenient access to goods and services for local residents and workers. As discussed previously, reducing the need to commute to work delivers a number of environmental and social benefits.

Similarly, **reducing the need to travel for core shopping** (for example weekly food and grocery shopping) is considered in support of broader State Government objectives to reduce dependency on car travel as well as travel distances.

Hill PDA considers that providing retail services within Brimbin would **increase retail choice, opportunities for price comparison and competition** for new and existing residents within the retail catchment. This is important given research shows that the price of grocery goods in recent years has increased at a significantly greater rate (an estimated 6%) than the headline Australian inflation rate.

Furthermore the growth of grocery prices shows no present signs of abatement. This is a matter of social concern as Australian consumers are particularly sensitive to the cost of grocery items with between 12% and 14% of their after tax household incomes being spent per annum on basic grocery items.

Some research on the topic suggests that inflated grocery prices are a result of the anti-competitive retail and urban planning environment in Australia. It has been argued that as a result of restrictive planning laws, consumers are paying up to 18% more for basic food items and up to 28% more for household products.

One of the key barriers to the provision of additional retail facilities, and therefore enhanced competition, is the availability of sites of a suitable scale and zone within existing centres. To address this issue, the DPI prepared and placed on exhibition the draft Competition SEPP in July 2010. The SEPP encourages new retail entrants to promote competition by removing the impact on another business' viability as a reason to refuse consent. Earlier discussion papers acknowledged the benefits of competition to consumers in terms of greater choice, higher quality and lower prices.

In light of these principles, Alternative 1 allocates land for a retail centre at the heart of Brimbin, together with neighbourhood centres to cater to the needs of the new residents. The provision of new centres also facilitates opportunities for **social interaction and activity** thereby enhancing the community atmosphere and character of Brimbin.

### **Protecting the Centre Hierarchy**

As discussed in Hill PDA's Brimbin Retail Lands Assessment, the quantum and nature of retail proposed within Brimbin has been calculated to ensure that only the needs of new residents are catered for and that net expenditure is not drawn away from existing centres. This is particularly important in light of broader objectives to support and reinforce Taree's Major Regional Centre role in the centre hierarchy of the Mid-North Coast Region.

In keeping with the Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy, the growth of Central Taree as a Major Regional Centre is a priority and its viability must not be undermined by competing centres. As a result, Hill PDA's Brimbin Retail Lands Assessment applied capture rates to expenditure available in the Local Trade Area of the proposed retail centre. For example, Hill PDA assumed the retail centre in Brimbin could capture around 85% of available supermarket expenditure, with the remaining 15% of available expenditure being captured by alternative centres such as Taree and Wingham. As a result, the Taree Major Centre will gain additional expenditure (net increase) through new residents locating in Brimbin.

## 5.4 Infrastructure

In keeping with the nature of its existing use, the Brimbin release area presently provides limited hard or soft infrastructure. In the case of Alternative 1 being approved and implemented, a range of infrastructure would need to be provided to facilitate urban development.

Both the Draft CADS and Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy recognise that infrastructure provision and providing services close to home is essential in new development areas. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal recognises that the new community is likely to require new, as well as upgraded roads, water and sewer services, electricity and communication facilities as well as stormwater drainage infrastructure and community services.

We understand that **extensive consultation has commenced** with the providers of this key infrastructure in order to better understand and plan for additional capacity and infrastructure provision. This would be set out in the Planning Proposal, Structure Plan Report and associated Structure Plan with details to be refined over the course of further consultation, planning and assessment.

Initial discussions with Greater Taree City Council have identified that **some of the local community welfare services (for example youth support) are reaching capacity**. There is a particular concern regarding the earlier stages of any development at Brimbin, as we understand it can take a number of years once additional residents move into an area to secure the necessary funding to increase the level of service. Such services are important, particularly in areas with a large proportion of the community falling within the lower economic brackets (refer to Chapter 3). As the Structure Plan associated with Alternative 1 evolves, these needs should be considered carefully.

The Police have also highlighted that there are **high levels of crime within the Greater Taree LGA** and have recommended that security during construction and the early phases of development, when passive surveillance is minimal be considered.

Whilst the additional population associated with Alternative 1 would generate demand for a broad range of new hard and soft infrastructure in Brimbin, it is also likely to **support demand for, and thereby the operation and**

**efficiency of existing infrastructure** in Greater Taree LGA. This would have broader benefits for the wider community by potentially contributing to demand for the growth and success of facilities such as Manning Hospital and Taree Regional Airport which serve the broader Region and promote the role of Taree as a Regional Centre.

## 5.5 Broader Investment Stimulus

The comprehensive development of a new community at Brimbin would **stimulate further investment** in the Region. An investment of this scale is likely to **draw investors and developers attention** to the area and encourage existing businesses in surrounding centres to consider investing and upgrading their assets to capitalise on the increased level of demand for goods and services in the area. This is to the benefit of the LGA and the broader region.

In summary, providing a range of homes, jobs, shops, leisure facilities and significant areas of open space in this very attractive location, which is currently closed to the public, would help raise the profile of the area and act as a catalyst for further investment.

## 5.6 Community Cohesion and Social Equity

There is evidence that liveable, sustainable and socially connected communities are characterised by strong social networks and provide good access to the services and facilities required for daily living<sup>7</sup>.

As such it is important **for the new community at Brimbin to be well connected and integrated with existing communities**. The Brimbin release area should be designed with a range of housing and employment opportunities so that it is inclusive and is not an isolated or gated community targeting only a limited socioeconomic section of the community. This could have an adverse impact to community cohesion and integration as a result of existing residents feeling excluded from the opportunities provided within Alternative 1.

By providing a range of housing types at a variety of price points should help to **promote social equity and community cohesion**. This is particularly important given the disparity between the levels of advantage and disadvantage experienced in Greater Taree. In the same way, the wide range of jobs likely to be provided at Brimbin would also help. To ensure these opportunities are truly accessible to the wider community, road linkages and provision of public transport services should be carefully considered as the detailed design is developed.

Furthermore, consistent with the Neighbourhood Planning Principles outlined in the Mid-North Coast Regional Strategy, Alternative 1 **encourages the community to visit** and use the leisure and recreational facilities to be provided within Brimbin. In addition, substantial areas of public open space including riverside walks and parklands are likely to further social interaction and provide community meeting spaces.

---

<sup>7</sup>Healthy Spaces and Places Organisation, [www.healthyspaces.org.au](http://www.healthyspaces.org.au)

## 5.7 Environmental and Social Amenity

The Brimbin release area is not presently accessible to the public. Alternative 1 includes a large portion of land set aside as public open space and private open space. Over 1,000ha is proposed to be set aside for conservation purposes and ultimately dedicated to National Parks and Wildlife, to provide a significant extension to the Brimbin Nature Reserve. It is envisaged that parts, if not all of this land will also be publically accessible by way of formal and informal walking tracks and utilised for other bushland activities and education purposes.

Alternative 1 therefore provides these public areas in visually appealing and environmentally sensitive locations such as along the river and provide views across the escarpments.

In addition to the visual merits of providing open space within the release area, there is mounting evidence that

*"...open space conservation is not an expense but an investment that produces important economic benefits."*<sup>8</sup>

**Economic benefits commonly associated with the provision of open space** include, increased property prices linked to improved aesthetic and amenity in an area and an improved ability to attract investment whereby

*"Corporate CEOs and small business owners alike rank quality of life, including parks and open space, among the top three priorities for choosing a business location."*<sup>9</sup>

Hill PDA considers that the substantial areas of land set aside as open space would make a positive contribution towards stimulating the development of a new community at Brimbin. There are also **lifestyle qualities linked to the provision of passive and active public open space** relating to the ability to use the space for leisure and relaxation purposes. This is essential if a community is to maintain physical and psychological health. As stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

*"Good health is necessary for individuals to flourish as citizens, family members, workers and consumers. Improving health is a key concern of OECD societies, as it can contribute to higher economic growth and improved welfare"*<sup>10</sup>.

## 5.8 Environmental Impacts

Consistent with the Draft CADS, Alternative 1 recognises the important interrelationship between the environment, economy and society.

Drawing on the information provided within the Planning Proposal, we understand that a detailed ecological study is has been undertaken for the entire site and it is **not anticipated that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities or their habitats would be adversely affected** as a result of Alternative 1.

<sup>8</sup>Will Rogers, President The Trust for Public Land

<sup>9</sup>National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance. Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1995, 4th ed. 7-3.Crompton, John L., Lisa L. Love, and Thomas A. More. "An Empirical Study of the Role of Recreation, Parks and Open Space in Companies' (Re) Location Decisions," Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 1997: 37-58.

<sup>10</sup>www.oecd.org

The key reason for this is linked to the provision of open space referred to in section 4.7 above. These areas are focussed in locations that have been identified as sensitive from an environmental perspective and would be protected through **conservation agreements** reached with the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH).

We also note that the Planning Proposal offers to **provide a regional corridor** within the Brimbin release area meeting a strategic need for the area that land fragmentation makes difficult to achieve on neighbouring sites.

The proposed regional corridor would connect the Yarratt State Forest and the Brimbin and Goonook Nature Reserves to the West and the large areas of habitat to the east of the release area. The associated value with the conservation of this linkage in environmental terms is therefore extremely significant compared to current fragmented pockets of existing vegetation and is seen as a key benefit associated with the Draft Structure Plan.



## 6. NET COMMUNITY BENEFIT TEST ASSESSMENT

This Chapter provides an assessment of the benefits of Alternative 1 against the Base Case. The draft Centres Policy clarifies:

*“...a net community benefit arises where the sum of all benefits of a development or rezoning outweigh the sum of all costs”.*

Bearing this definition in mind, in comparison to the Base Case and in light of the potential costs, Alternative 1 is likely to have a number of **net** community benefits as demonstrated in the matrix below.

Where we consider a net community benefit results, the degree of benefit has been rated as:

- **High** substantial and long term benefits are likely to result;
- **Medium** significant benefits are likely but could be shorter term; or
- **Low** minimal or short term only benefits are likely to result.

The assessment rating scores are broadly based on the Strategic Merit Test which forms part of the National Guidelines for Transport System Management in Australia (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) but have been adapted to be applicable to this study. These rating have been used by Hill PDA in a number of recent Social and Economic Impact Assessments and Net Community Benefit Tests prepared and submitted to the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure.

**Table 5 - Assessment of Net Community Benefits**

Net Community Benefit	Base Case Scenario		Alternative 1	
<b>Increasing Supply of Housing in the Region.</b>	<b>Low</b>	There are a small number of workers cottages within the Brimbin release area.	<b>High</b>	Deliver approximately 8,000 dwellings. Supports growth of the population in the LGA without needing to develop the environmentally sensitive and increasingly congested Coastal Areas.
<b>A wider range of housing.</b>	<b>Low</b>	There are a small number of workers cottages within the Brimbin release area.	<b>High</b>	Provides a mix of housing types catering for the current and future needs of the population (ageing, decreasing household sizes and the high proportion on low incomes).
<b>Generating additional jobs.</b>	<b>Low</b>	There are a limited employees based within Brimbin associated with pastoral activities.	<b>Medium</b>	Has potential to provide in excess of 2,500 jobs by 2044 catering for the employment needs of the new residents and providing new opportunities for existing residents within the Region.  With more than 380ha of employment land available there is potential to increase the number of jobs provided significantly over time subject to market demand and interest from new and emerging industries.
<b>Minimising the need to travel to work</b>	<b>Medium</b>	By definition, the residents of the workers cottages work the land and therefore do not generate a significant number of journeys to work outside of the Brimbin release area.	<b>Medium</b>	If Brimbin was entirely residential all working residents would be required to commute to access employment opportunities in other parts of the Region increasing road congestion and impacting the wellbeing of residents.

		Furthermore, any journeys made are unlikely to have a major impact on the capacity of the surrounding highways due to the relatively small number of residents.		By providing for a minimum of 2,500 jobs, Alternative 1 provides the opportunity to work near to home, albeit in reality, a proportion of the residents may choose to work in other locations.
<b>Supporting growth of Taree as the Regional Centre</b>	<b>Low</b>	There are few residents within Brimbin release areas pending money in local shops and on services.	<b>Medium</b>	<p>Most retail expenditure is spent on food and groceries. Whilst most of this expenditure is likely to be captured locally approximately 15% could leak to existing centres outside of Brimbin thereby supporting the growth of nearby centres.</p> <p>Furthermore, by 2044, \$192.15m or 57% of total available retail expenditure will be leaving the Brimbin trade area for higher order centres such as Central Taree.</p> <p>In other words, Central Taree will capture a significant amount of additional expenditure as a result of new residents moving into the Brimbin release area. The overall economic impact on Central Taree will be net positive.</p>
<b>Minimising the need to travel to access shops and services.</b>	No Benefit	The small numbers of existing residents within Brimbin currently need to travel to access shops and services.	<b>Medium</b>	<p>Providing shops and services within Brimbin, appropriate to the retail hierarchy should reduce the need for residents to travel to nearby Centres to purchase goods and services.</p> <p>Given the scale of Alternative 1, it is appropriate for the commercial/retail core to be centrally located where easy access can be provided. Accessibility to shops and services is further enhanced with smaller neighbourhood centres being scattered throughout Brimbin.</p> <p>An element of travel would be required to access those shops and services appropriate to the regional centre and by those residents who could choose to visit alternative Centres.</p> <p>As such it is important to consider alternative forms of transport to the private car so the risk of congestion is reduced and environmental and welfare benefits are maximised.</p>
<b>Enhancing retail choice and increasing competition.</b>	No Benefit	There are no shops within the Brimbin land.	<b>High</b>	Providing a new commercial centre with shops and services appropriate to Brimbin's role in the retail hierarchy, should help to increase consumer choice and as a result promote competitive pricing and even improvements in the shopping experience of existing centres competing for the additional expenditure generated by the new resident and working population.
<b>Demand for Infrastructure.</b>	<b>Low</b>	Brimbin does not provide any major infrastructure to support development but equally does not generate significant demand for additional infrastructure.	<b>Medium</b>	<p>Greater Taree LGA has been experiencing low growth rates over recent years and if continued this can undermine the viability of major regional infrastructure such as the airport and hospital.</p> <p>Facilitating growth Alternative 1 provides security that demand for important services would remain and indeed grow in the future.</p>

				Consultation is taking place to ensure adequate facilities are accommodated within Alternative 1 and the proposed phasing of the development is appropriate to support the needs of the new residents and workers in the longer term although we recognise that some services are unlikely to be viable in the shorter term.
<b>Stimulating broader investment in the local area and across the Region.</b>	No Benefit	As pastoral land in private ownership Brimbin in its current form would make no contribution towards attracting investment in to the Region.	<b>High</b>	<p>A development of this scale is likely to attract significant attention to the local area and the broader region and act as a catalyst for further investment.</p> <p>Investors and businesses within existing Centres are more likely to look for opportunities to invest in and improve the services/experience they provide to capitalise on the additional expenditure derived from the new community.</p>
<b>Promoting community cohesion and social equity.</b>	<b>Low</b>	There is an existing but small community within the Brimbin release area. The planning proposal is still at an early stage but as it progresses the existing residents will be consulted and their views taken in to account in the more detailed design.	<b>Medium</b>	Alternative 1 provides a range of housing, employment and recreation opportunities that are accessible to all socio economic groups ensuring the new community integrates with the existing communities.
<b>Provision of additional public open space.</b>	No Benefit	Brimbin is not open to the public.	<b>High</b>	Substantial areas of open space would be provided in attractive locations with public use being encouraged (subject to environmental constraints) delivering significant benefits to the new and existing community in terms of social welfare.
<b>Protecting critical habitat, threatened species, populations, ecological communities or habitats.</b>	<b>High</b>	If Brimbin remained undeveloped the risk of adversely impacting ecology would be very low.	<b>Medium</b>	Alternative 1 respects the ecologically and environmentally sensitive areas and provides a unique opportunity to deliver a longstanding objective to create a regional habitat corridor linking the Dawson River and Brimbin Nature Reserve and the Lansdowne River, Forest and Cattai Wetlands.

The above matrix shows that in all but one instance there is a greater net community benefit if Alternative 1 is delivered as opposed to the Base Case. On balance, Alternative 1 is considered likely to have a strong benefit for the local community of Greater Taree as well as the wider Region.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Overall this assessment has found that Alternative 1 would result in a range of benefits for the existing and prospective community of Brimbin, Greater Taree and the Mid-North Coast Region.

In comparison to the Base Case, the Alternative scenario provides significant opportunities for a mix of housing and employment opportunities in support of regional targets and socially mixed communities. The provision of a range of jobs and services close to new homes would also support objectives for sustainable urban areas and reduce the pressure for growth in coastal locations to the detriment of the environment.

The provision of a mix of uses within the Brimbin community would also enhance access to jobs, retail and community uses whilst reinforcing the important role of Taree as a Major Regional Centre in the Mid-North Coast Region. A mix of passive and active land uses would also create opportunities for recreation, healthy living and sustainable lifestyles thus making Greater Taree a more attractive location to live. In turn these benefits would have positive wider flow on social and economic impacts including a reduction in the level of road based use, the generation of economic multipliers on account of investment and the resulting direct and indirect generation of employment from construction.

In summary, the potential benefits of Alternative 1 to the existing and prospective community are considered likely to significantly outweigh those of the Base Case. Alternative 1 is therefore considered favourably and within the public interest. To ensure that the full potential of Alternative 1 is achieved we recommend the ongoing testing and refinement of the Draft Structure Plan in consultation with local and State government authorities, community and industry stakeholders.

## DISCLAIMER

This report is for the confidential use only of the party to whom it is addressed (the client) for the specific purposes to which it refers. We disclaim any responsibility to any third party acting upon or using the whole or part of its contents or reference thereto that may be published in any document, statement or circular or in any communication with third parties without prior written approval of the form and content in which it will appear.

This report and its attached appendices are based on estimates, assumptions and information sourced and referenced by Hill PDA and its sub consultants. We present these estimates and assumptions as a basis for the reader's interpretation and analysis. With respect to forecasts we do not present them as results that will actually be achieved. We rely upon the interpretation of the reader to judge for themselves the likelihood of whether these projections can be achieved or not.

As is customary, in a report of this nature, while all possible care has been taken by the authors to prepare the attached financial models from the best information available at the time of writing, no responsibility can be undertaken for errors or inaccuracies that may have occurred both with the programming or the financial projections and their assumptions.

This report does not constitute a valuation of any property or interest in property. In preparing this report we have relied upon information concerning the subject property and/or proposed development provided by the client and we have not independently verified this information excepted where noted in this report.