

# **Bellingen Shire**

## **Local Housing Strategy**

### **2020-2040**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bellingen Shire Council acknowledges the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Bellingen Shire Council would like to thank all those people who helped develop the Housing Strategy, including all community members who made submissions or spoke to Council. In particular, Bellingen Shire Council would like to recognise and acknowledge the hard work of volunteers within the Bellingen and Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group who helped develop, promote and refine the Strategy.

Thank you to all the community members who supplied beautiful photographs as part of the “What do you love about your neighbourhood” photo competition.

The Draft Housing Strategy includes valued input from various local professionals involved in the local planning, design and property industries and Council wishes to thank those who took the time to provide input during the engagement process.

## DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

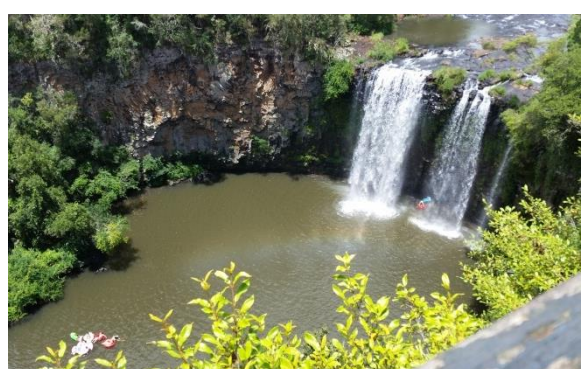
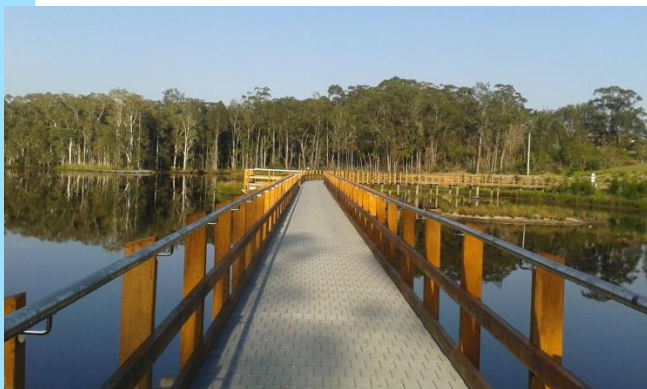
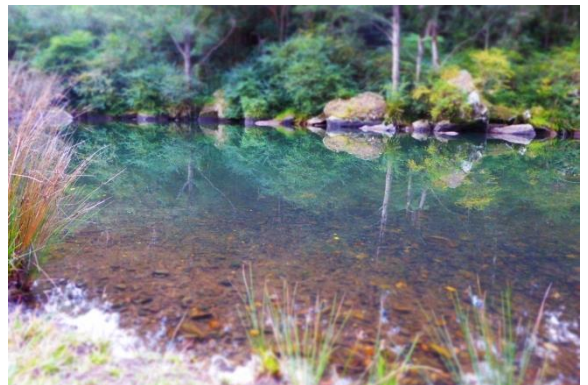
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0.1	21.9.19	Draft for public exhibition	045/19 Item 11.2 28/8/19
1.0	XX	Final Strategy	

## DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information within this publication, Bellingen Shire Council disclaims any liability to any person in respect of anything done or not done as a result of the contents of this Strategy.

The Housing Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Action Plan, background studies and relevant legislation.

This Strategy does not constitute legal or planning advice and should not be relied upon as such. Please seek the advice of a planning professional or speak to Council in relation to the development potential of your land.



Photos from top, left-right:

Vicki Sharkey – View from Marx Hill; Tom Cloquhuon – Drone shot of Dorrigo; Sue Francis – Onwards Murray Greys; Taff Cooper-Williams – River Reflections; Ruth Holmes – Urunga Wetlands; Jacqui Forest – Mylestom Tidal Pool; Bellingen Shire Council – Bellingen Main Street & Dangar Falls

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## Section 1 Introduction



Maeve Forest – Mylestom River Side

## 1.1 Executive Summary

### What is the Housing Strategy?

The Housing Strategy is a plan to provide high-quality homes to all residents of Bellingin Shire and to make sure housing meets the needs and desires of our community. The Housing Strategy will be used to guide development, decision-making and infrastructure priorities for the next 20 years.

The Housing Strategy is focused on housing in residential areas of the Shire. Housing growth in rural areas and rural-residential areas will be guided by the **Rural Lands Strategy**. Rural and rural-residential housing and population growth will contribute to the growth of the Shire overall.

### A focus on housing affordability and environmental sustainability

This Housing Strategy recognises the local housing market is becoming very expensive for residents. Housing affordability challenges are affecting a broad sector of our population, including very low, low and moderate income households; young people and pensioners, renters and purchasers and single person households and families with children. To help influence affordability, this strategy focuses on creating housing diversity. This means providing a wide range of homes of different sizes and types at different price points to cater for the diverse needs of people in our community.

This strategy also recognises the need to advocate for government investment and more social and affordable (subsidised) housing. Housing at below-market rates is necessary for residents' who are shut out of the housing market and cannot access safe and secure housing (e.g. very low income households; people at risk of homelessness).

The community have very strongly indicated they want housing growth to be environmentally conscious, by protecting natural areas, using precious resources like land and water wisely and embracing sustainable technologies and building practices. Bellingin Council also recognises the need for climate change action and adaptation, addressed throughout this strategy and action plan.

### A strategy for the community

The community plays a key part in shaping and implementing this Strategy. In 2018, Bellingin Shire Council asked the community how they wanted to grow as part of an award-winning community engagement process called *Homes for Our Future*. The comments collected during this engagement informed the Draft Housing Strategy. A second round of community engagement (seeking comment on the draft) was held during September-October 2019. Feedback received from the community has informed the direction and actions within the final Housing Strategy.

#### How much housing?

Bellingin Shire is a popular place to live and this Housing Strategy predicts an additional **+1861 homes** could be built in residential areas by 2040.

These estimates help us plan for the infrastructure and services needed to support growth.

#### How many more people?

The estimated number of new homes could accommodate an additional **+3,852 people** (estimate only).

These new residents would bring the population of Bellingin Shire to 16,852 by 2040 (not including population growth that may occur in rural areas).

\*Based on 2.3 persons per dwelling and applying a 10% vacancy rate

#### What type of housing?

We want to provide a greater variety of house types and sizes to suit a wider range of household needs.

Housing diversity goals are for growth to deliver at least **50% diverse housing types**.

#### What will new housing look like?

High-quality housing design is vital to provide comfortable and sustainable homes for the future. Actions seek to promote design education and investment in design to benefit residents over the long term.

New landscaping controls will provide open space and enhance the leafy, country town character of the Shire's neighbourhoods.

#### Where will more housing be located?

Most new houses will be in the form of **infill** (located in existing towns). Some greenfield housing (new housing estates) will be built in existing residential zones.

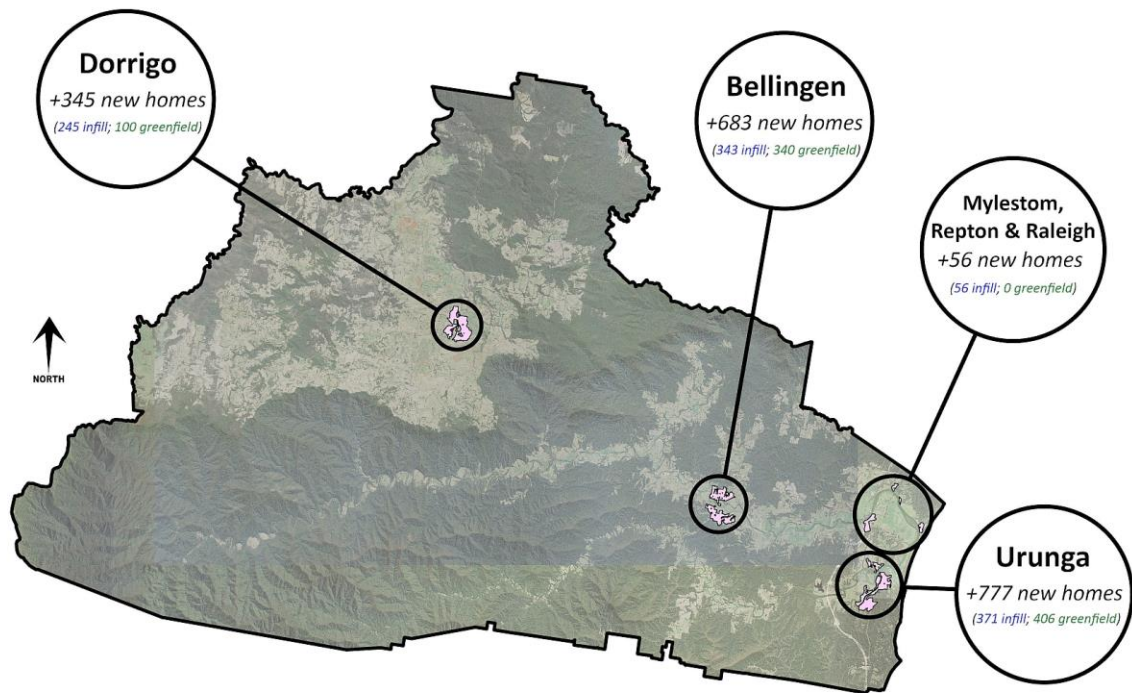
This approach will limit sprawl and protect our natural areas and farmland.

#### What do we need to support housing growth?

More new homes mean we need to invest in infrastructure to support more people. This includes (but is not limited to) water, sewer, electricity, roads, footpaths and community facilities and services.

Infrastructure studies and infrastructure delivery programs will be prioritised in growth areas.

## ~1861 new homes by 2040



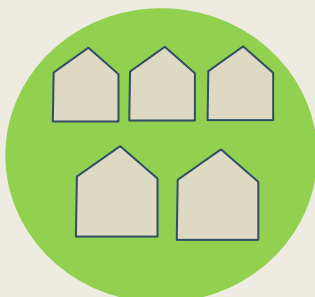
## Housing Diversity Goals

Aim for at least 50% of new homes (built 2020-2040) to be diverse housing types.



### Diverse housing types

(includes granny flats, dual occupancies (attached and detached), townhouses, terraces, villas, flats and detached homes on lots smaller than 600m<sup>2</sup>)



### Conventional detached housing

(single homes on lots 600m<sup>2</sup> and larger)

Infill means houses in existing neighbourhoods and built up areas.  
Greenfield means new housing estates or building homes in currently undeveloped areas.



## Supporting infill housing – a new approach

Providing additional housing to meet the needs of our changing population requires a new approach that aligns with the community's aspirations. Previous plans to rezone and release new greenfield land is not providing timely additional housing supply. The high costs of providing infrastructure to proposed new release areas is one factor in delayed greenfield development and investigations into enabling subdivisions of already-zoned new release areas are required. It is important that enabling actions do not compromise on vital infrastructure or future community wellbeing, for example the provision of adequate and useable public open space.

The Bellingen Shire community have indicated their preferred method of growth is infill (development in areas that are already built-upon). This represents an ecologically-minded view and protects undeveloped land for environmental conservation and agricultural production into the future.

It is vital that new development is delivered sensitively, with respect to the Shire's built heritage and leafy, low-rise character. This strategy proposes a variety of planning and non-planning mechanisms to support delivery of high quality infill development and places increased emphasis on good design and environmental sustainability. For more information refer to the background report – **Infill Design Study**.

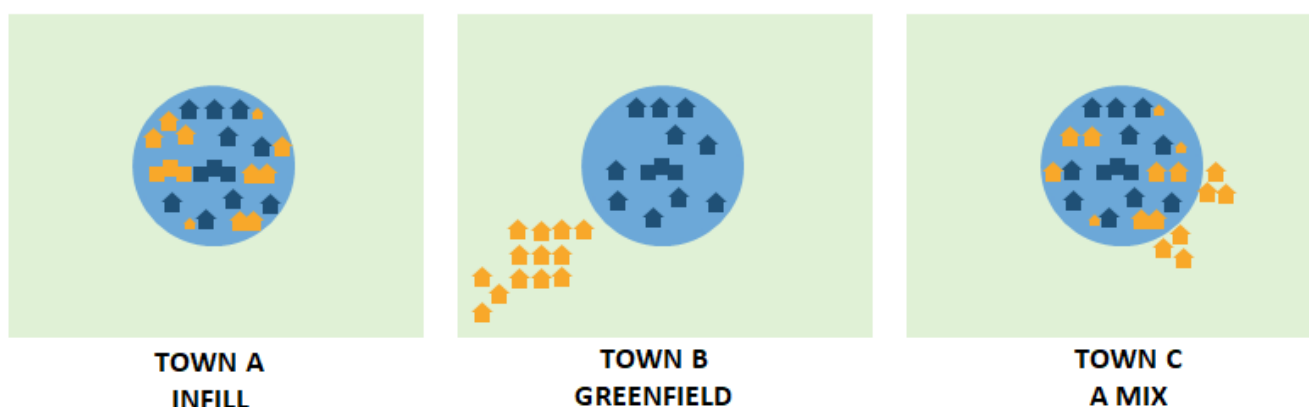
## DEFINITIONS

### INFILL HOUSING

Infill housing is the building of additional homes in an existing neighbourhood or already-approved subdivision. They can be provided as additional homes built on the same lot, by dividing existing homes into multiple units, or by creating new residential lots by further subdivision or lot line adjustments.

### GREENFIELD HOUSING

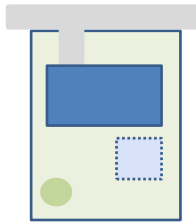
Greenfield land is undeveloped land in a city or rural area either used for agriculture or landscape design, or left to evolve naturally. These areas of land are usually agricultural or amenity properties being considered for urban development.



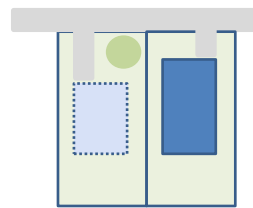
Graphic illustrating the difference between infill and greenfield development.



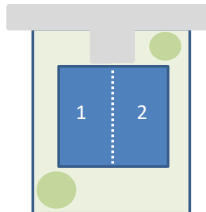
## Some examples of infill housing



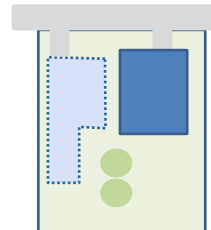
Building a granny flat  
(secondary dwelling) in  
your backyard



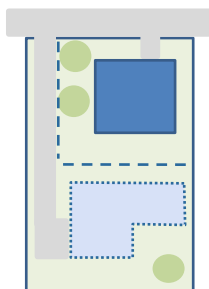
Building a house (or  
homes) on vacant land  
in the neighbourhood



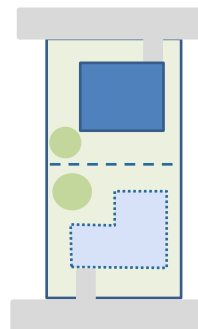
Splitting an existing  
home into two homes  
(duplex)



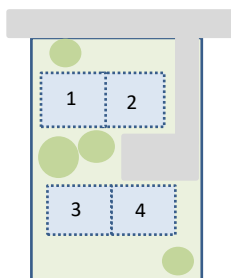
Building another home  
on your property (dual  
occupancy)



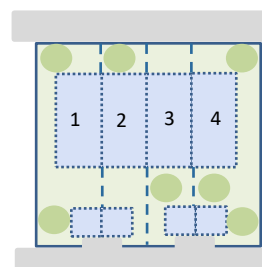
Building another home  
on your property and  
subdividing (battle-axe  
arrangement)



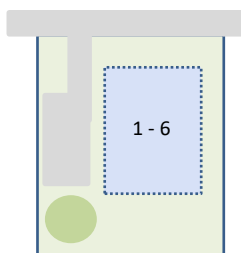
Building another home  
on your property and  
subdividing (rear lane  
arrangement)



Demolishing an old  
home on a large block  
and building a number  
of villas



Building semi-detached  
or terrace (row)  
housing (with or  
without subdivision)



Building a manor  
house (max 4 units) or  
flat building



Shop top housing, building  
units above shops or offices  
(elevation view)

## 1.2 How the NSW planning system works

### Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is the process of creating plans and policies to enhance the places we live and promote community wellbeing. A wide range of social, environmental and economic aspirations need to be considered to achieve balanced strategies, policies and outcomes.

Strategic plans are used to:

- explain the long-term vision for an area;
- to provide a basis and context for planning rules, and
- inform decisions about development.

Good strategies are useful links between what the community wants for a place and what happens in an area.

### Local Housing Strategy

This Local Housing Strategy forms part of a new Growth Management Strategy (GMS) for Bellingen Shire. The GMS will also include a Rural Lands Strategy and Employment Lands Strategy.

A GMS details the local, place-based aspirations of the local community. A GMS also provides strategies and actions to achieve these aspirations.

There are over 60 actions attached to this Housing Strategy, which will be implemented over the next 20 years. For more information see the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

### Strategic Planning Framework - Summary



#### GLOBAL & NATIONAL

Global megatrends  
United Nations  
Sustainable  
Development Goals



#### STATE

Environmental  
Planning &  
Assessment Act 1979  
State Environmental  
Planning Policies  
(SEPPs)  
NSW Government  
Architect - Better  
Placed Design Guides  
Infrastructure  
Strategies and State-  
Significant Projects



#### REGION

North Coast  
Regional Plan  
North Coast  
Settlement  
Planning  
Guidelines  
North Coast  
Urban Design  
Guidelines



#### LOCAL

Local Strategic  
Planning Statement  
**Growth Management  
Strategy:**  
**Housing Strategy**  
**Rural Lands Strategy**  
**Employment Strategy**  
Local Environmental  
Plan (LEP)  
Infrastructure Studies  
and Delivery Programs



#### PRECINCT/SITE

Precinct Plan/Master Plan  
Development Control Plan  
(DCP)  
Place-based Design  
Guidelines

## Development Assessment Planning

In NSW, most forms of development (including buildings, structures and different land uses) require approval before they can be built or undertaken.

For most housing and housing-related development, there are three pathways to getting an approval - the **Exempt Development**, **Complying Development** and **Development Application** pathways. These are briefly explained in the diagram below.

Approval processes can be confusing for first time applicants and some of the standards and rules that apply can be tricky to navigate. For your own development proposal, it is recommended that you seek additional professional or Council advice.

## Development approval processes

The following is a summary for general knowledge purposes only and cannot be taken as development advice (and is correct as of 2019).

The NSW Government provides a good guide to the development application (DA) process for small housing development.

This guide can be found on the NSW planning department's website:

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Assess-and-Regulate/Development-Assessment/Your-guide-to-the-DA-process> (or type *Guide to the DA process NSW Government* into a search engine for a current link).

### EXEMPT DEVELOPMENT

No approval is needed for a range of small home improvement projects and low-impact works.

For example a deck, solar panels, a carport or small garden shed or renovating a kitchen could be exempt development.

Proposals **must** meet all of the relevant standards (e.g. size, positioning, height restrictions) to be classified as exempt from requiring approval.

Exempt development types and their standards are mandated by the state government and can be found in: *State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Exempt and Complying Development Codes*.

If undertaking exempt development - keep a copy of the exempt development standards as proof that an approval was not required at the time of construction.

### COMPLYING DEVELOPMENT

Some straightforward housing development may qualify for fast track approval known as complying development.

If the proposal meets specific standards and land requirements, a Complying Development Certificate (CDC) can be obtained through Council or an accredited private certifier.

Complying development generally applies to development that has predictable environmental and amenity impacts. It can include the construction of a new house and outbuildings, alterations and additions to an existing house and the construction of a secondary dwelling (granny flat).

Complying development types and their standards are mandated by the state government and can be found in: *State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Exempt and Complying Development Codes*.

### DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

For development that is not exempt or complying, a development application (DA) is required to be prepared and lodged with Council.

Preparing a DA means filling out an application form, a Statement of Environmental Effects and submitting plans and technical reports where necessary.

Development applications are assessed against Council's local planning controls found within the Bellingen Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP).

If you receive development consent (approval) you will then need to get a construction certificate (CC) before you start any building work. This involves submitting building specifications to Council or an accredited private certifier. Approved construction certificate plans will contain a lot more information than your approved DA plans, to allow your builder to work directly from them.

## 1.3 How the Housing Strategy aligns with the North Coast Regional Plan

The North Coast Regional Plan (NCRP) is the NSW Government's premier planning strategy for the North Coast (Port Macquarie to Tweed). The NCRP has a strong focus on protecting the natural environment and supporting the main economic drivers of tourism and agriculture.

All North Coast Councils must prepare a Growth Management Strategy (including Housing Strategy) to address local growth challenges and opportunities and give effect to the directions of the NCRP. Development proposed within Bellingen Shire must also be consistent with the goals and objectives of the NCRP.

The overarching Vision of the North Coast Regional Plan is to make the North Coast:

*The best region in Australia to live, work and play thanks to its spectacular environment and vibrant communities*



<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/North-Coast>

### Directions of the NCRP that relate to the Housing Strategy

#### Environmentally sustainable growth

- Concentrate growth in **Regional Cities & Strategic Centres**
- Direct growth away from **Important Farmland & land with High Environmental Values**
- Limit development in the **Coastal Strip** (land east of Pacific Hwy) – allow housing only in identified **Urban Growth Areas** & restrict rural residential lots
- Manage water catchments & groundwater
- Promote renewable energy & environmentally-focused design of precincts, subdivisions & buildings
- Deliver high quality development for unique natural environment & environmentally responsive communities
- Locate housing away from hazard prone areas & build resilience
- No coal seam gas

#### Thriving, interconnected economy

- Make centres more attractive & attract jobs and labour force
- Promote tourism. Limit large-scale development to prime tourism areas only (Tweed Heads, Ballina, Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour & Port Macquarie).
- Protect productive agricultural lands – limit housing & subdivision in rural zones.

#### Healthy, safe, socially engaged and well-connected communities

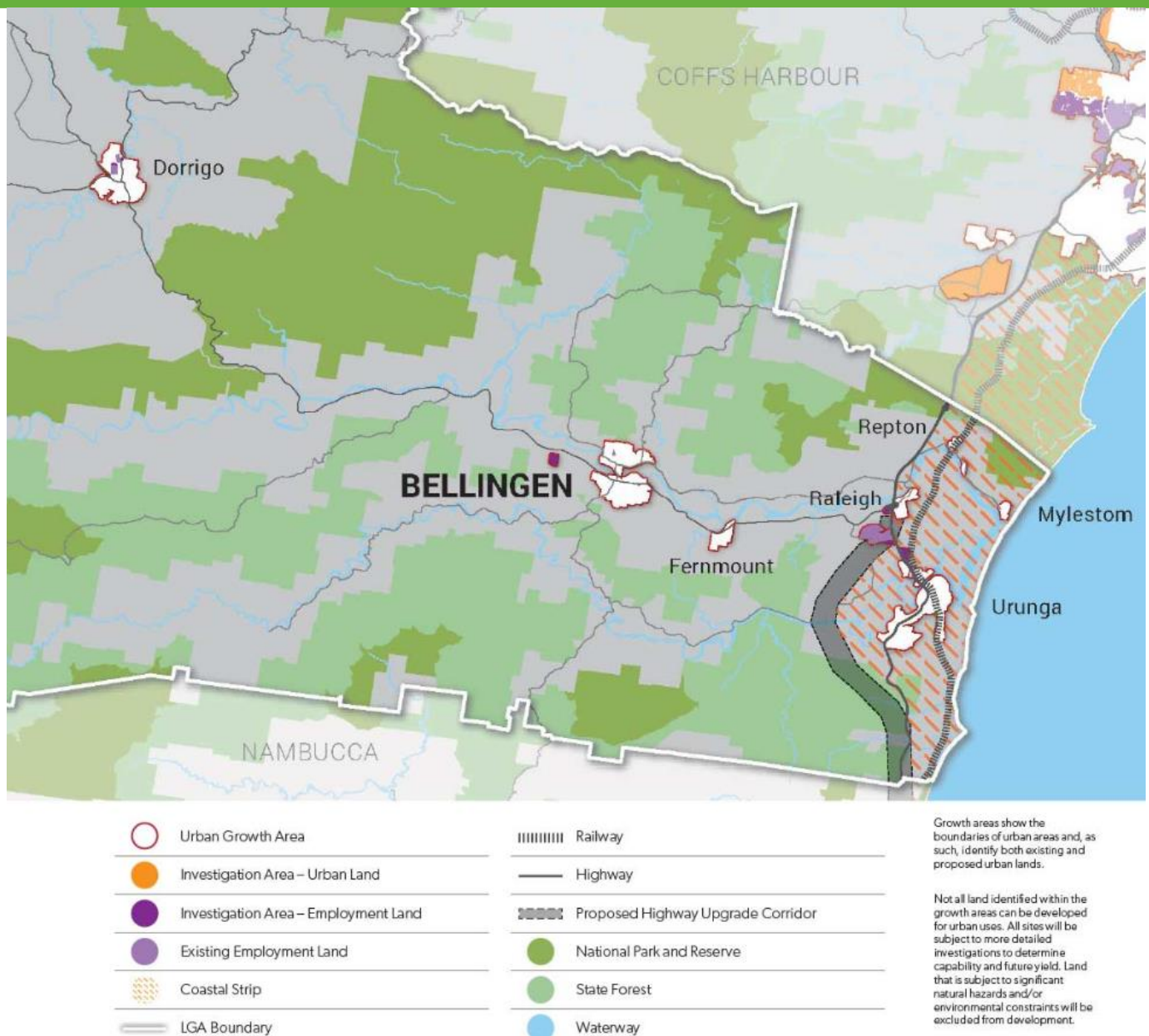
- Provide housing, services & facilities within walking distance of each other
- Cluster new development to take advantage of existing infrastructure & detail infrastructure service planning
- Deliver best practice buildings for ageing demographic & subtropical climate
- Establish social infrastructure benchmarks & social impact assessment
- Prepare & deliver precinct plans for areas undergoing change
- Develop partnerships with Aboriginal communities throughout planning process
- Update local heritage studies & adopt appropriate planning controls

#### Increase housing diversity and choice

- Provide housing for residents with range of incomes. Provide more affordable & social housing for low-income earners.
- Include policies, planning tools & incentives to increase affordable housing
- Encourage housing diversity & more compact housing
- Accelerate delivery of housing by upfront investment in local infrastructure
- Provide opportunities for ageing in place



## North Coast Regional Plan Figure 19: Urban Growth Area Map



<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/North-Coast/Maps>

The North Coast Regional Plan limits new housing release (greenfield housing estates/suburban expansion) to mapped “Urban Growth Areas”. This means new housing will be limited to the areas highlighted in white in the above map.

This housing strategy does not propose any changes to the mapped Urban Growth Areas in the North Coast Regional Plan. Changes are not considered necessary at this time as there is existing capacity for additional housing in the current growth areas.

The “Urban Growth Areas” shown above correlate with areas zoned R1 General Residential in Bellingen Shire’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

This includes existing neighbourhoods which could accommodate additional infill housing development and some as-yet-undeveloped areas that were rezoned for greenfield housing as part of a previous housing strategy (e.g. land at South Urunga).

## North Coast Regional Plan Local Narratives

The North Coast Regional Plan includes place-based narratives to guide local planning. The priorities described in these narratives are to be incorporated into local council growth management plans, to assist with implementation of the Regional Plan.

The main points of the local narrative for Bellingen Shire are:

- Diverse range of coastal, hinterland and rural communities
- Popular tourism, cultural and recreation destination
- Idyllic mix of natural landscapes (more than half of land area is National Reserve)
- Economy and employment base underpinned by agriculture and tourism
- Becoming more connected to adjoining council areas, particularly Coffs Harbour

The Housing Strategy emphasises sustainable growth, through aspirational principles stating the Shire wants to be recognised as a leader in environmental living and by focusing on infill housing (thereby protecting natural areas from encroachment of housing development).

Most growth on the Mid-North Coast will be concentrated in cities (e.g. Coffs Harbour). However, this strategy recognises many people want to remain within, and move to, Bellingen Shire and that squeezed housing supply and affordability challenges are issues for the community.

This strategy seeks to provide more homes and greater housing diversity so more people have the opportunity to live within the Shire, giving residents more options to age in place, downsize, rent or purchase within the Shire.

These aims are consistent with the Directions 22-25 of the North Coast Regional Plan which relate to providing greater housing supply, diversity and affordability across the region.



The NCRP recognises that for Bellingen Shire **“Managing [the] unique natural environment appropriately will be key to delivering a sustainable future and a strong local economy”**. The photograph above shows Urunga Wetlands, a remediated old antimony processing site that has been turned into a wildlife refuge and recreation area.



## Consistency with the North Coast Regional Plan

The Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy is consistent with the goals and directions of the North Coast Regional Plan (NCRP).

The NCRP projects a growth in housing supply of +459 dwellings between 2016-2036. The NCRP requires a minimum housing supply of +200 dwellings across Bellingen Shire by 2036. This requirement would be met if housing supply continued at the recent rate of approximately 20-25 dwellings built each year. However, the minimal supply of new homes over recent times (mainly 3/4 bedroom houses) is not providing housing to meet the varied needs of the community. Supply failing to keep up with demand has exacerbated significant affordability issues in Bellingen Shire. Gentrification now risks pushing many lower-income households out of the housing market and area entirely.

This housing strategy illustrates there is capacity and demand for growth and estimates capacity for ~1,860 homes to be built across the Shire (to 2040) in a medium-high growth scenario. The lifestyle benefits of the Shire and proximity to Coffs Harbour are expected to continue to draw people to Bellingen Shire and many long-term residents want to stay in the area. Investment in infrastructure and encouragement of incremental infill housing is proposed to spur housing supply beyond the low growth figures of the last decade.

The medium-high growth scenario reflects house building increasing to an average of ~90 homes per year. This is more homes than delivered over the last two decades; however is not an unprecedented level of growth. Between 1971-1991, Bellingen Shire added +2,397 new homes – an average of 120 homes each year. By contrast between 1996 and 2016, 845 homes were built, delivering an average of 42 homes per year.

This level of growth is considered to have acceptable environmental impacts as the strategy focuses on infill housing and includes many actions to increase sustainable building and living practices. Bellingen Shire has long been known for its environmental awareness and many people want to live in the area to be part of this eco-conscious community.

Providing additional housing beyond the minimum specified in the NCRP could positively influence housing affordability if an increased amount of smaller and more diverse housing types are built. Planning for additional homes to 2040 (beyond the relatively low recent rates of growth) will ensure the infrastructure and service needs of residents will be met, should growth rates increase. Using these projections illustrates that the Shire is planning ahead for growth impacts and wants to deliver opportunity and high quality of life for *all* residents.

### North Coast Regional Plan Housing Diversity Targets

Action 23.1 of the NCRP sets a target for North Coast Councils to deliver:

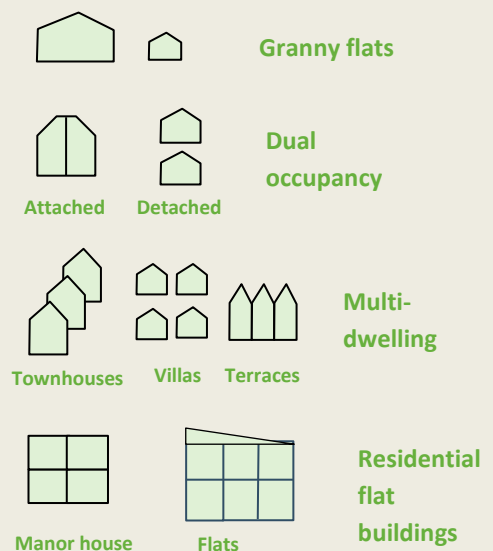
**40% of new housing in the form of dual occupancies, apartments, townhouses, villas or dwellings on lots less than 400 square metres, by 2036**

For Bellingen Shire, approx. 1,489 new homes could be built by 2036\* and 40% of these are required to provide housing diversity. This means at least **596** dwellings other than single houses on lots larger than 400 square metres need to be provided by 2036 to meet NCRP targets.

It is predicted that this target will be met and will likely be exceeded. This is because the Housing Strategy focuses on enabling more infill housing and adopts a local goal of 50% diverse housing types by 2040 (noting granny flats are included and small lots are defined slightly differently – as <600m<sup>2</sup>).

The *Infill Capacity Study* estimates over 800 dwellings in the form of granny flats, dual occupancies, multi-dwelling housing and flats could be delivered across Bellingen Shire to 2040 (exclusive of small lot housing), likely meeting both regional and local targets for housing diversity. Additional monitoring will be required to ensure housing diversity delivery remains on track.

\* 2036 is year 16 of a 20 year plan and 80% of estimated housing growth is modelled to be taken up representing 1,188 dwellings.



**“Providing housing diversity and choice will improve affordability, help meet the needs of an ageing population and support the reduction of household size”**

**NCRP, page 56**

## 1.4 Community Engagement – it's your strategy

As a first step in creating a new Housing Strategy and Growth Management Strategy (GMS), Bellingin Shire Council asked the community how they want to plan for change. The *Homes for Our Future* community engagement project aimed to gather feedback from a diverse range of community members and was successful in raising considerable awareness and establishing new stakeholder relationships. During this first round of engagement Council staff spoke to over 500 community members (as a conservative estimate) and collected 250 comprehensive submissions during the engagement. Council also received 60 photo competition entries, illustrating what they love about their neighbourhood.

A Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan was placed on public exhibition from 4 September to 18 October 2019, seeking community feedback. The exhibition period yielded 113 written/mailed submissions and 122 sticky notes/short comments provided at engagement events, for a total of 235 submissions.

More than 1,800 comments were included in these submissions. This brings the total number of submissions on the Housing Strategy project to 485 (of which 20% are estimated to be people who made submissions during both engagements).

The feedback received during both rounds of community engagement has shaped and refined the Housing Strategy. We have heard that infill housing growth is the community's preferred growth scenario during multiple engagement projects. However, there are many concerns about how infill will be planned and delivered and the Draft Housing Strategy and actions place a strong emphasis on encouraging good design and investing in supportive infrastructure. The Draft Strategy also encourages the supply of more diverse housing types to suit a wider range of housing needs and supports improving housing affordability and sustainability, which are key community priorities. For a comprehensive guide to feedback received, please refer to the **Engagement Reports**.

### Housing Strategy Timeline





## Homes for Our Future (2018)



250 submissions

54% support growth, 7% oppose growth (39% neutral)

Strong preference for infill growth scenario (49%)

Top themes:

- More housing choice
- More affordable housing
- Support community connections
- Grow in existing towns (infill)
- Protect unique character

31% concerned about housing choice and affordability

18% want greater protection of natural environment and more focus on sustainability

11% would like improved Council processes

+60 photo competition entries

See report for more detailed analysis

## Your thoughts on the Draft Housing Strategy (2019)



113 written submissions

65% support Draft Housing Strategy Vision / intent

58% support infill housing

Support benefits of infill - >housing choice, environmental protection

But 26% concerned about infill in their area – most common concerns overdevelopment and loss of gardens and private space

Top priorities:

- protect character;
- encourage more environmentally-sustainable homes and lifestyles; and
- improve housing affordability

13% concerned about infrastructure

16% concerned about Council processes

+122 comments collected at information sessions and markets

+ 9 government agency submissions

See report for more detailed analysis

## 1.5 Local Government Area Snapshot

Bellingen Shire is located on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, south of the regional city of Coffs Harbour and roughly halfway between Sydney and Brisbane.

Bellingen Shire is part of **Gumbaynggirr Country**, embedded with the stories, landscapes, knowledge and culture of generations of Aboriginal people.

Approximately 13,000 people live within the Shire, with the majority of the population (63%) living in the main town centres of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo. 37% of the population live in villages (such as Mylestom, North Dorrigo and Repton) or on rural properties.

Living close to nature is a large part of the Shire's appeal. The Shire covers an area over 160,000 hectares (1,600km<sup>2</sup>) and over half this area is National Park and State Forest.

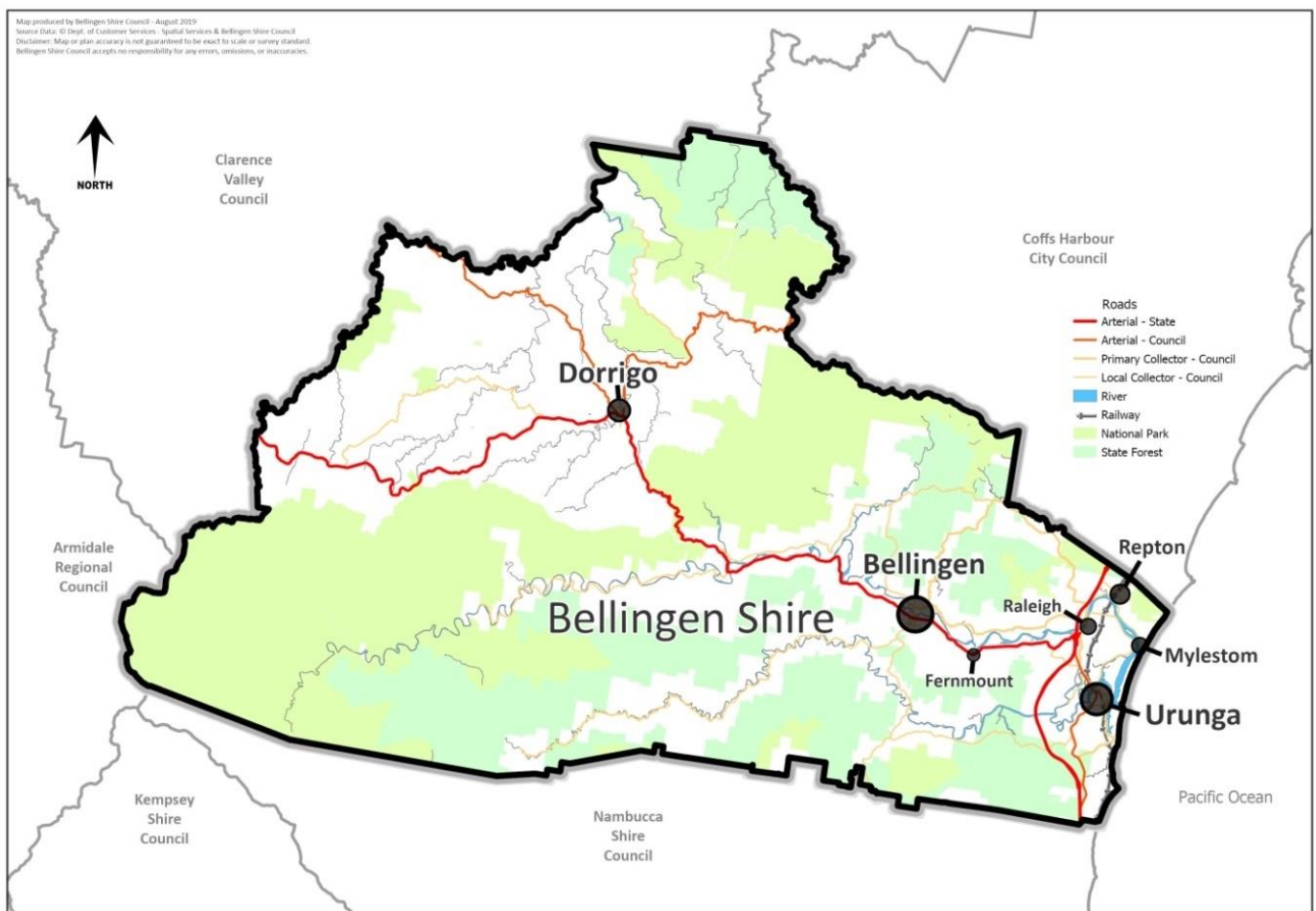
The local economy and employment base is underpinned by the agriculture and tourism sectors. Bellingen Shire's proximity and growing connectivity to adjoining council areas, particularly Coffs Harbour, is creating strong social and economic links between the communities.

**Dorrigo** is the main centre for people living on the plateau. Agriculture is the predominant industry on the plateau, producing milk, beef and fruit and vegetables. The World Heritage Listed Gondwana Rainforests are located near Dorrigo.

**Bellingen**, located on the banks of the Bellinger River, is the largest town centre and contains the highest concentration of jobs, shops and services in the Shire. The surrounding valley and floodplain is characterised by dairy farms, large rural residential properties and bushland areas.

**Urunga** is a coastal town popular with retirees and boasts a picturesque (and largely undeveloped) coastline, and extensive beaches and wetlands. The upgraded Pacific Highway is easily accessed from Urunga and the coastal villages of Repton and Mylestom.

There are many villages and rural hamlets/settlements throughout the Shire, including (but not limited to) Mylestom, Repton, Raleigh, Fernmount, Megan, North Dorrigo, Bostobrick, Deer Vale, Gleniffer, Valery, Brierfield, Kalang, Darkwood and Thora.



### **Our strengths in the region**

The Bellingen Shire plays an important role in the region as a hinterland tourist destination for those visiting the Coffs Coast and people travelling along the Waterfall Way to and from Armidale. More than 230,000 people visited the Shire in 2017.

The natural beauty of the region including its scenic rural landscape is the main drawcard for people visiting, and living in, the Shire.

The cultural features are also a strong attractor: much of the Shire's distinctive built heritage is intact and well-looked after, and the many arts and community-driven events attract people year-round.

The Shire's traditional main street shopping and dining precincts and multiple markets offer a point of difference to shopping malls and chain stores. These successful retail and food and drink premises attract people looking for unique experiences and character. This distinctiveness is very important in a time where retail is facing increased disruption from online stores. The town centres also play an important social role, as places to meet, connect with others and access services.

### **Natural environment**

Bellingen Shire enjoys a diverse natural landscape including World Heritage-listed rainforest, rugged mountains, rich floodplains and beautiful beaches. Bellingen Shire offers excellent growing conditions, reflected in significant native vegetation cover, diverse habitats and swathes of fertile farmland.

Bellingen Shire is home to a range of rare and endangered ecological communities and threatened species; the most iconic include Koalas, Flying Foxes, Jabiru and the Bellinger Snapping Turtle.

Also iconic are the Shire's waterways; the Bellinger, Kalang, Nymboida and Bielsdown Rivers and their tributaries fulfil environmental, cultural and recreational functions. These natural rivers are prone to flooding, with communities displaying resilience and spirit by banding together and helping each other in times of floods. Vital town water supplies are sourced exclusively from local water catchments, (the Bielsdown River and Lower Bellinger Aquifer), underscoring the need to continue to protect the health of the Shire's waterways, especially in times of drought as experienced in the last few years.





## Community spirit and values

Bellingen Shire is more than just its attractive physical attributes. It is hard to describe (and there is a risk of generalising) but the Shire's uniqueness and appeal also stems from the mix of people, their connections and commonalities.

The Gumbaynggirr traditional owners; the farmers; the retirees; the creatives; the recent tree/sea-changers; the alternative-lifestyle seekers from the 70s and 80s and their families, all shape the character of the Shire in noticeable ways. Despite a wide range of people and views, there are some collective values broadly attributable to the Shire as a whole, which can be roughly summarised as:

- care and concern for the natural world translating to eco-conscious actions and lifestyles
- a pride in all things local and independent whilst maintaining strong connections to, and awareness of, regional and global happenings
- strong community connections and resilience
- an appreciation of the heritage character of the built environment and rural landscapes

## Population growth

Bellingen Shire has a low growth rate, growing by only 150 people during the last census period (2011-2016) and by a total of 250 people of the last ten years (2006-2016). This is the lowest growth rate of any coastal council in NSW.

Most of this growth has occurred in the over 55s age group and almost a quarter of the Shire's population is now aged 65 or over. There are many more people living alone, and fewer children than in past decades, representing a major shift in the make-up of the population.

## Jobs and the local economy

True to its independent spirit, Bellingen Shire's economy is characterised by small businesses (and the larger dairy co-operative Norco). A relatively large proportion of people work from home (10.5% compared to the Regional NSW average of 5.8%), and with the rise of the digital economy, high-speed internet in regional areas is vital.

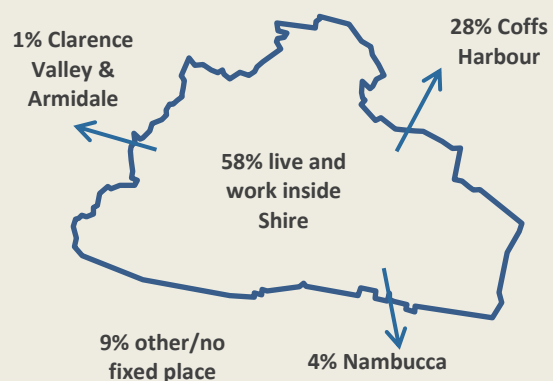
Over a third of working residents commute outside the Shire (36%), mostly to work in the regional city of Coffs Harbour. Interestingly, 22% of local jobs are held by people living outside the area (mostly from Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Shire) who travel into the Bellingen Shire for work.

Industrial land is available at Raleigh Industrial Estate, located between Bellingen and Urunga, although there are infrastructure limitations including no sewer connection. Undeveloped industrial land is also available in Dorrigo. Coffs Harbour has limited industrial land availability; however, Nambucca Shire has rezoned 71 ha of employment land as part of the Valla Urban Release Area. Encouraging jobs growth will be explored further in a forthcoming Employment Lands Strategy.

### MAJOR EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES

HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
RETAIL TRADE  
MANUFACTURING  
ACCOMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES  
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING  
CONSTRUCTION

### RESIDENT WORKERS - PLACE OF WORK





## Vision for equitable and affordable housing

Given the wide range of physical constraints and natural values of the Shire, population and dwelling growth on the North Coast will be concentrated elsewhere (predominantly within and near cities and regional centres).

However, Bellingen Shire aspires to provide its residents with high quality of life and affordable housing choices that meet a wide range of needs. This Strategy seeks to minimise instances where residents are pushed out of the area they love by lack of appropriate housing stock or over-inflated property or rental prices. Significant demographic changes have also occurred over the last 30 years, with the population ageing and households shrinking, and the Shire's older housing stock has not kept pace with these trends.

Maintaining services to support residents and fostering community wellbeing requires a multi-faceted strategy, including actions to:

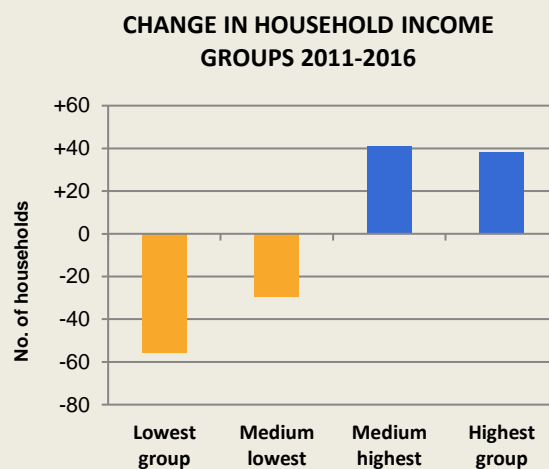
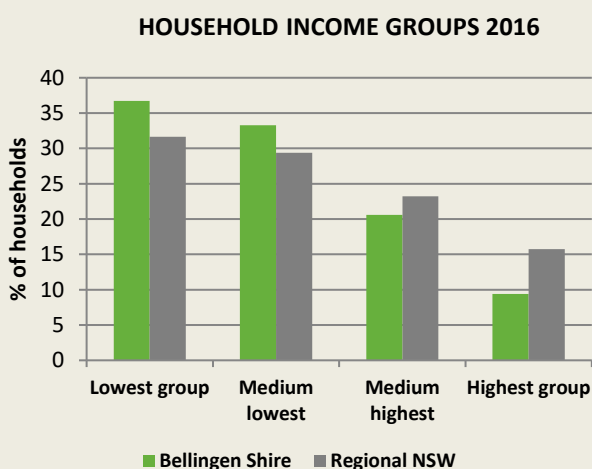
- address housing supply deficiencies and gaps (e.g. supporting ageing in place, proving more homes to suit smaller households)
- retain and attract a younger and working population, including families with young children;
- provide housing to suit a range of household incomes, especially people on lower-incomes; and to
- efficiently fund vital infrastructure.

## Housing affordability concerns

In recent years, housing affordability has become a key concern for many residents, as nation-wide pressures play out regionally. Very few new homes have been built in recent years. With low overall population growth, it could be assumed demand for housing is low; however, the high and rising cost of housing across the Shire indicates considerable demand exists, and lack of housing supply is checking growth.

Whilst overall population growth has been very slow, considerable change is being felt in the community. New residents (often moving from wealthier city areas) are attracted by the exceptional liveability of the area. The Shire benefits in many ways from this in-migration. However, due to the lack of housing supply coupled with longstanding employment challenges and pressures from tourism, whole groups of people, (e.g. lower-income households, renters, young people, pensioners, people with part-time or casual or freelance employment) are disadvantaged and find it difficult to access appropriate and affordable housing in the Shire.

Some people, including residents with established links to the community, are being forced to leave for more affordable areas or forced into less suitable, substandard or insecure housing situations. To maintain community connections and encourage population diversity, there is a need to provide more housing in the Shire, especially for those currently disadvantaged by market conditions. If a wider range of housing is provided to meet a wider range of housing needs Bellingen Shire will maintain its sociable and friendly reputation.



Bellingen Shire has a large proportion of lower-income households, who are most at risk of housing stress or displacement (having to leave the Shire) due to affordability challenges.

### **The climate and natural hazard risks**

The Shire's climate is subtropical, with pleasant year-round warm weather, mild winters and, generally reliable rainfall due to geography and topography (average of 1500mm/year). However, different areas experience different microclimates – for example the Plateau experiences colder winters and more frosts, and Bellingen and the Valley have a tendency to retain humid heat in the summer. The generally high levels of rainfall are an attraction of the region for farmers and people migrating from drier areas.

The Shire is vulnerable to many natural hazards, perhaps most famously flooding. Despite being prone to flood isolation, established residents have developed and displayed significant resilience to flood events. Much of the Shire is forested and bushfire-prone and bushfire risk is increasing due to climate change. Some people in the Shire live in areas with constrained road access (narrow, unsealed, one way in and out), presenting evacuation and isolation challenges.

Climate change exacerbates natural hazard risks and the impacts of extreme weather events such as flooding, bushfire, coastal inundation/storm surges, drought and heatwaves will intensify into the future. Improvements in planning for, and responding to, natural hazards are required.

### **Can we better support farming and rural living? – A Rural Lands Strategy**

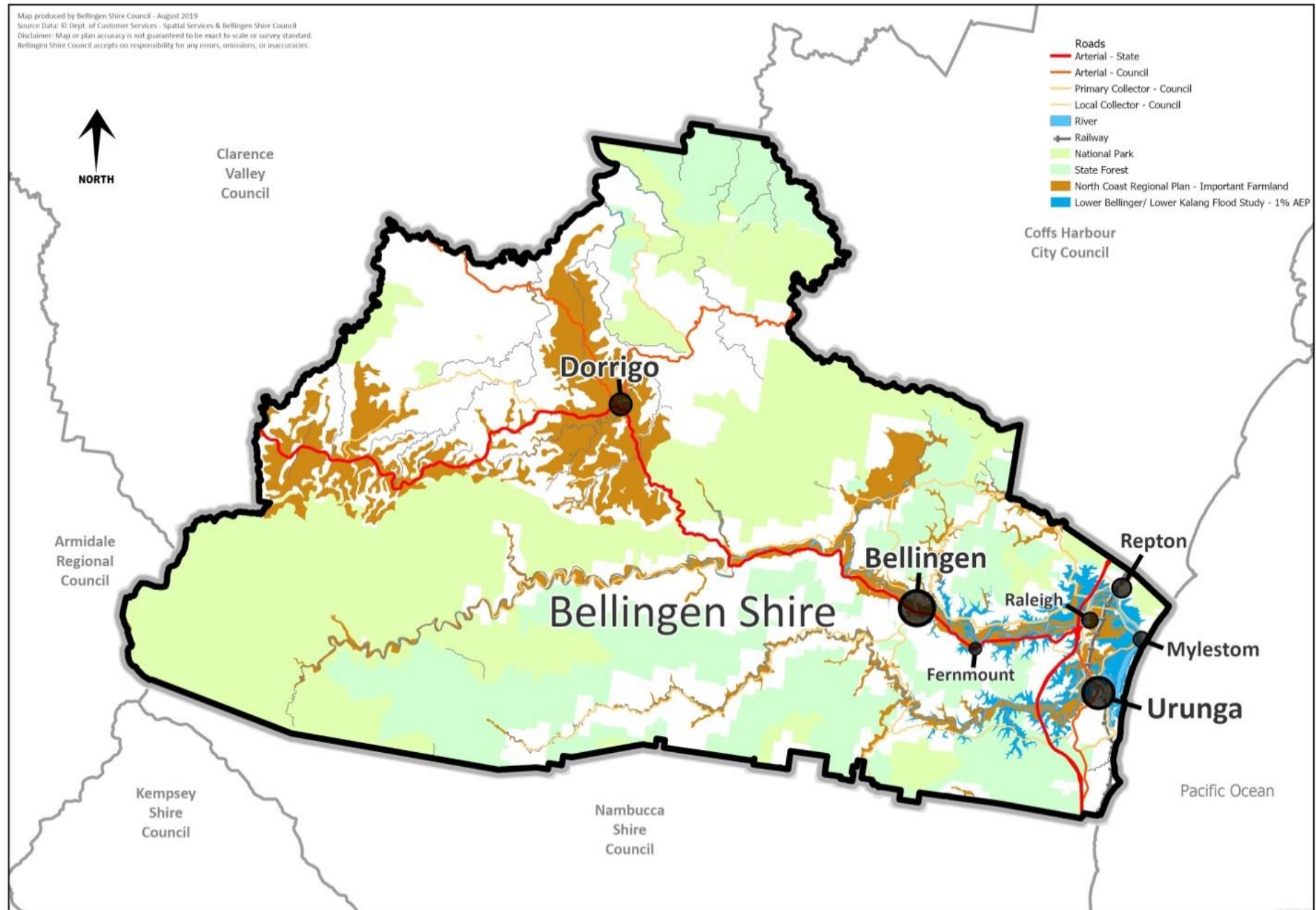
A popular housing choice for many moving to the Shire is a rural-residential or larger rural property. Like many rural shires across NSW, Bellingen Shire experiences tensions between agricultural land uses and rural lifestyle housing.

Many people in the Shire value our rural character and local food production, and housing pressures need to be managed. Allowing more housing in rural areas has infrastructure implications and in some areas exposes people to greater natural hazard risks.

However, the rural population and economy of the Shire is changing and planning controls are restrictive. Understanding how we can best support people living in rural areas without disadvantaging local food producers is an important facet of the Growth Management Strategy. Indeed, understanding how planning controls can support local food production and farming innovation is also very important. These issues will be further explored in a forthcoming Rural Lands Strategy.



Map produced by Bellingen Shire Council - August 2019  
Source Data: © Dept. of Customer Services - Spatial Services & Bellingen Shire Council  
Disclaimer: Map or plan accuracy is not guaranteed to be exact to scale or survey standard.  
Bellingen Shire Council accepts no responsibility for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies.



## Infrastructure requirements

Bellingen Council is responsible for infrastructure worth over half a billion dollars, including transport, drainage, buildings, water & sewer networks and parks & recreational assets. These assets are essential in maintaining our community's quality of life. Like many NSW Councils, Bellingen Shire faces considerable challenges due to: aging infrastructure; funding backlogs; cost-shifting; limited revenue growth; changing community expectations and environmental and climate change risks. Council has to manage many competing priorities and variable community expectations with very limited funds.

Council has prepared a *Strategic Asset Management Plan - Civil Infrastructure and Buildings* (Feb 2019) which outlines how Council will provide the services needed by the community in a financial sustainable manner over the long term. The SAMP recognises that Council has previously made infrastructure decisions in a reactive manner, driven by funding availability and customer requests. The SAMP acknowledges that there is not enough Council revenue to cover forecast renewals and maintenance (there is a funding gap). Therefore, prioritisation of works is required. This Strategy directs investment to where efficiencies and community benefits are able to be maximised. Bellingen Shire Council relies heavily on grant income and this strategy seeks to support future applications for projects aligned to the Housing Vision.

The SAMP seeks a shift to more holistic and strategic decision-making focusing on maximising benefits to the wider community and environment, considering lifecycle costs and better balancing service expectations with cost and risk.

### Infrastructure and growth

Population growth requires investment in infrastructure and services as more people will use these services. Upgrades need to be planned effectively to ensure there is adequate capacity in essential systems and quality of life is not unreasonably impacted. Across the country, housing growth has been provided without sufficient infrastructure investment, having negative consequences. However, careful planning is required to make sure scarce funding is used efficiently and equitably and delivery of infrastructure is timed to coincide with identified growth thresholds. Continuing conversations about community service level expectations are important, as trade-offs and efficiencies are required to ensure financial sustainability. Regularly engaging with the community will help Council understand what the community prioritises the most, and for residents to understand the level of service Council is able to deliver (or is required by law to deliver). This

information is important determining and understanding resource allocations and funding.

The next revision of the SAMP will take into account the projections and actions within the Housing Strategy to ensure infrastructure planning and decisions to further align infrastructure planning to projected areas of housing growth and overall expected population growth.

### Water and Sewer

Council provides two water supply schemes, for Dorrigo and Bellingen-Seaboard. Rural landowners obtain water from their properties from rainwater capture and/or irrigation licences (managed by the State). Council provides three wastewater treatment facilities and sewerage networks. A large portion of water and sewer mains are in the same age bracket and will require a significant investment in a short time span when due for replacement. Approximately half of the properties in Bellingen Shire are using On-site Sewage Management Systems (OSMS).

The Shire's water supply is reliant on rainfall and is susceptible to drought. Whilst known as a high rainfall area, water supply and catchment management requires new integrated system approaches given climate change impacts and the expensive, high energy requirements of transporting water. New approaches include improved demand management (Bellingen Shire residents are high water users compared to other regional areas), and recycling water, such as the scheme proposed to service South Urunga by providing recycled water, or 'purple pipes', for non-potable uses (laundry, flushing of toilets etc.). This scheme is currently awaiting grant funding. Higher rainfall areas like Bellingen Shire will continue to attract people moving from drier areas. However, even Bellingen Shire is not immune from the current drought - unprecedented conditions have led to Council investigating Level 5 Emergency Restrictions and emergency water supplies (including a portable desalination option), underscoring the need to increase water security and climate change resilience for current and future populations.

Current water and wastewater studies (*Bellingen Shire Council Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy 2012*) predict sufficient capacity for population growth and include a number of improvement actions. This Strategy is under review, considering emerging challenges (e.g. increased extreme weather and actual population and tourist growth impacts on capacity). The updated IWCMS needs to consider predicted population growth and geography as detailed in this Housing Strategy.

### Transport network



Bellingen Shire is heavily reliant on private car transport and most of the Shire connects to the region via the two-lane Waterfall Way. Urunga and coastal areas are connected to Coffs Harbour and Nambucca via the Pacific Highway and Giinagay Way (old Pacific Highway). Over one-third of the Shire's population live outside the main town areas, and the Shire has an extensive road network. This network includes over 650 kilometres of roads (70km state roads, 43km regional roads; 427km sealed local roads & 114km unsealed local roads), 24km of footpaths and 135 bridges (including 85 timber bridges). Council is working towards renewing many of these ageing assets.

Road maintenance and renewal represent a large portion of Council spending – in 2018-19, 51% of Council's annual budget was spent on maintaining and renewing transport assets, for a total spend of \$21.2 million. Over the next 10 years, Council plans to continue its strong focus in the high-risk areas of Roads and Bridges under its Special Rate Variation program which includes road resealing, high priority bridge works and footpath, kerb and gutter renewal.

For the long-term, the Housing Strategy focuses on growth in existing towns (infill housing) to make use of existing infrastructure and to efficiently concentrate future infrastructure spending in population centres.

The town centres of Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga have most key destinations, services and community facilities within walking distance of most homes in town. However, walkability is not necessarily supported by adequate infrastructure (footpaths, cycleways/shared paths, seats and shade trees) and more could be done to support active transport along key links. Council has a Pedestrian Access and Movement Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan which requires funding for implementation.

Supporting walking and cycling is a key part of this Housing Strategy, to reduce private car reliance and emissions, to improve public health, and foster close community ties. A focus on infill housing supports increased walkability and efficient investment in footpaths, cycleways and roads.

Public transport in the Shire is virtually non-existent, although Urunga is located on the North Coast train line (currently limited service). The Coffs Harbour Regional Airport provides excellent business and tourism linkages to Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. There are opportunities to improve country rail links at the State level, given rail travel is a more environmentally-friendly (lower emission) form of travel. High speed rail through the region is also a possibility. Whilst public transport such as buses are currently not viable due to low population density, changes in technology and community transport, vehicle-sharing options present significant opportunities for future transport options. Addressing employment challenges requires an understanding of our transport networks, intra-and inter-regional connections, and future connectivity potential and constraints.

### Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure such as the Bellingen Youth Hub, Dorrigo Support Service (Aged Care), libraries, pools and surf lifesaving clubs provide vital services to the community. Sports fields, playgrounds and parks contribute to wellbeing. There is not a significant maintenance backlog in Council's parks and open spaces; however maintenance needs to be more proactive and service levels in the context of increased infill growth need to be determined. New housing areas will need to provide and/or embellish parks and open spaces. Other important social infrastructure includes: pre-schools, primary schools; high schools; hospitals and community health centres. The ageing of the population requires adaptations in the health care system.



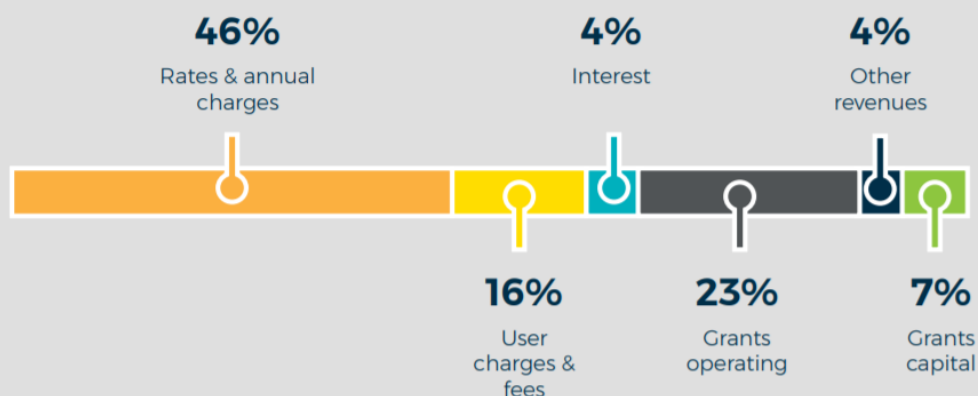
Feeneys Bridge Construction; Hungry Head Shared Path (Cycle & Pedestrian path)

## Annual Report 2018-2019 - Summary

This information is a summary of Council funding and spending from the 2018-2019 Annual Report. The full summary and full Annual Report can be found at [www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au)

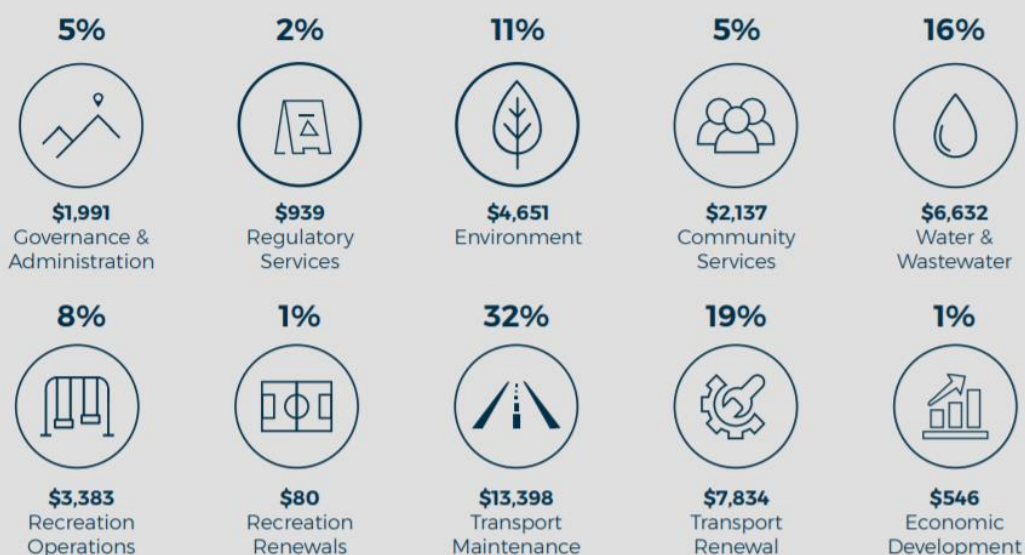
### WHERE DO THE FUNDS COME FROM

The Council raised \$32.3million from various sources.



### WHERE THE FUNDS GO

Council spent \$41.5million on maintaining and renewing assets and providing services. (\$ thousands)



## 1.6 Housing Vision

Bellingen Shire is characterised by its natural assets and these present challenges for growth. However, the Shire has capacity to grow within its natural limitations, supported by adequate infrastructure investment.

The preferred growth pattern is compact around existing town and village centres, protecting natural areas and important farmland and keeping new populations out of isolated, hazard-prone areas.

Steady and inclusive population growth is the goal, with a focus on attracting and retaining people of all ages and backgrounds, with different skills, jobs, experiences and incomes to foster the diverse yet tight-knit community feeling of the Shire.

Having an eco-conscious lifestyle (doing your bit for the world) is one of the key attractions of living in Bellingen Shire, and this Vision supports continuing to improve our methods of looking after our country by living more sustainably and supporting more regenerative land use.

The Vision describes the community's priorities and housing aspirations in the Bellingen Shire over the next 20 years and sets the benchmark against which decisions can be assessed.

### Where we have come from

Gumbaynggirr Nation caring for Country in Bellingin (Baalijin) since the Dreaming (Yuludarla)

European arrival establishes cedar cutting industry.

Dairy farming becomes key industry

1960s dairy industry crash, est. of timber plantations

Population boom 1970s & 80s seeking alternative, eco-conscious lifestyles.

New rural land sharing communities (MOs) founded

Rapid growth leads to a minor cultural clash between old and new residents and displacement of some sawmilling families.

Population and housing growth drops sharply from early 1990s

Relatively frequent flood events

### Where we are now

Strong environmental outlook and high social capital

Enjoy beautiful natural environment and well-serviced town centres.

Major demographic shift with an ageing population, and fewer young people and children.

Few new homes being built

Housing affordability declines, especially for low income households

Shire attracting new residents, but some people having to leave Shire for more affordable housing or jobs, therefore low overall growth

Farming still very important, especially dairy, beef, vegetables. Sector challenges – climate and price volatility, drought, generational change and succession.

MOs facing generational change; legal & financial difficulties, increased hazard risks.

Environmental concerns, primarily about water, climate change, land clearing, consumption and apathy.

Drought and water security risks

### Where we want to be

A friendly and equitable place

Resilient and community focused, with strong social connections

Offering high-quality, affordable housing choices

Embracing lifestyles and technologies that are environmentally friendly and that tread lightly on the land

A leader in sustainable development at a local, grassroots level, including carbon emissions reductions.

Local, independent, authentic, with the unique and historic character of our towns and villages protected and enhanced

Producing food for the local area and region, embracing regenerative agriculture and supporting small producers

Continued respect for Aboriginal culture, heritage, knowledge and improved relationships with, and outcomes for, Aboriginal communities

Adequate and efficient infrastructure

Managing precious resources like water, sustainably, for future generations



## Bellingen Shire Housing Vision

Bellingen Shire offers **housing choices** by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations, with varied features and characteristics.

New housing is located mostly **in and around existing town centres**. Shops, services, parks and community facilities are close by, encouraging **walking and cycling**.

We strive for greater opportunity and **affordability** in the housing market. Our homes cater for a wide range of people and households, including for all incomes, people with a disability, and for our ageing population.

High quality design of housing and public space encourages **community connections**, and enhances **neighbourhood character** whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

Our housing reflects the **environmental ethos** of the community, respecting our precious natural environment and supporting eco-conscious lifestyles and habits.

The **farmland** and **rural character** of the Shire is protected, and offers **regenerative and innovative** farming opportunities, supporting our country towns and villages.





## Section 2 Evidence



Bellingham River and Skate Park

## 2.1 Demographic Overview

### Growth has been modest

12,668 people were counted as usual residents of Bellingen Shire in the 2016 census (compared to 12,419 people in 2006). The population grew by 249 people or 2.0% between 2006-2016.

Whilst the Shire is a popular lifestyle destination, this represents the lowest growth rate of any coastal local government area in NSW. By contrast, between 2006-2016, Clarence Valley grew by 5.2%, Nambucca Shire by 7.3%, Byron by 9.7%, Coffs Harbour by 12.4% and Kiama (on the south-coast) by 13.1%.

Adjusting for Census undercount, the official Estimated Resident Population (ERP) of Bellingen Shire in 2016 was 12,951 people. In 2006, Bellingen Shire had an ERP of 12,716 people (+230 people between 2006-2016).

In the last census period (5 years between 2011-2016), the population grew by 150 people, or by 1.2% (based on usual resident counts).

Population growth is a result of natural increase (more births than deaths) and/or positive net migration (more people coming in than leaving).

In the years 2011-2016, deaths slightly outnumbered births, 736 and 730 respectively. The Shire's slight growth during this period can therefore be attributed to migration.

Net migration is the difference between people moving *into* and *out of* the Shire during a 5 year period. Between 2011-2016, slightly more people came to the Shire than left (approximately +110 people). This is a change from 2006-2011 when more people were leaving the Shire than arriving (and when births outnumbered deaths).

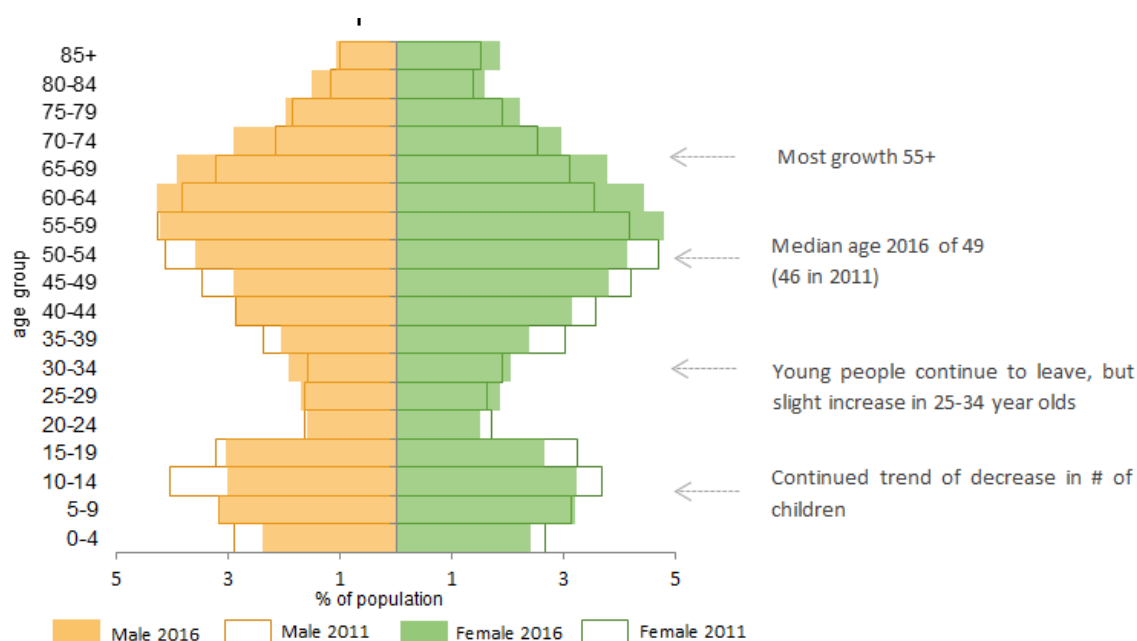
The low overall population growth is surprising to many residents because the Shire has experienced significant change in the last 10 years, in particular through changing household types, tourism growth, and declining affordability.

Between 2011-2016, population growth was concentrated in Bellingen (+87 people / +2.4%). Urunga grew marginally by 26 people (+0.9%).

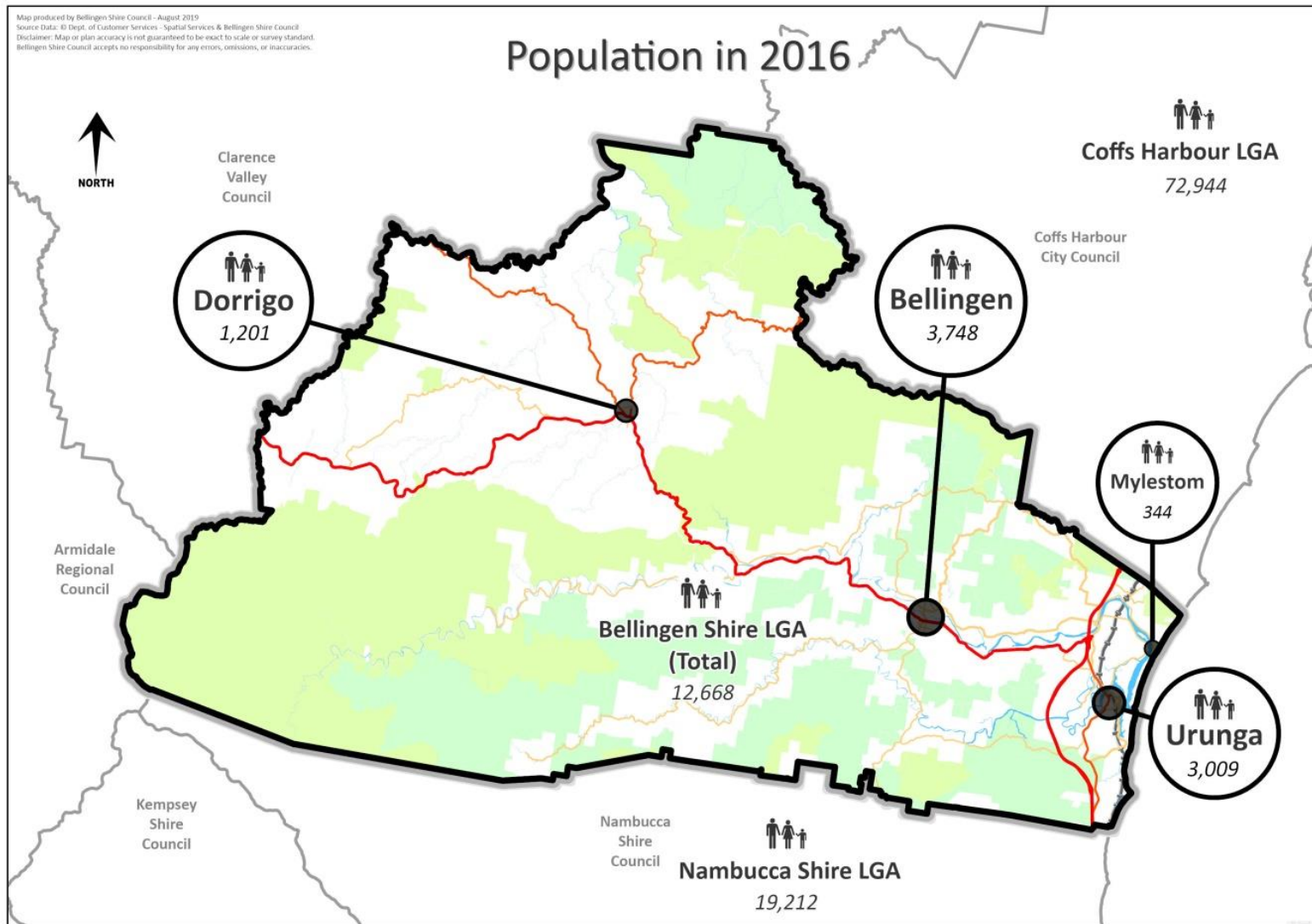
Growth occurred in some of the Shire's rural areas and villages (excluding the Plateau) (+134 people). The population of Dorrigo fell by 77 people (-6.0%), whilst elsewhere on the Plateau remained stable (-3 people). On the Plateau, population changes have been noticed by the local community, as the area has experienced gradual population decrease (-355 people since 1996).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Shire has grown, representing 3.6% of the population in 2016 up from 2.6% in 2006.

Shire Population Pyramid 2016 & 2011



## Where do people live? Population distribution in 2016



Based on ABS Census 2016 Usual Residents data, compiled by .id



## Population characteristics

### An ageing population

In Bellingen Shire, almost a quarter (24%) of the population is aged 65 or over, compared to 16% for NSW and 20% for Regional NSW. This is a significant change from 2006 where 18% of the Shire's population were older than 65.

The median age is the midpoint of the population, meaning half the population are older than the median and half are younger (the higher the median, the older the population). In Bellingen Shire the median age is 49, compared to 38 for NSW and 43 for Regional NSW. The median age differs significantly between the three main towns. In Dorrigo the median age is 55, in Urunga it is 54, while Bellingen has a median age of 44. Nearly 1 in 4 people in Bellingen Shire is aged over 65, compared to 1 in 6 in Australia, and 1 in 5 in Tasmania (the state with the oldest age profile).

The Shire's largest age cohort is 55-59 year olds who make up 9% of the Shire's population. Many people aged over 55 relocate to the Shire for retirement or for a tree/sea change. The number and proportion of people aged 55 years and over is growing, with the most growth between 2011-2016 in 65-69 year olds (+179 people / +1.2%). Most younger age cohorts decreased in number and proportion between 2011-2016, most notably 10-14 year olds (-174 / - 1.5%).

It is well-known that Australia has an ageing population, characterised by high life expectancy and low fertility rates. 16% of Australia's population is aged 65 or over. By comparison, Japan is experiencing the most rapid population ageing in the world, with 26% of the population aged over 65 in 2016.

Population ageing is associated with numerous challenges including an increased need for health care, disability assistance and other government services. These services need to be paid for (via taxes/user charges/efficiencies) and all levels of government experience increased pressure on expenditure (e.g. rising pension costs).

For local government where high rates of older people own their own homes (such as Bellingen Shire), rates concessions reduce revenue. Senior/pensioner concessions are important as they reduce cost of living for the elderly, which can be a significant source of stress – too many pensioners live in, or close to, poverty.

Exacerbated inequality is another outcome of population ageing, as women, low-income earners and people with insecure work often have much less superannuation to rely on upon retirement.

There are many housing challenges facing an ageing population, including:

- the quantity and quality of aged care accommodation and community care services;
- lack of appropriate and affordable housing (e.g. limited rentals, very high housing costs/housing stress when reliant on full pension; risk of displacement; homes too large/too much land maintenance, lack of smaller homes available for downsizing);
- old housing stock/poor housing design not meeting lifestyle, health or care needs;
- lack of support for older people wanting to retrofit their homes or subdivide their land;
- loneliness and loss of social connections;
- upgrades required to streets and public spaces to make them all-ages-friendly.

Less publicised is the good news and opportunities emerging from an ageing population, we are living longer and many people over 65 are healthy, mobile, independent and productive and able to spend more quality time with their family and friends. The number of people aged 65 and over staying in the workforce is increasing and older people are more likely to volunteer. In Bellingen Shire, 13.6% of the population is aged 65-75; 7.3% fall within the 75-85 year age group and 2.9% are 85 years or older, and many older people are likely engaging in some work (especially in agriculture, farmers tend to stay on the land well past retirement age).

Many older people provide unpaid child care for their family. Older people with disposable income purchase goods and services, contributing to local economies and some are able to provide financial support to younger family members (many younger people use the bank of 'mum and dad', or 'gran and grandad', to be able to afford their first home). Older people contribute skills, knowledge and experience to communities in ways that do not have a dollar value.

The large and increasing proportion of older people in the Shire means it is necessary to include specific actions within this strategy to meet the housing needs of older people, especially those who may be disadvantaged by the current housing market.



## Population age and household composition

### Fewer households with children

Between 2011-2016, households comprising couples with children fell by 68. This household type now represents just 21% of the population (down from 27% in 2011). The number of single parent families fell by 33, but the proportion of stayed relatively constant representing 12% of the population (down from 12.9% in 2011).

### There are fewer children

In 1996, 5-9 and 10-14 year olds were the most populous age groups. Twenty years ago, children and teenagers made up 30.7% of the population, today they represent 23%. This is a significant shift.

This trend appears to have accelerated over the last 5 years. Between 2011-2016, people in this age group declined by 340 people and now make up less than a quarter of the population. If this trend continues, there could be implications for local schools. However, the slight increase in 25-34 year olds could mean more babies in the future, should these people decide to have children and stay in the Shire.

### Couples without children is our dominant household type

Couples without children make up 29% of all households. Older couples (65+) without children represent 14% of total households and middle-aged couples (45-64) without children make up 12.5%. Young couples without children make up just 2.6% of the Shire's population.

### Attracting millennials? Slight growth in 25-34 year olds

Interestingly, the only 5 year age groups that grew proportionally from 2011-2016 (apart from over 55s) were 25-29 and 30-34 year olds. People aged 25-34 now make up 7.6% of the population, up from 6.7% in 2011. This new trend means a small number of 25-34 year olds moved to the Shire and many stayed here (resulting in overall growth of +113 people in this age group). Growth in younger populations is important to maintain the local labour force and to provide social diversity. Affordability and jobs (as well as lifestyle) are big factors in attracting and keeping this age group.

### More people living alone

27% of households are lone person households. Between 2011-2016 lone person households grew by 57.

13.6% of the population aged 65 and over are living alone, up from 11.4% in 2011. Older one-person households may need additional support and can be at risk of social isolation.

### Housing types

Drivers of population change inform planning because they tell us whether we need to plan for preschools or senior citizens centres, one and two-bedroom villas and townhouses or four bedroom houses.

High demand areas may need more homes and different housing types to stabilise house prices and promote equality by increasing access to housing for different ages, household types and income groups.

Lower-demand areas may need greater employment opportunities, different housing types and/or a catalyst projects to retain and attract people.

### What type of housing do we have?

There are 6,091 dwellings in Bellingin Shire of which 88% were occupied on Census night 2016.

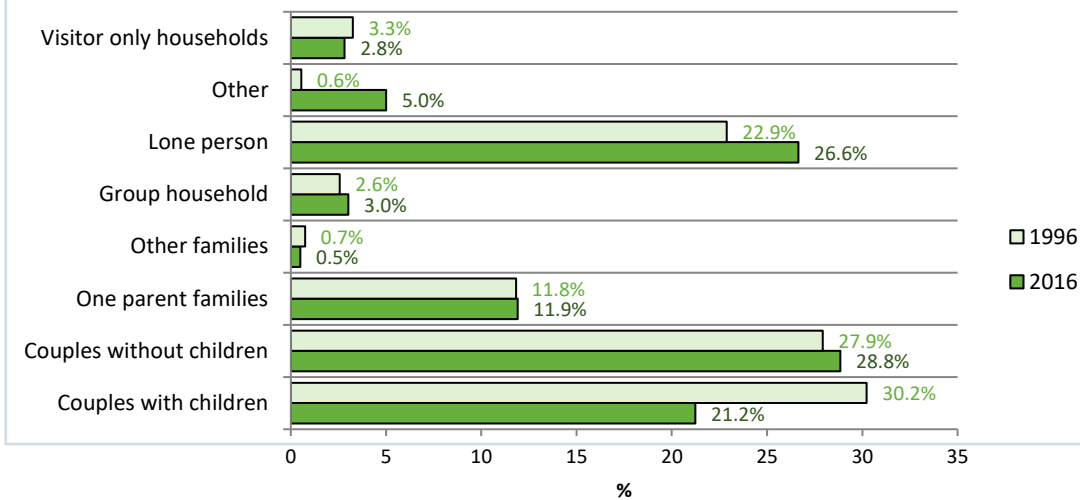
The majority of Bellingin Shire's housing stock is separate detached homes (88%) with few townhouses or flats of two storeys or less (7.1%) and only 0.2% of housing stock is located within buildings of three storeys or higher (noting that since 1990, a 10m height limit has applied to development in residential areas).

Three bedroom homes are the most prevalent (42%) followed by four bedroom homes (21%). Two bedroom homes represented 18% of dwelling stock (mostly older cottages or units, as opposed to recent builds).

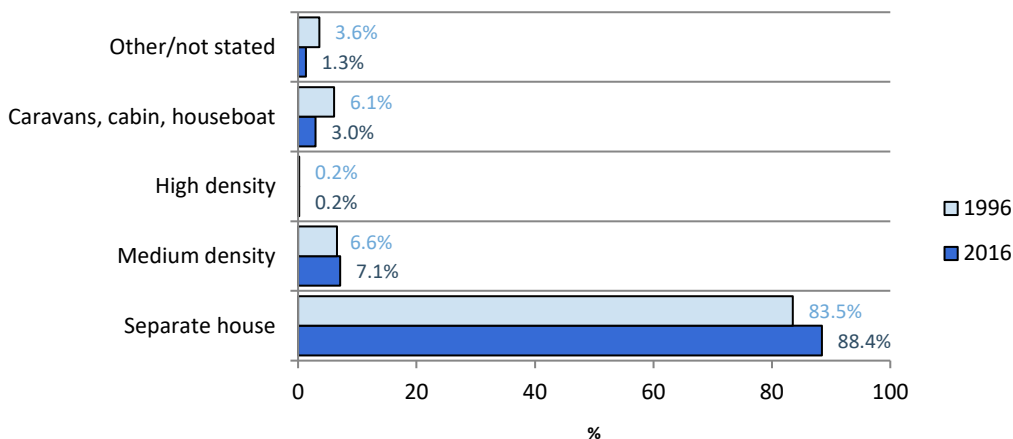
The average household size in Bellingin Shire is 2.3 people per dwelling (in 2016) down from 2.57 in 2001. Household size is expected to reduce further as more single-people households and empty nester households emerge.

Most of Bellingin Shire's housing stock is older and much of its character can be attributed to the original homes built in the early-mid 1900s, especially in Bellingin and Dorrigo. Urunga contains a higher proportion of small walk-up flats and medium density developments, reflecting its coastal village character and tourist appeal. Many homes across the Shire also were built during the population boom of the 1970s and 80s and most were built for families with young children - the most common household type in the 1980s and 1990s. It is the trend across Australia to build 4 bedroom homes regardless of household size and this trend is evident in Bellingin – although housing supply has been relatively low, most new homes are 4 bedrooms in size. There is an identified gap in supply of smaller homes, especially more affordable two-bedrooms.

### Household types Bellinghen Shire 2016 & 1996

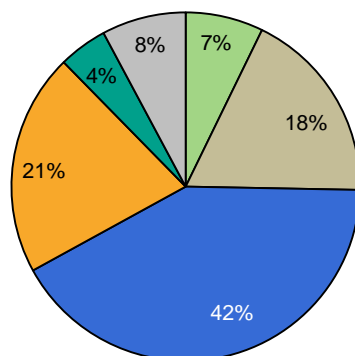


### House types Bellinghen Shire 2016 & 1996



### Number of bedrooms per dwelling Bellinghen Shire 2016

- 0 or 1 bedrooms
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4 bedrooms
- 5 bedrooms +
- Not stated



The largest changes in the number of bedrooms per dwelling in Bellinghen Shire between 1996 and 2016 were:

- 4 bedrooms (+303 dwellings)
- 3 bedrooms (+163 dwellings)
- 2 bedrooms (-91 dwellings)
- 5 bedrooms or more (+89 dwellings)

## Car ownership

Understanding patterns of car ownership across the Shire presents interesting findings. Bellingen Shire is a rural Shire which means most people rely on car travel to access goods and services and many people travel to work via private vehicle. However, residents of Bellingen Shire are more likely to own fewer cars per household than residents elsewhere in Regional NSW.

Overall, 36.9% of Bellingen Shire households owned one car; 34.4% owned two cars; and 14.9% owned three cars or more, compared with 33.4%; 34.0% and 17.2% respectively for Regional NSW.

Travel to work data also shows Bellingen Shire residents are less car-reliant than typical residents of Regional NSW. The major differences in persons between the method of travel to work of Bellingen Shire and Regional NSW in 2015 were:

- Bellingen Shire has a larger percentage of persons who worked at home (10.5% compared to 5.8% for Regional NSW);
- Bellingen Shire has a larger percentage of persons who walked only to work (5.1% compared to 3.5% for Regional NSW);
- Bellingen Shire has a smaller percentage of persons who travelled by car (as driver) (62.0% compared to 68.4% for Regional NSW).

Analysis of the method of travel to work of the residents in Bellingen Shire in 2016, compared to Regional NSW, shows, 68.1% used a private vehicle, compared with 75.1% in Regional NSW.

Focusing on improving walkability (investing in safe and attractive footpath and cycle networks) and providing more homes close to centres are key objectives of the Housing Strategy, to reduce car reliance, minimise congestion and to improve public health and environmental outcomes.

During community engagement, some people raised concerns about infill housing (more homes in existing towns), worried that infill would cause increased congestion and increased parking issues from vehicles on residential streets. Many people stated households are more likely to own more than one car and that parking is already a problem in Bellingen and Urunga town centres and cannot cope with growth.

Geographically, people are more likely to own no car or just one car if they live in the town centres of Dorrig, Bellingen and Urunga. These centres are traditional, walkable main streets with attractive shops, cafes and heritage/historic features.

Most of the older parts of these suburbs were built before most households owned multiple private cars, evident in historic homes without garages and driveways. Many people would not automatically notice, but a lot of the charm and character of the historic parts of our towns and town centres comes from a lack of space being given over to cars and parking spaces in their original design (compare the character of our main streets to large shopping malls with expansive car parks for example).

Being a regional area, there are certain services like higher education, employment and health services that require travel to Coffs Harbour or other areas, which are difficult for people with no access to private vehicles given the lack of public transport in the Shire. Car sharing, community transport, rail services and autonomous public transport have been suggested during community engagement to cater for future mobility needs whilst reducing reliance on private vehicles. Improved public transport would benefit young people and older people who do not have drivers licences as well as lower-income households who cannot afford private vehicle ownership.

People are more likely to own more cars if they live outside the main centres of the Shire. Increasing housing on the fringes or further from town centres, would therefore be more likely to increase the numbers of cars owned by households based on these statistics. Infill housing is more likely to have people owning fewer cars because many goods and services are within walking or cycling distance.

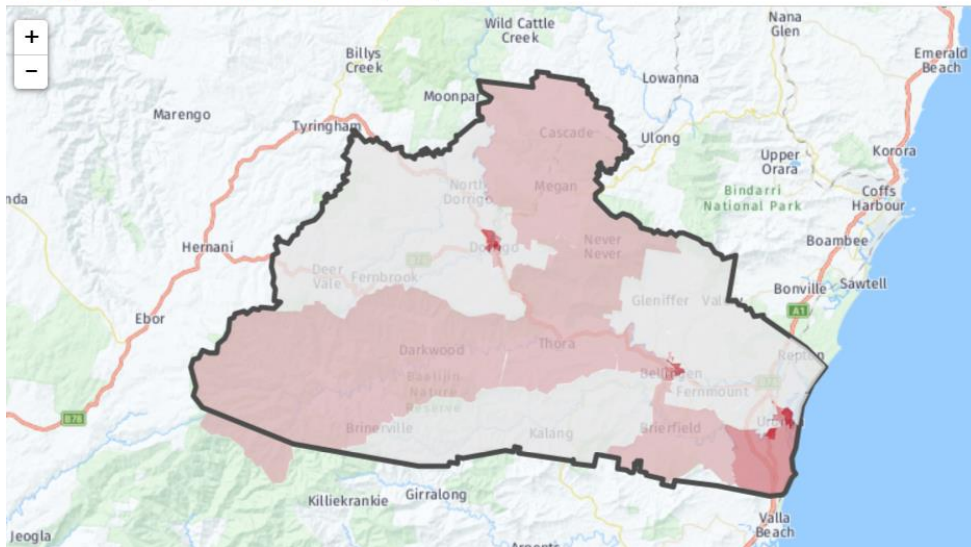
However, recent trends indicate households are owning more cars than they did in the past (and this could be due to growth in rural areas, and wider consumer trends/rising affluence) and fewer households are making do with no or just one car. Most new modern homes also are built with a double garage and large driveway, often altering the character of our towns (unless clever design tactics are employed to minimise impacts). The largest changes in the household car ownership in Bellingen Shire between 2011 and 2016 were:

- Ownership of just 1 motor vehicle (-161 households)
- Ownership of 3 or more motor vehicles (+105 households)
- Ownership of no motor vehicles (-62 households)

Well-designed infill housing, public/shared/electric vehicle alternatives, community education and improvements to walking infrastructure are recommended to help achieve the community's vision of reduced private car reliance and minimise congestion impacts.

## Car ownership patterns – Maps

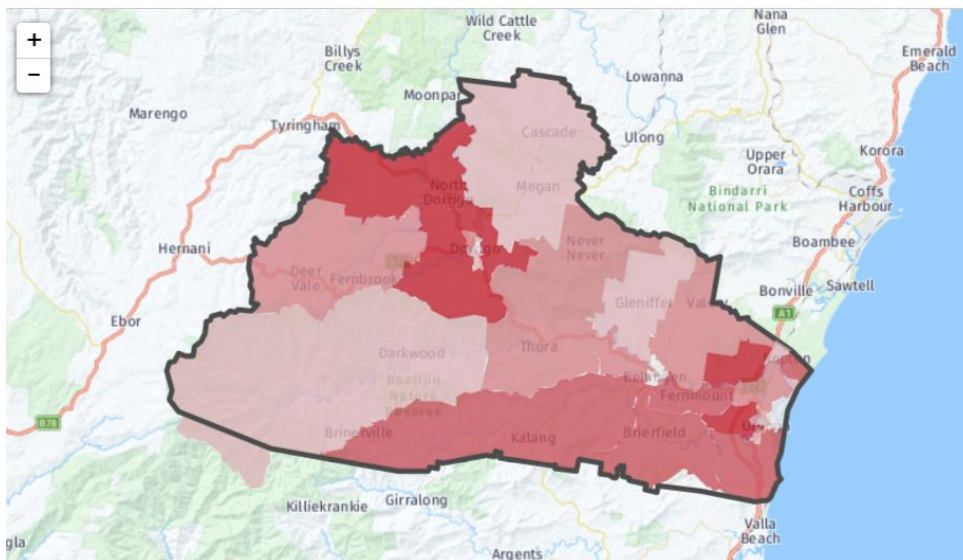
Bellingen Shire, Households without a car, 2016, Enumerated



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts. Note: Due to changes in the ABS rules regarding perturbation of small numbers to protect the confidentiality of individuals in 2016, the totals of all SA1s in an area may not equal the total derived from the area as a whole.

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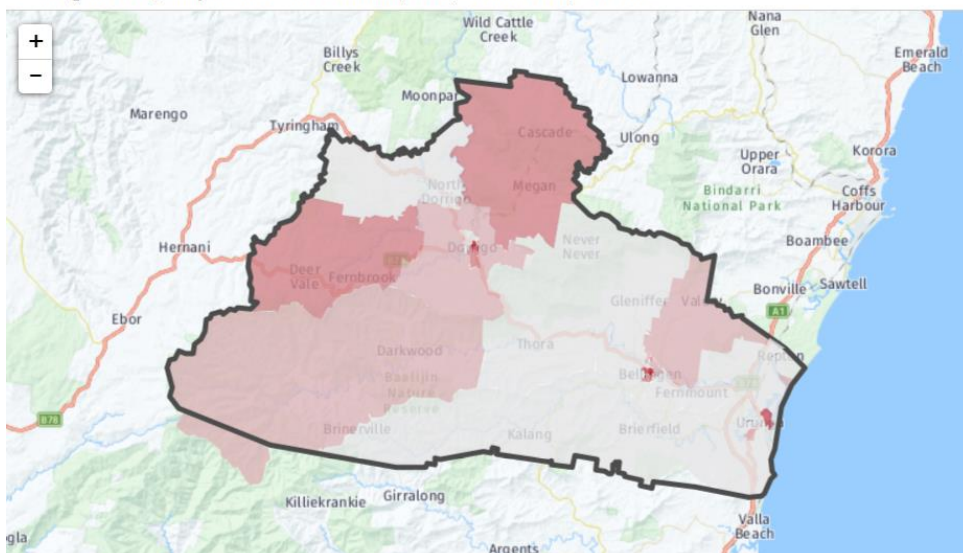
Bellingen Shire, Households with three or more cars, 2016, Enumerated



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts. Note: Due to changes in the ABS rules regarding perturbation of small numbers to protect the confidentiality of individuals in 2016, the totals of all SA1s in an area may not equal the total derived from the area as a whole.

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Bellingen Shire, People who walked to work, 2016, Enumerated, Persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts. Note: Due to changes in the ABS rules regarding perturbation of small numbers to protect the confidentiality of individuals in 2016, the totals of all SA1s in an area may not equal the total derived from the area as a whole.

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## Housing Affordability

Bellingen Shire has a housing affordability problem, much like most cities and regional areas across Australia. Housing affordability issues are no longer confined to the unemployed or low-income earners, and affect a wide range of people, including:

- young people
- people on moderate (middle) incomes
- single-income households,
- first home buyers, and
- renters

Understanding affordability is not just about house prices. We need to look at income and wealth (e.g. some retirees have low incomes but significant asset wealth), job type and security, tenure, cost of living and transport costs, migration trends and wider economic trends.

### Defining “Affordable Housing”

Affordable housing can be defined in many different ways, making it a confusing and difficult topic to address in policy. “Affordability” is relative – what is affordable for one household may not be for another due to differences in incomes or prevailing economic conditions (e.g. interest rates, tax policy). To account for differences in people’s ability to pay for housing:

*“Housing is considered “affordable” when a household spends less than 30% of their gross income on housing costs”<sup>1</sup>*

This means spending more than 30% of pre-tax income on housing places you in housing stress.

To ensure affordable housing policies target households in most need, policymakers use the 30:40 rule:

*Housing is considered affordable for lower income households (those in the bottom 40% of income distribution) when housing costs do not exceed 30% of gross income”<sup>1</sup>*

This recognises that some higher-income households may be more able to absorb increased housing costs. This definition is however not perfect and local context is important.

### Tenure

44% of residents in Bellingen Shire own their homes outright. This is much higher than the regional NSW average of 35.5%. This reflects the large number of people who bought homes in decades past. This statistic may mask other issues, e.g. difficulties faced by first-home buyers, young people, renters and pensioners, that are (or are at risk of being) pushed out of the local housing market. In addition, some homeowners may wish to downsize, but cannot access suitable housing locally at the right price.

<sup>1</sup> AHURI - Understanding the 30:40 indicator:

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/2016/3040-indicator>

Over the last twenty years, trends show less people own their house outright and more people with mortgages and renting.

## Housing Stress

People in housing stress, defined as those spending more than 30% of their weekly income on housing, can face a number of related challenges. These include including taking on extra debt or longer, riskier mortgages; working long hours/multiple jobs; travelling long distances to work; moving away from family; living in substandard housing; remaining in family violence situations, cutting spending on other necessities including food, heating & cooling or education and risk becoming homeless. These challenges can contribute to wider social and economic issues and inequalities.

### Rental stress is a particular problem

Over 20% of households in the Shire rent. Renters are most likely to experience housing stress most acutely, as renting is the least secure tenure type. Paying high rent makes saving for a deposit difficult. Increasingly, many people are expecting to rent for life.

In 2016, 37.5% of all rental households were in housing (rental) stress, and 59% of low income and 90% of very low income rental households were in rental stress.

A local term has been coined to describe the high rate of people moving address in the Shire – the “Bellingen shuffle”. Renters have a series of short rentals, often moving because the house is sold, rents go up or they are evicted to allow for renovations/rent increases or short-term holiday letting.

### Income

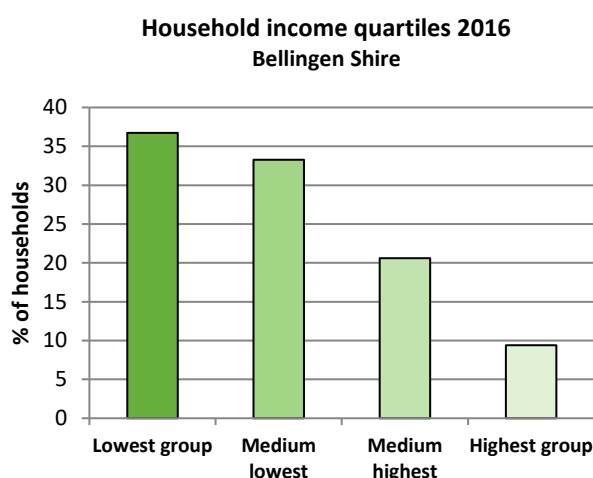
Historically, the Shire has been home to more lower-income households than higher income households. A quarter (25.7%) of households in Bellingen Shire earn less than \$650 per week. Households are becoming more affluent, but the Shire risks lower-income households not being able to afford to live here.

### Homelessness

54 people were homeless in Bellingen Shire according to the census in 2016 (up from 44 in 2011). This represents a rate of 42 in every 10,000 (the NSW rate is 49 in every 10,000). All homelessness census counts are acknowledged as undercounts. Homelessness is a significant and increasing issue on the North Coast as house and rental prices rise.

## Understanding housing affordability issues

### INCOME



#### Low income household scenario

30% of a household earning \$750 a week is **\$225**. If housing costs exceed this amount, the household is considered to be in housing stress. Below this figure and housing is considered affordable. \$750/wk income is the minimum wage, and the top of the lowest quartile range – many households in Bellingen Shire earn less than this amount.

#### Household income quartile group dollar ranges NSW 2016

Group	Weekly Gross Income ranges (2016)
Lowest	\$0 - \$750
Medium-lowest	\$751 - \$1,481
Medium-highest	\$1,482 - \$2,554
Highest	\$2,555 and over

#### Middle income household scenario

30% of a household earning \$1,400 a week is \$420. If housing costs exceed this amount, the household is considered to be in housing stress. This income is the top of the medium-lowest quartile range – many households in Bellingen Shire earn less than this amount.

### HOUSE PRICES

#### House & unit value groups

Bellingen Shire June 2018

Price range/group	House value/cost	Unit value/cost
Entry	\$425,642	\$369,166
Median	\$527,998	\$371,024
Upper	\$670,701	\$410,604

#### Low income household scenario

A low-income household looking to purchase an entry-level unit in the Shire would need to pay a min. approx. \$333 in mortgage payments a week (assuming an unlikely 10% deposit, 30 yr loan), for an entry level house >\$400/wk. Add mortgage insurance/other fees and purchasing is very difficult for first home buyers in this group. Rentals affordable to low income earners are scarce, and an entry level unit rental would cost more than 30% of a minimum wage earner's weekly wage.

### RENTAL PRICES

#### Rental house and unit value groups

Bellingen Shire June 2018

Price range/group	Rent - House value/cost	Rent -Unit value/cost
Entry	\$350	\$250
Median	\$390	\$290
Upper	\$430	\$340

#### Middle income household scenario

Middle income households may be able to afford mortgage repayments on units or entry level homes in the Shire (assuming 10% deposit, 30 yr loans), but a household earning \$1,400/wk would need to make repayments of at least \$500/wk on a loan for a median priced home in the Shire, placing them in housing stress. Middle-income renters could likely afford unit rentals and entry and median house rentals – however rental supply is limited and entry-median rental types are very scarce across the Shire.

## Your stories – housing affordability challenges

"Noticing significant rental stress – generational poverty means that many people are living on a knife's edge in terms of being able to pay rent. While they may be able to manage when everything is going well, if something unplanned happens (such as car needing expensive mechanical work/breaking down), may miss rent to pay for it, then it is very difficult to recover from this, leading to getting further and further behind. A particularly big issue also exists with widows who will go from two pensions to one and then find it very difficult to cope."

"We have lost hostel level accommodation, legacy housing and with changes to Housing NSW, housing is unaffordable. Need proactive development of smaller affordable housing types. Granny flats and cottages filled with tourists – the elderly have to move away and the wealthy are moving in. Nobody organising festivals, volunteering or generally being neighbourly anymore."

\$420week/rent too hard when on a disability pension. Rents in Urunga once highway went in skyrocketed.

"Too expensive to be a young person in this Shire. Most people move away. People willing to share, but there isn't the housing stock for that even. Know young people are living in cars. Very vulnerable situation. Almost at risk of homelessness myself. Then got a one bedroom for \$310 a week. Its so expensive."

If the needs of those who do not own property are ignored the shire will suffer, as the comfortable home owners age and retire there will be a lack of people to do the work necessary to run the shops, the bakeries, the car maintenance garages, or to care for the elderly because there will be nowhere for them to live

Improve employment options within Shire. I drive to Coffs so I can earn enough \$ to stay here.

Bellingen is the next place to be gentrified, don't want it to but it will.

I am a homeless older woman. I don't like caravan parks or motels, expensive and less safe. Am couch surfing/housesitting, wouldn't mind a group of older women coming together to buy/rent a place to make affordable.

## Housing Matters Videos – Bellingen Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group



Housing Matters- Affordable Housing Film 2.

"The **Bellingen Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group** is a community-led initiative that explores innovative and practical ways to grow affordable, well-designed homes for people living in our Shires. This is the first of three short films made to show the human face of the housing crisis in our communities. We know that a safe and secure home is the bedrock of wellbeing, participation in work and community activities, and underpins the care of children. No-one deserves to live in housing stress, poverty or homelessness. Our Action Group is committed to finding practical solutions to these issues in our local communities." See <https://www.bnc.org.au/about-the-housing-action-group/> for more information.



## Suburb Snapshots

### Dorrigo and the Plateau

Dorrigo and the Plateau have a higher proportion of people aged over 65 and a lower proportion of children than Bellingen Shire.

Agriculture is a very important industry and remains a large employer.

The area has a higher proportion of low-income earners than the Shire as a whole.

Dorrigo and the Plateau have a large proportion of people living alone.

Over half the population fully own their own homes.

Dorrigo and the Plateau have a higher proportion of unoccupied homes (14.9% and 15.8% respectively) than the Bellingen Shire overall (11.6%). Interestingly, the area has relatively few Air BnB listings.

Despite the small average household size and large portion of people living alone, Dorriggo has very little medium density housing. The lack of high density housing is unsurprising given the country town nature of Dorriggo.

### Urunga and the Seaboard

Urunga and the Seaboard have a higher proportion of people aged over 65 and a lower proportion of children than Bellingen Shire. The area is a popular retirement location.

Most people work in the health care and social services sector – which is the largest employer across the Shire. The second largest industry of employment in this area is construction. Many of these jobs are probably associated with the Pacific Highway project.

Urunga and the Seaboard have a higher proportion of one and two bedroom homes than other areas of the Shire.

Urunga also has a larger proportion of medium density housing types and a small number of high density homes (in the form of three-storey walk-up flats). The area is a popular retirement and tourist destination. The large number of caravan homes are reflected in the high proportion of “other dwellings” (7.7%).

A relatively large proportion of people are renting in the area, particularly in Urunga.

### Bellingen and the Valley

Bellingen and the Valley have a lower proportion of people aged over 65 than other areas of the Shire, and a larger proportion of children. The area has a relatively high number of students (of all ages).

The area has a higher proportion of the population in the local labour force (people able and wanting to work) than other areas of the Shire.

The area has a high percentage of people who volunteer.

The Valley has a higher proportion of people earning a high income than other parts of the Shire.

Bellingen and the Valley have a lower proportion of people who fully own their homes compared to other parts of the Shire. More people are paying off mortgages or renting.

Bellingen has the highest median house price of the three main towns.

There are a larger number of Air Bnb listings in the Valley and Bellingen compared to other areas of the Shire.

Despite being the main centre of the Shire, a vast majority of dwellings are single houses, with little medium density dwellings and no high density.

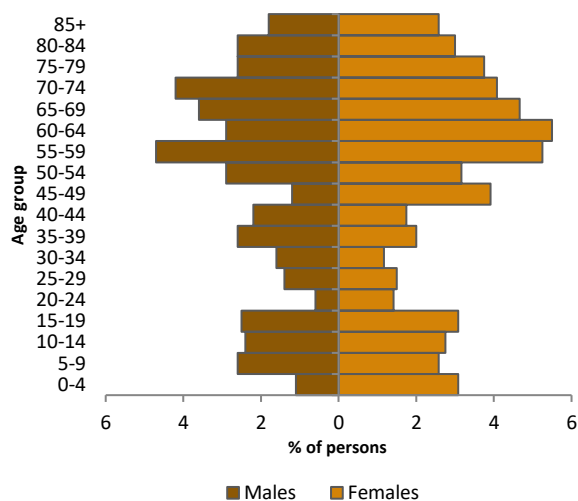
# DORRIGO

KEY POPULATION STATS 2016	
Total Population	<b>1,201</b>
Population change 2011-2016	<b>- 77 people</b>
Median Age	<b>55</b>
Population over 65	<b>33.5%</b>
Population under 15	<b>13.1%</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	<b>3.4%</b>
Students (attending educational institution)	<b>15%</b>
Needing assistance for core activities due to disability	<b>7.6%</b>
Labour Force	<b>406 people (42.9%)</b>
Volunteers (%)	<b>27.4%</b>
Individuals earning high income (%) (>\$1,750/wk)	<b>3.6%</b>
Individuals earning low income (%)(<\$500/wk)	<b>50%</b>
Top 3 employment industries	<b>1. Health care &amp; social assistance</b> <b>2. Accommodation &amp; food services</b> <b>3. Agriculture forestry &amp; fishing</b>



KEY HOUSING STATS 2016	
Total Dwellings	<b>649</b>
Change in # of homes 2011-2016	<b>+23</b>
Occupied dwellings	<b>85.1%</b>
Air bnb listings (entire house) as at 31/1/19	<b>6 (2)</b>
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	<b>2.05</b>
Single person households	<b>35.9%</b>
4 bedroom homes or larger	<b>19.5%</b>
3 bedroom homes	<b>49.4%</b>
2 bedroom homes or smaller	<b>23.7%</b>
Renting	<b>21.6%</b>
Renting – Social Housing	<b>0.7%</b>
People who fully own their homes	<b>50.4%</b>
Median rental price (house)^ of 25 listings between 1/1/18 – 29/1/19	<b>\$300</b>
Median house price^ of 28 sales between 1/1/18 – 2/1/19	<b>\$337,000</b>
Change in median house price 2011-2018^	<b>+ 19.2%</b> (\$282,500 in 2011)

## POPULATION PYRAMID DORRIGO 2016

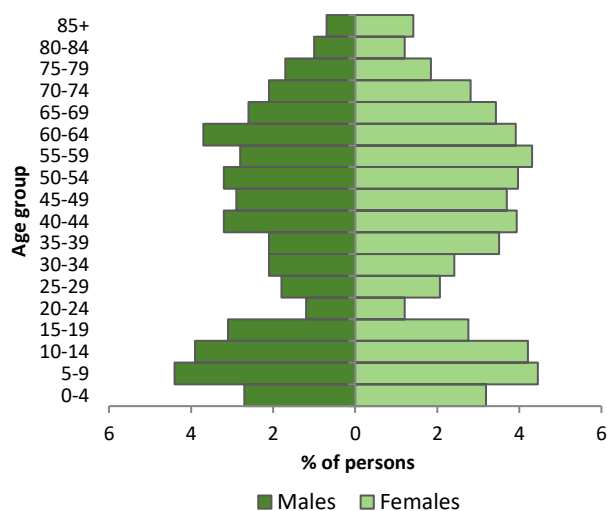


# BELLINGEN

KEY POPULATION STATS 2016	
Total Population	<b>3,748</b>
Population change 2011-2016	<b>+87</b>
Median Age	<b>44</b>
Population over 65	<b>19.8%</b>
Population under 15	<b>22.8%</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	<b>4.1%</b>
Students (attending educational institution)	<b>25%</b>
Needing assistance for core activities due to disability	<b>5.4%</b>
Labour Force (people aged 15+)	<b>1,514 people (52.1%)</b>
Volunteers (%)	<b>31.7%</b>
Individuals earning high income (%) (>\$1,750/wk)	<b>5.2%</b>
Individuals earning low income (%) (<\$500/wk)	<b>43.6%</b>
Top 3 employment industries	<b>1. Health care &amp; social assistance</b> <b>2. Education &amp; training</b> <b>3. Retail Trade</b>

KEY HOUSING STATS 2016	
Total Dwellings	<b>1,650</b>
Change in # of homes 2011-2016	<b>+51</b>
Occupied dwellings	<b>90.8%</b>
Air bnb listings (entire house) <small>*as at 1/2/19</small>	<b>93 (64)</b>
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	<b>2.43</b>
Single person households	<b>25.4%</b>
4 bedroom homes or larger	<b>23.6%</b>
3 bedroom homes	<b>45.7%</b>
2 bedroom homes or smaller	<b>22.9%</b>
Renting	<b>25.9%</b>
Renting – Social Housing	<b>2.3%</b>
People who fully own their homes	<b>36.3%</b>
Median rent price (house)^ <small>from 61 listings between 1/1/18 – 27/1/19</small>	<b>\$410/wk</b>
Median rental price (unit)^ <small>From 10 listings between 1/1/18 – 27/1/19</small>	<b>\$325/wk</b>
Median house price^ <small>from 54 sales between 1/1/18 – 2/1/19</small>	<b>\$532,500</b>
Change in median house price 2011-2018^	<b>+ 44%</b> <b>(\$370,000 in 2011)</b>

## POPULATION PYRAMID BELLINGEN 2016





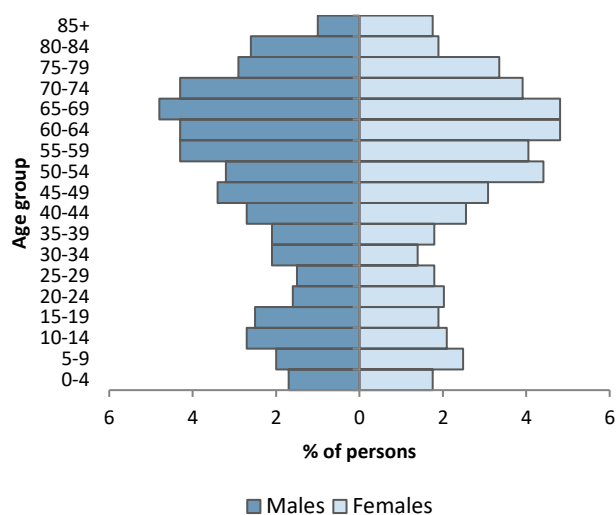
# URUNGA

KEY POPULATION STATS 2016	
Total Population	<b>3,009</b>
Population change 2011-2016	<b>+26</b>
Median Age	<b>54</b>
Population over 65	<b>31.4%</b>
Population under 15	<b>12.9%</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	<b>4.2%</b>
Students (attending educational institution)	<b>15%</b>
Needing assistance for core activities due to disability	<b>6.9%</b>
Labour Force (people aged 15+)	<b>1,180 people (45.1%)</b>
Volunteers (%)	<b>21.3%</b>
Individuals earning high income (%) (>\$1,750/wk)	<b>4.5%</b>
Individuals earning low income (%)(<\$500/wk)	<b>45.3%</b>
Top 3 employment industries	<b>1. Health care &amp; social assistance</b> <b>2. Construction</b> <b>3. Education &amp; training</b>



KEY HOUSING STATS 2016	
Total Dwellings	<b>1,579</b>
Change in # of homes 2011-2016	<b>+31</b>
Occupied dwellings	<b>91.5%</b>
Air bnb listings (entire house) *as at 1/2/19	<b>22 (19)</b>
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	<b>2.1</b>
Single person households	<b>30.9%</b>
4 bedroom homes or larger	<b>22.1%</b>
3 bedroom homes	<b>38.8%</b>
2 bedroom homes or smaller	<b>30.7%</b>
Renting	<b>28.1%</b>
Renting – Social Housing	<b>3.9%</b>
People who fully own their homes	<b>44.9%</b>
Median rent price (house)^ From 52 listings between 1/1/18 – 28/1/19	<b>\$370/wk</b>
Median rent price (unit)^ From 29 listings between 1/1/18 – 28/1/19	<b>\$270/wk</b>
Median house price From 48 sales between 1/1/18 – 2/1/19	<b>\$555,000</b>
Change in median house price 2011-2018^	<b>+64% (\$339,000 in 2011)</b>

POPULATION PYRAMID URUNGA 2016



## 2.2 Housing Demand

Natural beauty and lifestyle benefits are major drivers of housing demand in the Shire. Bellingen Shire is blessed with remarkable natural beauty from the rural landscapes of the plateau and floodplains to the World Heritage Listed Gondwana Rainforest to the wetlands and beaches of Urunga. More than half of Bellingen Shire is protected in the National Reserve System.

Whilst much has changed since its bohemian heyday, Bellingen Shire maintains an authentic and casual, yet energetic and passionate vibe. A true passion for sustainable living exists amongst many people living in the Shire, with a focus on protecting and celebrating nature, environmental advocacy and sourcing local food and products.

Across the Shire, residents and visitors value and support small independent businesses and farms, as well as live music, festivals, events and the arts. This passion for, and involvement with, local people and issues means that there is always something happening and a real creative buzz exists. Places and events are run by the community for the community and are not yet overly commercialised. Community networks are nurtured and people are genuinely invested in their local area and Shire.

The Shire's town areas are full of character and variety. Bellingen's main street is a heritage conservation area, containing historic buildings, bustling streets, a wide variety of independent shops and a thriving food and coffee scene. Dorrigo town centre has historic buildings and streetscapes and exudes rural charm, whilst providing a high-quality array of friendly shops and cafes. Urunga is a relaxed sea-side town with small shops, cafes, a famous boardwalk, rare mangroves and wetlands and a heritage-listed pub overlooking the waterfront park. The General Store and Café and the local Bowling Club are activity hubs in the peaceful coastal village of Mylestom. Everything you need day-to-day can be found within the Shire and higher order services are only a short drive away in the city of Coffs Harbour.

Currently, demand for housing is driven primarily by people aged 55 and over, particularly retirees near the coast. Near Bellingen town centre, families with young children and young people and couples are emerging groups seeking to live near the buzz of the town centre and close to schools and shops. In Dorrigo and on the plateau people are moving for the climate, including the generally more reliable rainfall, and to be closer to the coast and services.

Reduced housing construction over the past few years means demand for new housing appears low because the population is not growing rapidly. However, this does not reflect actual demand, as high prices and limited supply are leading people who would otherwise stay or move into the area to move elsewhere. Supply-side barriers are discussed later in this report. Bellingen Shire has relatively high house prices compared to neighbouring Coffs Harbour and Nambucca which affects demand - particularly in the younger age groups and for first-home buyers and renters, who struggle to obtain suitable and affordable housing within the Shire and will move elsewhere.

Failing to provide for unmet demand through limiting new housing supply leads to competition for existing housing which pushes up prices. It also means many people miss out on living here, or have to move away to access cheaper housing. Affordability is relative, meaning Bellingen Shire's house prices are attractive to someone selling their home in an area such as Sydney (higher incomes and much higher house prices/equity) and looking for a tree change or retirement location.

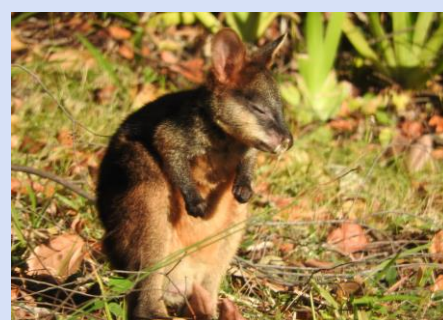
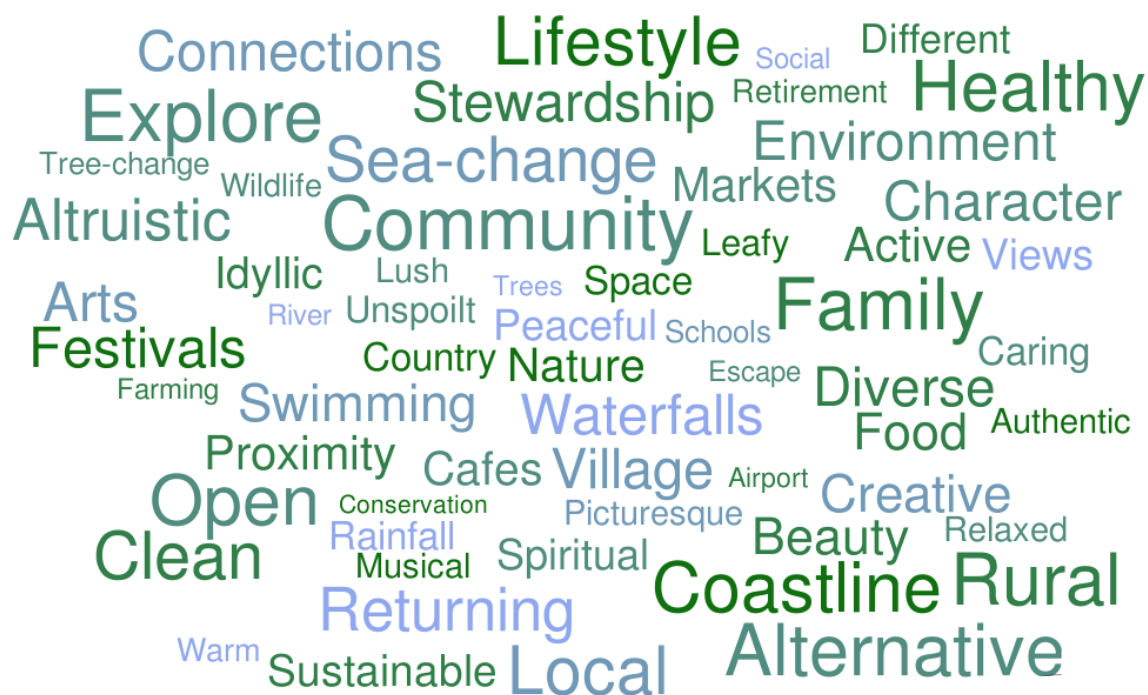
The type of new housing needing to be supplied is very important. Due to affordability pressures, income profile and changing household dynamics, there is considerable demand for smaller dwellings, at more affordable price points to be provided in accessible locations within the Shire, including medium-density housing types. Simply supplying only large detached homes at luxury specification/prices will cater for the upper end of the market whilst further disadvantaging those at the entry or below-median end of the market. The ageing population also indicates increasing demand for low-maintenance, accessible and adaptable homes in areas close to services. There are barriers to downsizing within the Shire including lack of housing choices and well-designed new homes and financial constraints. The Housing Strategy seeks to increase housing choices to better match underlying and effective demand for housing across the Shire.

Housing diversity targets are for growth in new housing to deliver:

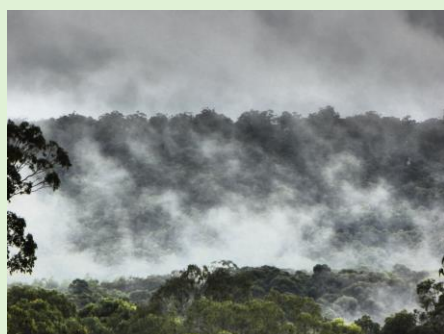
**50% diverse housing types**

(including: granny flats, dual occupancies, townhouses, villas, flats and houses on lots smaller than 600m<sup>2</sup>).

## Reasons why Bellinghen Shire is in high demand as a place to live



From left: Birdy b-p: Wompoo fruit doves 1; Dawn Lewis: Down my lane; Fenella Briscoe: Peanut the Swamp Wallaby



From left: Taff Cooper-Williams: Nymboida Valley Mist; Ruth Holmes: Sunset; Mike Bradbury: Urunga 1



## Dwelling demand analysis

Market research reports commissioned by Council in 2017 (LEFTA Corporation & Colleen Coyne Property Research April-May 2017) indicated there is demand in Bellingen Shire for:

- low-rise medium-density housing on relatively flat land near town centres (especially medium density forms that can be subdivided as Torrens Title)
- attractive masterplanned community providing house and land at the right price point (lower than or comparable to Coffs Harbour)

The reports found that there are insufficient housing types available to accommodate an ageing population and retiring downsizers from Sydney which is the current priority driver of demand in the Bellingen LGA. These groups seek well-designed smaller, self-contained villas, townhouse and homes within walking distance to entertainment and services, housing products that do not currently exist in the necessary quantities to meet underlying demand. Providing cost-effective homes to retain the younger 20-34 year old demographic was also recommended to avoid population decrease over time.

The reports found other demand drivers included Bellingen Shire's greatest asset, the natural environment as well as heritage and built environment character. It is important that new developments do not erode these special character features. Bellingen Shire was noted as having the advantage of retaining urban infrastructure assets in each of its three main centres, including retail facilities and hospitals in Bellingen and Dorrigo (unlike many other small communities in regional Australia). Many residents during the community engagement recognised population growth would continue to support these essential services, keeping them within the Shire and noted the need to create jobs to increase demand for housing.

Because developers rely upon recent housing approvals/construction and sales history to determine development viability, Bellingen Shire's recent low levels of housing supply acts as an impediment to investment (despite other indications of strong housing demand such as demographics factors, migration and high prices/property values). The report stated that in conversations with local landowners and developers there was not an understanding that medium density housing types were currently permissible in the R1 General Residential zone and a perception that it was not permitted. Bureaucracy was noted as an additional impediment. The LEFTA report recommended Council provide "a clear and concise strategy for

growth that can be clearly implemented to attract population, business and property developers".

Recent state level population projections within the North Coast Regional Plan were undertaken by MacroPlan Dimasi. These indicate Bellingen Shire could experience population decrease to 2036 in a low-growth scenario, assuming low-growth trends from the last 10 years will persist over the next 20 years. However this may not be the case as Bellingen Shire has experienced fluctuations in growth (periods of both high and low growth) during its history.

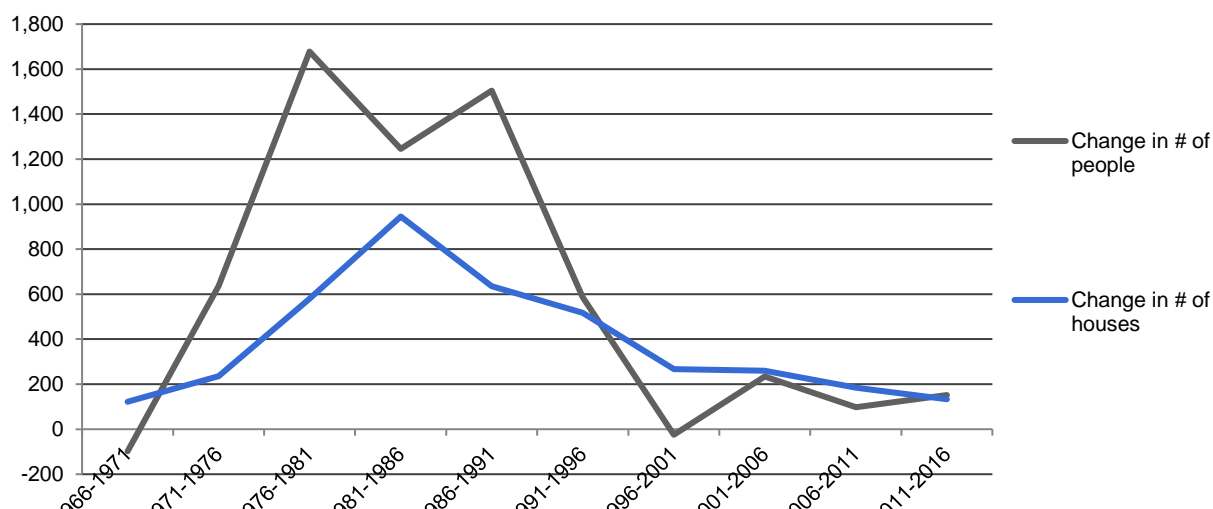
There is significant capacity for growth under current planning rules across the Shire; the Shire is a popular lifestyle destination and is well-connected to the region and even larger cities due to proximity to Coffs Harbour airport. Feasibility of development may be a current barrier, as is perception (a period of low growth can shake confidence in the property industry) and costs to provide/connect to infrastructure. However these barriers may not persist over the next 15-20 years, and housing growth is likely to occur in excess of what has occurred over the last ten years. Bellingen Shire is in demand as a place of residence, evidenced by high and climbing house prices across the Shire and a large amount of intra-state migration.

The future population of Bellingen Shire will be determined by a number of factors, notably:

- whether younger people move into the Shire (or stay in the Shire),
- whether residents have children, and/or whether families with children move to the Shire
- whether there is sufficient housing supply and sufficient housing affordability to retain and attract a diverse population (across different age groups, professions, incomes, backgrounds and places)
- whether there are sufficient jobs in the Shire and region (within commuting distance) to retain/attract population
- whether the Shire retains its appeal, liveability and range of services, maintaining or enhancing community wellbeing

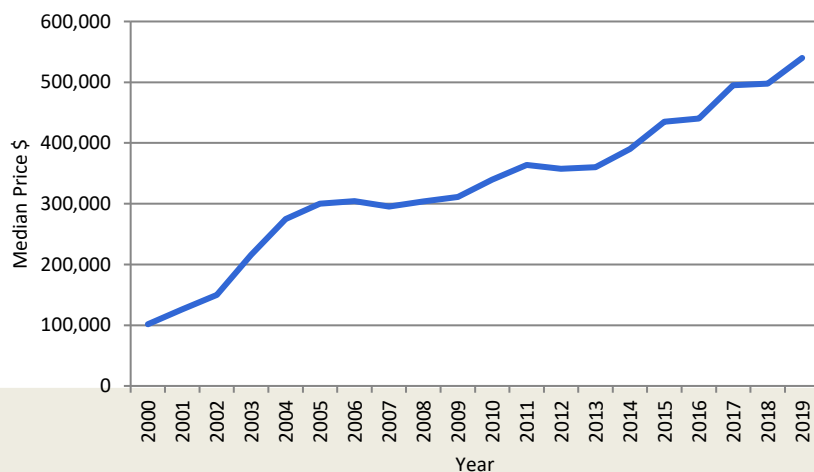
Environmental factors or resource and infrastructure constraints will also influence Bellingen Shire's future population. The Housing Strategy notes water security as an important growth determinant, recognising that whilst the area is conventionally a very high rainfall area, water sources may need to be diversified to ensure water security in the face of climate change, for current residents and for future growth.

**Change in Population and Housing Bellingen Shire 1966-2016 (Census Data)**



This graph illustrates the fluctuations in Bellingen Shire's population and housing growth since the mid-1960s. The Shire grew rapidly during the 70s and 8-0s (following a period of population decline). Whilst overall growth has slowed over recent decades, many people are migrating to the Shire (and many people are moving out, some for employment, education or other opportunities but others due to lack of appropriate or affordable housing supply).

**Median House Price Bellingen 2454**



**Median house prices**

	2017	2011
<b>Bellingen Shire</b>	<b>\$508,520</b>	<b>\$389,140</b>
Regional NSW	\$452,300	\$341,120
NSW	\$711,000	\$438,560
<b>Bellingen</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$367,000</b>
<b>Urunga</b>	<b>\$460,000</b>	<b>\$332,000</b>
<b>Dorrigo</b>	<b>\$310,000</b>	<b>\$265,000</b>
Coffs Harbour	\$476,000	\$350,000
Nambucca Heads	\$376,000	\$303,000
Macksville	\$357,000	\$300,000
Toormina	\$411,000	\$315,000
Sawtell	\$634,000	\$423,000

Source: RP Data trading as CoreLogic. This graph shows the rising median house prices in Bellingen suburb (postcode 2454) over the last 19 years. The median house price has also risen in other parts of the Shire. Bellingen Shire is a high value area in the region, renowned and popular for its natural and lifestyle attractions and its points of difference from other areas – for example the Shire retains its traditional main street shopping; plenty of historic, heritage and character architecture; rural landscapes; village lifestyles and strong, connected community ties.

## Housing demand – migration factors

Many local people are surprised at the low overall level of growth in Bellingen Shire over the last 5-10 years, because there are large numbers of people moving into the Shire and the community is experiencing noticeable demographic changes.

Bellingen Shire attracts a significant proportion of in-migrants from elsewhere in Australia. Internal migration figures indicate between 2011-2016, 18.5% of the population moved into Shire, whilst the equivalent of 17.8% of the population moved out of Shire. Whilst this movement of people does not translate into significant net growth in population, it does impact upon the characteristics of the population.

There has been no significant shift in natural increase/decrease. Natural increase is where births outnumber deaths. The Shire is currently experiencing slight natural decrease currently, following period of slight natural increase between 2006-2011.

Migration patterns are driven by lifestyle factors and the North Coast of NSW is a popular retiree location. Between 2011-2016 there was slight growth in 25-29 and 30-34 year old age groups, mainly around the town centre of Bellingen. This is a new trend, as recently most 5 year age groups under 55 had been declining as a proportion of the population. This indicates something has recently been attracting younger people to parts of the Shire (possibly jobs or lifestyle related).

People moving into the Bellingen Shire tend to move from Greater Sydney. According to Census data, approximately 441 people moved into Bellingen Shire from Greater Sydney between 2011-2016; whilst 132 people moved from Bellingen Shire to Greater Sydney, resulting in positive net migration of +309 persons.

Between 2011-2016, the Local Government Area (LGA) with the highest net migration to Bellingen Shire was the Northern Beaches (+65 persons), followed by Sydney (City) (+36 persons), Hornsby (+32 persons) and the Blue Mountains (+32 persons).

Other sources of positive net migration into the Shire from the Sydney region include: Sutherland; Penrith; Ku-Ring-Gai; Blacktown; Hawkesbury; Canterbury/Bankstown; Parramatta; Liverpool; Randwick; The Hills; Waverly; Woollahra; North Sydney; Fairfield; Botany Bay and Georges River.

The 2016 Census indicated 146 people moved to the Bellingen Shire from overseas between 2011-2016. There is no data for people who moved from Bellingen Shire overseas.

A large number of people moved from the neighbouring Shire (and Regional City) of Coffs Harbour (433 persons) between 2011-2016, however Bellingen Shire also lost a large number of people to Coffs Harbour (625 persons) resulting in net loss of -192 persons. Bellingen Shire also lost more people to neighbouring Nambucca Shire (168 persons) than it gained (150 persons) for a net loss of (-18 persons). Other sources of relatively high numbers of in-migrants to Bellingen Shire between 2011-2016 include Brisbane (79 persons); Clarence Valley (59 persons); Central Coast (54 persons); Armidale Regional (51 persons) and the Gold Coast (51 persons). However, out-migration from Bellingen Shire to these areas (332 persons) resulted in net loss of population to these areas of -38 persons.

Therefore, given the Shire is not experiencing natural increase, population growth is primarily being driven by in-migration from Greater Sydney and overseas.



Residents and visitors enjoying Bellingen Markets. Photo by Bellingen Council.

## Affordability – demand for affordable housing

Affordability is a significant issue for the local community. Bellingen Shire is historically low-income area (relative to other areas) and Shire still contains a majority of lower-income households. However, due to low levels of new housing supply, a very tight rental market and in-migration by people from generally city areas with relatively more wealth (more equity, higher incomes, more cash from sale of expensive city homes) housing is becoming less affordable for lower-income households.

This is a common pattern across regional Australia and increases risks of some residents being pushed out of the area due to rising housing costs. Evidence that this is occurring in Bellingen includes high median house prices (relative to elsewhere in the region), significant house price increases, high rates of housing stress (especially rental stress and amongst low income earners) and loss of lower-income households.

Housing Stress is defined as per the NATSEM (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling) model as households in the lowest 40% of incomes who are paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on housing costs. Housing affordability is a significant issue if mortgage and rent payments rapidly increase as a share of income.

Id. Profile note that in regional NSW, the highest rates of housing stress are found on the North Coast, in Byron (16.6%), Lismore (16.1%) and Coffs Harbour (15.8%). Overall, across Bellingen Shire 13.5% of households are experiencing housing stress. The areas with the highest rates of housing stress are the suburbs of Bellingen (15.7%) and Urunga (13.4%).

Id. profile state housing stress in north-east NSW is likely to be driven by high proportions of low-income households, but also increasing housing costs driven by higher income residents moving into the area.\*

In 2016, 13.7% of Bellingen Shire's households purchasing their dwelling were experiencing mortgage stress compared to 9.8% in Regional NSW. Renters have a particularly tough time with housing security and affordability. In 2016, 37.5% of Bellingen Shire's renting households were experiencing rental stress compared to 32.5% in Regional NSW. In 2016, Dorrigo had the highest proportion of people experiencing rental stress in Bellingen Shire.

While Bellingen Shire had a higher proportion of households experiencing rental stress, it is important to note that this varied across the Shire Council. Proportions ranged from a low of 32.3% in Urunga, 37.4% in Bellingen to a high of 42.7% in Dorrigo.

Low-income earners renting in the private market are most likely to experience housing stress – in Bellingen Shire 59% of low income and 90% of very low income rental households were in rental stress.

The high levels of housing stress in the community, particularly amongst people with mortgages, renters and people in lower income ranges indicate there is demand for more affordable housing product. Competition for scarce housing is high, and provision on a range of housing types at different price points, including housing at below-median prices, will enable more people to secure housing in the area. More affordable housing for those who need it will reduce instances of housing stress and reduce flow-on impacts across society.

Housing Prices					
Bellingen		Dorrigo		Urunga	
Annual growth	6.7%	Annual growth	1.7%	Annual growth	7.3%
Median House Price	\$495,000	Median House Price	\$305,000	Median House Price	\$470,000
Median Weekly Rent	\$390	Median Weekly Rent	\$285	Median Weekly Rent	\$378
vs Balmain		vs Pymble		vs Cronulla	
Annual growth	14.9%	Annual growth	13.1%	Annual growth	13.7%
Median House Price	\$2.15M	Median House Price	\$2.35M	Median House Price	\$2.29M
Median Weekly Rent	\$945	Median Weekly Rent	\$1000	Median Weekly Rent	\$900

data from realestate.com.au, 2017

This graphic comparing house and rent prices from Bellingen and Sydney (in 2017) seeks to appeal to people looking to relocate to the Shire and is a good example of how relative the concept of affordability is – see page 43 for what is considered affordable for low-middle income earners in the Shire. Source: [lovebello.com.au](http://lovebello.com.au)

\*<https://blog.id.com.au/2019/housing-analysis/map-which-lgas-in-our-fastest-growing-states-show-the-highest-rates-of-housing-stress/>



## Stated housing preferences – what you told us

There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence about affordability being a significant issue for the local community. Housing affordability was a top issue in community engagement during housing strategy preparation.

In the first round of engagement, the most common themes were the need for more housing choice and greater housing affordability (over 30% of comments). A strong preference for infill housing was evident. Community spirit was highly valued, expressed as encompassing natural beauty and geographical features, an eco-conscious population, heritage and historical links and the character of the built environment. Significant opposition to cookie cutter, or generic/homogenous, McMansion-style development was noted throughout the submissions. Environmentally sustainable design was a popular theme. Encouraging smaller homes and more walking and cycling (and reducing car dependency) were commonly mentioned.

Many people wanted to keep community ties and stay in the area, age in place and keep families close together. Concerns that established residents, family members and those with changing circumstances can no longer afford to live in, or move back to, the Shire were common. Some submissions expressed concerns that new developments were catering only to the market of wealthy people moving in from city areas. Concerns about a lack of affordable rentals were common with concern about the impact of short-term holiday letting on the rental market.

Providing improved affordability and choice were common themes received in response to the exhibition of the Draft Housing Strategy, along with support for infill, and protecting local character by managing risks of overdevelopment. Improving house design and sustainability were other top themes. Short-term holiday letting's impact on long term rental availability was also mentioned a number of times.

For more information refer to:

- *What we heard: Community Engagement Report Homes for Our Future November 2018* and
- *Your thoughts on the Draft Local Housing Strategy Community Engagement Report 2019*

The emergence of the Bellingham Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group, a volunteer advocacy and action group focused on improving housing affordability for local residents is further evidence of the local need for greater affordability. This group have held two Affordable Housing Forums and undertook a survey of local residents to understand their housing needs and preferences and received over 300 responses, which informed a Housing Needs Analysis and advocacy platform. Importantly 40% of respondents were renters. Broadly speaking across the Shire, people renting are at most risk of housing stress and insecure housing situations, especially low-middle income earners. The survey found most people were renting in the private market with few people on the social housing waitlist (under 10% of respondents). One respondent to the BNAHAG Survey 2018 stated there is 'no point being on the social housing waitlist - I will be dead by the time I get to the top of the list.' Wait times are 5-10 years for a property in Bellingham Shire and Coffs Harbour. This reflects an anecdotal sentiment for the reason why the social housing wait list does not reflect the experienced housing demand. For many people, there is little personal reason or support to go through the effort of completing the social housing waitlist paperwork. Also anecdotally, given strong community ties in the area many people who cannot afford housing are couch surfing, housesitting, sharing housing or living in informal housing situations.

Respondents noted a variety of factors that currently impact their housing situation. These themes can be grouped accordingly- (a) financial stress: increasingly unaffordable rents (46.37%); purchasing stress (22.35%); (b) inappropriate structure: too small (19.55%); too big (12.29%); lack of privacy (12.85%); not fit for changing needs (12.29%); and (c) stability: insecure tenureship (26.26%). When combined these forces have the potential to seriously impact on these people's wellbeing and the community as a whole.

31.19% of respondents have had to leave area due to lack of affordable housing.

For more information please refer to the BN Affordable Housing Action Group website: <https://www.bnc.org.au/about-the-housing-action-group/>

## Social Housing and Rental Statistics

### Social Housing Snapshot

NSW Government has a social housing portfolio of 130,000 homes

110 social housing dwellings in Bellingen Shire.

In the Shire:

50% of tenants are aged 60+ years.

54% of tenants live in one-person households.

53% of tenants received the Aged or Disability pension as their main source of income.

45% of people on the waiting list in Bellingen are seeking a 1 bedroom dwelling (wait time 10+ years)

### Private Rental is unaffordable across Australia

Anglicare Australia Rental affordability snapshot report 2019

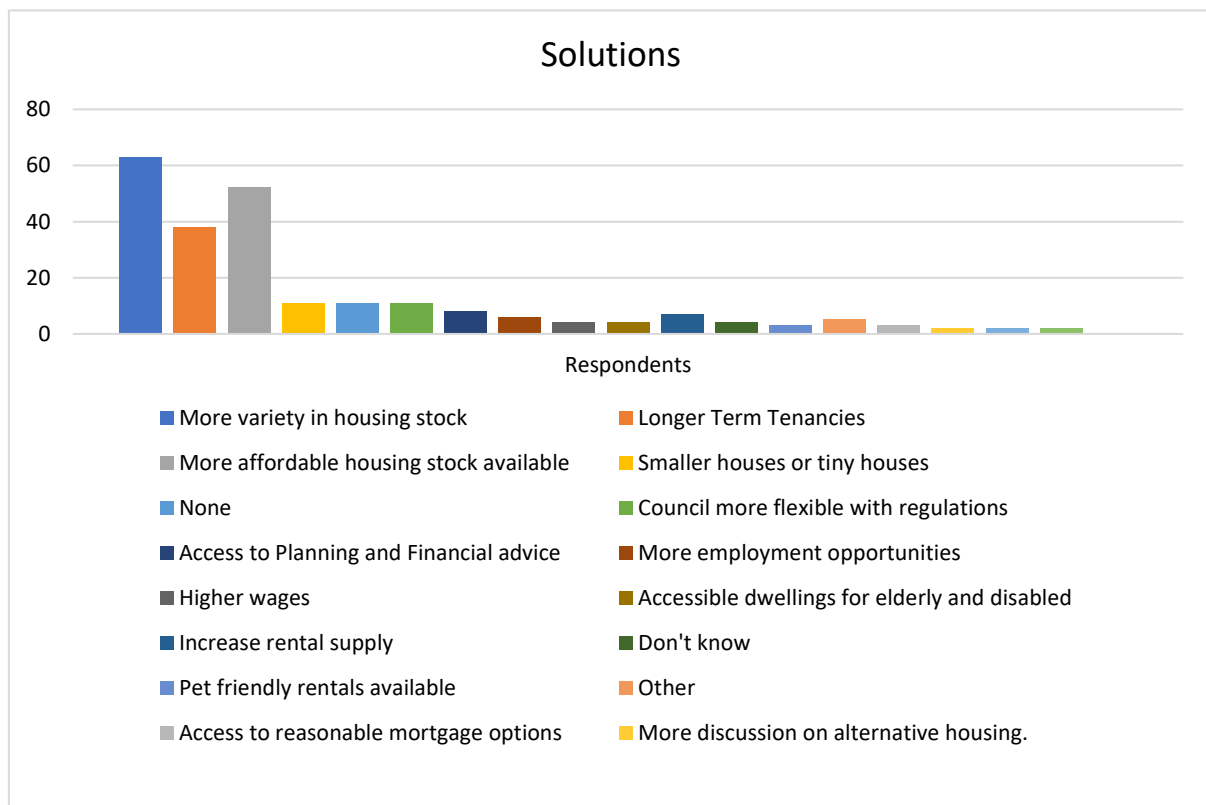
On the Snapshot weekend, 775 private rentals were advertised for rent in 9 separate locations on the North Coast of NSW.

- 26 (3%) individual properties were suitable for at least one household type living on income support payments without placing them in housing stress.
- 179 (23%) individual properties were suitable for at least one household type living on minimum wage without placing them in housing stress.

<https://anglicareras.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/nsw-north-coast.pdf>

## Bellingen Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group Survey Results (2019 extract)

### Question 19: What could help improve your housing situation or that of people you know?



## Housing for People with Particular Needs

### Gender-specific trends and challenges

Bellingen Shire has more females than males (51.7% of the population is female and 48.3% is male), and this gender split differs from the rest of Regional NSW where the split is more balanced (50.8% females and 49.2% males) <sup>^</sup>. Because females generally live longer<sup>+</sup> and there is an ageing population, a higher number of females is expected, although in Bellingen and Dorrigo the split is even more pronounced. In Bellingen 54% of the population is female and 46% male; and in Dorrigo the population is 54.2% female and 45.8% male. In Urunga, the ratio is more balanced, with 50.8% of the population female and 49.2% male.

This is relevant to planning for housing for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Human Rights Commission states women are more likely to earn less than men over their working careers and therefore more likely to experience old-age poverty and associated housing stress. Community consultation revealed a need for safe, affordable housing for older women across Bellingen Shire. Given the housing affordability crisis in Australia, there has been a sharp increase in older women experiencing homelessness across the country.

There are many complex causes of homelessness. Family/domestic violence is one leading cause of homelessness. Startling statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show 72,000 women, 34,000 children and 9,000 men sought homelessness services in 2016–17 across the country due to family/domestic violence.

Gender differences are also evident in perceptions of safety. Women are more likely to feel unsafe in public spaces and home alone after dark than men. This illustrates the need to plan for safe neighbourhoods and public spaces and strong community connections to the benefit of all ages and genders. Males, especially older men, are also at risk of social isolation and with a rise in single person households many more people than before are living alone. Males experience higher suicide<sup>#</sup> rates than women, especially in regional areas. Gender diverse individuals are also at higher risk of suicide. This strategy seeks to be inclusive and to make better places and housing for everyone, regardless of age, gender or background, but recognises that some groups may need extra assistance or attention when it is evident that the market or status quo is not providing for their needs.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 3.5% of the Bellingen Shire population. Of the people who reported being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, 95% identify as being of Aboriginal origin, 3% as being of Torres Strait Islander origin and 0.7% as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

The median age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Shire is 22 years old. This is much younger than the median age of 49 for the population of Bellingen Shire. Couples with children are the most common household type for households with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons (36%), followed by one parent families (25%) and couples without children (17%). Lone persons make up 12% of households and 7% are multiple families living together (3% are 'group' or unrelated person households).

The average size of a household with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the Shire is 3.2 people per dwelling, higher than average size of non-Indigenous households (2.3 people per dwelling). Census data indicates that 8.6% of Shire households with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons require at least 1 extra bedroom (compared to 2.8% for non-Indigenous households).

Granny flats are a common form of housing catering to multiple generations on the one property, and consultation with Dorrigo Plateau Aboriginal Land Council and Nambucca Heads Local Aboriginal Land Council indicated a need for more smaller dwellings, to support greater affordability (for purchase and for rent) as well as to cater for a rise in single older women, widows and their families. Communal type living arrangements (multiple homes on one property, tiny house communities, villas etc.) were a common suggestion. Communal living was a major theme emerging out of the consultation for many people and groups across the Shire. More and continued engagement with Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Housing providers and Aboriginal communities and people within the region is required to better understand and provide for local housing needs.

<sup>\*</sup>There are currently no accurate statistics for gender diverse people in Australia, although the ABS is taking steps to improve collection of this data. Until the 2016 Census, there were few ways of reporting anything other than male or female. Gender refers to the way a person identifies themselves and can include intersex and transgender persons.

<sup>+</sup>this trend is changing over time; life expectancy gains for men are now outpacing that of women.

<sup>#</sup> If you or someone you know needs help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/suicide>

## People with a disability

The need for accessible and adaptable housing close to services is also evident as 5.9% of the population of the Shire (750 people) reported requiring help with day to day activities due to a disability (up from 5.3% of the population in 2011/+87 people). The need for assistance is expected to grow with the ageing of the population.

Bellingen Shire's predominantly older housing stock is not necessarily well-suited or fit-for-purpose to cater for the varied needs of people with a disability and their families. Housing affordability and the cost to retrofit accessibility features is an important consideration.

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs.

Council introduced planning controls to increase supply of homes designed using Universal Design principles in 2017 to meet an identified need for more adaptable and accessible homes. These controls reference the Livable Housing Guidelines produced by Livable Housing Australia in partnership with industry supporters.

The move towards more accessible dwellings is a necessary change for the housing industry. Council is committed to additional research, policy refinement and ongoing advocacy and education on the importance of Universal Design and accessible housing.

## Older people

As previously discussed, Bellingen Shire has an ageing population.

In Bellingen Shire there were 1,430 carers providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age in 2016. The proportion of people providing unpaid care for the aged and disabled in Bellingen Shire can be an important indicator of the level of demand for aged care services and facilities by local and state governments. An increasing proportion of carers

among the population may indicate inadequate aged care provision or the need for in-home support, or support for the carers themselves.

Analysis of the unpaid care provided by the population in Bellingen Shire in 2016 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a higher proportion of people who provided unpaid care either to family members or others. Overall, 13.7% of the population provided unpaid care, compared with 12.6% for Regional NSW. The number of people who provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age in Bellingen Shire increased by 49 between 2011 and 2016.

There is demand for aged care services within the Bellingen Shire to cater for the ageing of the population. However, the community engagement for the *Homes for Our Future* project indicated strong support for ageing in place – many people wanted to be able to stay in their home as long as possible into their old age or to be able to downsize to another home in the area, which is quite difficult given a lack of adaptable/accessible homes, high housing prices and low levels of new housing supply, especially smaller homes suited to downsizers. Many people expressed they wanted more housing choices, and wanted to stay in or close to their existing communities and support networks, rather than move into an aged care facility or out of the Shire.

## Young people

There is a lot of research regarding housing affordability and its generational impacts – young people are less likely than ever to be able to afford to buy a home, especially if they are single. Many young people rely on 'the bank of mum and dad' for a foot into the housing market. Bellingen Shire's high house prices relative to other areas in the region and low rate of new housing supply appear to be exacerbating the trend of out-migration of young age groups from the region. There is little housing available to those moving out of home. Young people have always left the Shire in relatively large numbers seeking employment, education, travel or other lifestyle opportunities; however, a trend was for many to return to the area to have and raise their children. During the community engagement, some concern was expressed that they would not be able to return due to high and increasing house prices.

Young people are generally attracted to infill housing types, showing demand for smaller, low maintenance, well-located dwellings, close to services, infrastructure and employment centres. This can be for lifestyle reasons, and/or because of affordability constraints. Young people are likely to trade off private space for access to amenities or features that enhance wellbeing and lifestyle (e.g. reduced commuting time, local cafes and parks).



They are also more likely to live in group households or share housing situations. This is usually only for the short-medium term.

Young people are also more likely to rent, and want rentals that are low-maintenance (in terms of gardens and lawns) close to town centres. Living within walking distance to shops and services is becoming increasingly popular and whilst much of the Shire is car-dependent (66.4% of residents used a car to get to work in 2016), the Shire has compact and walkable centres which provide for day to day convenience and are an attraction in their own right. Emerging population trends show Bellingen is becoming popular with the 25-34 year old age groups, and this could be because of a vibrant live music scene, café culture and the variety of activities and lifestyle opportunities nearby and the social opportunities these bring.

Young people are also attracted to detached housing in new house estates when they are seeking to purchase housing, because these are generally located on the fringes of existing centres and can be more affordable than established homes in established neighbourhoods. Many young people also value new homes and modern amenities, especially if they are looking to have children.

### **Families with children**

Families with children was the dominant household type 20 years ago, however with the ageing of the population, couples without children is now the dominant housing type. This is an expected consequence of ageing; as young adults move away, however new young families with children are not replacing those that now have grown-up kids or those families that have left at the rate they once were.

As the proportion of children decreases across the Shire, the ageing of the population becomes more pronounced and future population decline becomes more likely. There can be flow-on effects to these changes such as fewer school students, sports teams and less investment in child-friendly infrastructure (such as playgrounds, sports facilities etc.). A wide variety of new housing types will provide for families with children and a focus on providing quality amenities and services and increased investment in infrastructure will attract more families with young children to the Shire. As with all attraction/retention of population factors, access to employment is another key determinant.

Families with children vary in their housing needs and aspirations although it is commonly expected that detached homes on their own block of land attract families with children. Homes close to schools and services are also attractive and this can include infill housing. As our city areas grow, more and more families are also living in and seeking out medium density housing options, trading off space for access to good schools and amenities. In Bellingen Shire, families with children under 15 are mostly located in and around Bellingen town centre and in some rural areas (Brierfield and South Arm/Newry Island, Bostobrick). It is expected new release areas such as South Urunga and North Bellingen will attract families with children, especially if good amenities such as playgrounds are provided.

### **Low income earners**

Household Income is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic status. Household income levels are not comparable over time because of the influences of economic change such as wage level fluctuations and inflation. The income quartile method is an objective way of looking at income data. Analysis of the distribution of households by income quartile in Bellingen Shire compared to Regional NSW in 2016, shows that there was lesser proportion of households in the highest income quartile and a greater proportion in the lowest income quartile.

Equalised income quartiles allow us to compare relative income-earning capabilities across time. Because the data is equalised, households of different size and composition are placed on an equal footing. Assuming all households were the same size, the 'lowest' quartile was the largest income group in Bellingen Shire in 2016. For more information see: <https://profile.id.com.au/bellingen>

New supply of a variety of housing types at different price points is more likely to positively impact on affordability, including for lower income earners. In Bellingen Shire, to meaningfully impact on affordability, targeting new supply to residents in the low-moderate income bracket is considered more effective than relying on the possibility of "filtering" by developing only very expensive homes. Providing a larger proportion of homes that cater for lower-income earners will also help address fears of gentrification that are emerging within the community and will help ensure Bellingen Shire stays inclusive. The Action Plan also contains a number of actions designed to improve affordability.

## Providing for housing demand

Previous growth projections for the Shire have relied on recent low-growth trends, however populations are dynamic and there is considered to be significant scope for actual population growth to be different depending on future policies, projects and wider housing and population trends.

This Strategy seeks to understand the housing needs of the population and to influence population trends into the future to ensure Bellinghen Shire has a sustainable, prosperous and equitable future. This Strategy also seeks to shape growth so that Bellinghen Shire retains what makes it special.

This Housing Strategy and background studies indicates there is capacity for growth under existing planning controls, both in terms of greenfield land available for subdivision and infill potential. This potential has thus far not been taken up for a variety of reasons. It is not expected these barriers to supply will persist over the next 20 years and this Housing Strategy and Action Plan seeks to prepare for and manage growth for the benefit of the wider community. The Housing Strategy also actively seeks to break down some development barriers, for example by promoting well-designed infill development and encouraging supply of a more diverse range of housing types to meet a wider range of community needs.

Council has limited ability to influence the housing market in terms of affordability (many policy levers are available only to state and federal governments or private developers); however, Council recognises the issue and through the Housing Strategy and Action Plan proposes a raft of measures intended to meet demand for more affordable housing types. For example Council is proposing to review government-owned sites that could be used for subsidised Affordable Housing development and will review planning controls and objectives to encourage building of smaller homes at more affordable price points.

The Housing Strategy presents housing projections, taking into account land suitability and capacity of existing planning controls and local trends and observations. These predictions are based on the recent low growth trends changing with greater uptake of house building into the future. Recent low growth trends have been driven by population churn rather than growth and low market confidence restricting new house supply. Overall low levels of growth are because although many people are moving in, an almost equal number of people are moving out. Many of these out-migrants want to move away, but some may not want to leave but are being priced out due to rising house costs and lack of suitable housing supply.

The Housing Strategy also seeks an equitable outcome for the wider community, so looks at ways to provide housing for a diverse population, considering the need to provide a range of housing types at different price points. Focusing on providing housing for the community whilst also improving housing design quality and environmental outcomes is a key goal of the Strategy and Action Plan, and is what the community asked us to focus on. The Bellinghen Shire community want housing to be done a little differently to elsewhere, and there are real opportunities in supporting new innovative housing models with improved environmental and social outcomes.

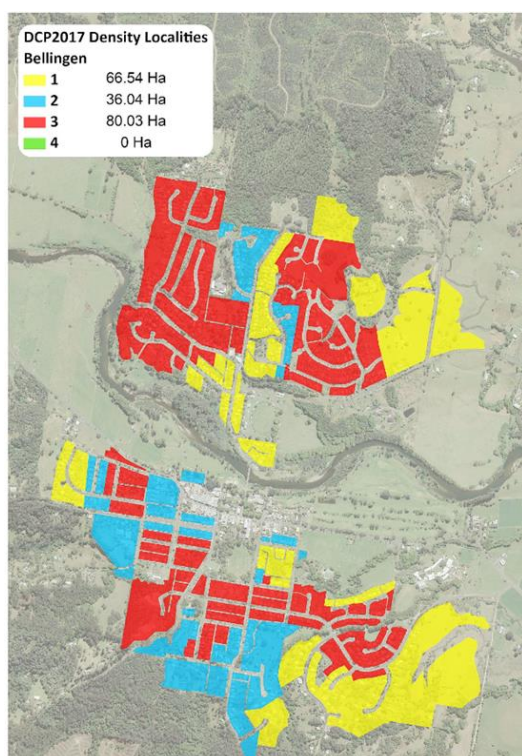
Detailed feasibility modelling or infrastructure servicing requirements was not carried out at this high level to inform the housing projections and infrastructure availability and economic feasibility will influence housing projects. However the approach of this Strategy is not to be too conservative with growth predictions and to make assumptions based on capacity (what is possible) to plan for middle-higher growth scenarios. Therefore planning for future infrastructure and servicing requirements will be more proactive and there is less risk the Shire will be caught out by increased growth. Utilising lower, conservative estimates (based only on historic trends rather than looking to what is probable and possible in the future) may lead to infrastructure and servicing strains in the future, should population trends and housing growth change. It is important to regularly monitor growth against these projections/targets, to ensure good planning and efficient infrastructure spending. It is of vital importance that good strategic planning is undertaken and adequate levels of infrastructure are provided to cater for current and future residents of the Shire, using the best available information and trend analysis as carried out during this local housing strategy process.

## 2.3 Housing Supply

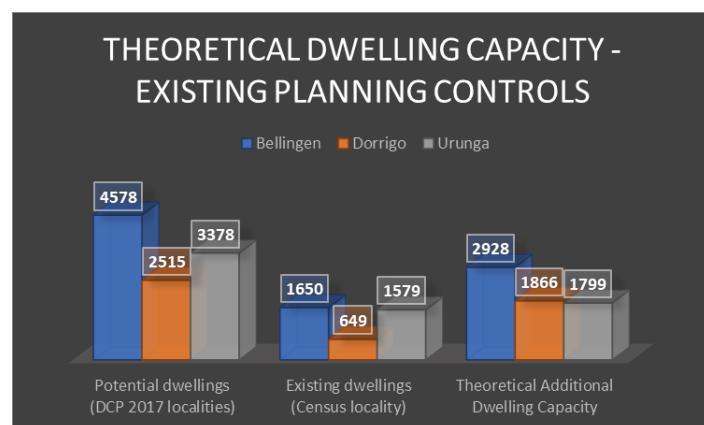
Bellingen Shire has capacity to grow, but the amount of housing supplied will be cognisant of natural and physical limitations. Bellingen Shire will contribute a small amount to the population growth of the region, and the Shire will remain an important agricultural and tourism locality, with strong community connections, benefiting neighbouring areas (e.g. Coffs Coast tourism). The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 identifies that over the next 20 years; almost 77 per cent of population growth on the North Coast will be in the regional cities of Tweed Heads, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. Therefore, Bellingen Shire's growth pressures should also be shared and addressed via the housing and employment strategies of other Councils in the region.

### Theoretical capacity of existing controls

There is significant theoretical capacity within existing land use controls to deliver future housing growth. One way to estimate capacity is to consider the area of land that is currently within different density localities that are prescribed within the Bellingen Shire Development Control Plan 2017 (excluding roads and excluding Railway Museum Land at Dorrigo) and to calculate the total number of dwellings that could theoretically be built if all land within a particular density locality was developed to the full extent permitted in that locality. An example of the area of land within different density localities in Bellingen is shown below.



An analysis of the theoretical dwelling capacity that exists within each of the town areas, under current planning controls, is shown below.

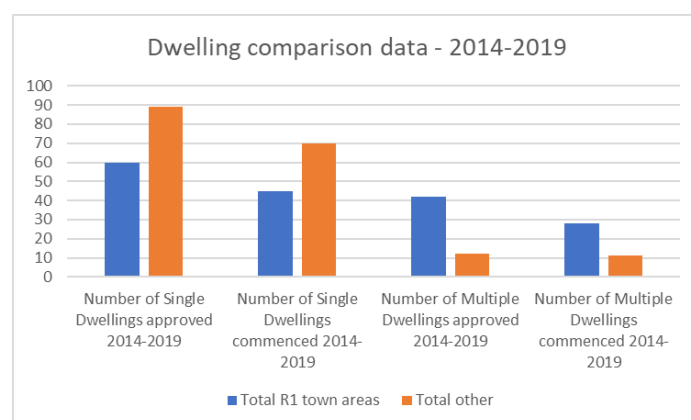


This shows that there is theoretical capacity for a very large number of dwellings however realisation of these dwelling capacities is not likely, noting that full development feasibility would be dependent upon the demolition of existing dwellings with significant remaining life expectancy and consolidation of development sites. These trends do not typify the Bellingen Shire housing supply market.

### Recent supply of new dwellings

The supply of new lots zoned R1 General Residential has been limited since the gazettal of Bellingen Local Environmental Plan 2010. An analysis of single and multiple dwelling approvals over that last 5 years has however been undertaken to attempt to form a picture regarding potential rates of uptake for new housing products should they come to be delivered over the life of the Strategy.

The figure below compares single dwelling and multi-dwelling approvals and commencements from 2014-2019.



This shows that on average 12 new single dwellings are approved each year within the R1 Zones in Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, compared to an average of 18 new dwellings approved each year in

other parts of the Shire, notably areas of land zoned Rural and Rural Residential. Multi dwelling data (which includes secondary dwellings, dual occupancies and multi dwelling housing) indicates that on average 8.4 of these types of dwellings are approved each year within the R1 Zones in Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, compared to an average of 2.4 in other areas.

There was a combined average a total of 40 new dwellings a year approved in Bellingen Sire between 2014-2019, of which 27% were multi dwelling housing.

#### Housing Supply Gaps

This data is considered to suggest that there is a relative lack of new housing supply being provided within the main town areas of the Shire. It is possible that the relatively high rates of dwelling approvals in outlying areas may be partly a of the lack of new housing supply being delivered in town areas. Although capacity exists for continued supply of new housing opportunities in areas zoned as rural residential, the capacity for rural areas to continue to deliver new housing growth is finite and limited by the dwelling entitlement provisions in BLEP 2010 that The data also indicates that there is a gap in the supply of more diverse types of housing, with single dwellings being the dominant category of development approved.

#### Revised housing supply and capacity projections

The data that has been compiled on the theoretical capacity of existing controls, and the actual areas of recent development within these areas, indicates that here is a clear need to review the capacity projections for both infill and greenfield development that is likely to occur over the life of the strategy. This is discussed further in the following sections.

#### Revised Infill Projections

In order to more accurately consider future housing growth within the existing town areas of the Shire, Council has undertaken an "Infill Capacity Study". A copy of the Infill Capacity Study, including assumptions and methodology, is included as an attachment to this strategy.

The key findings of the Infill Capacity Study are reprinted below.

It is estimated that Bellingen Shire's town areas (zoned R1 General Residential) can accommodate an additional **1,015 new infill dwellings** to 2040.

The infill potential of each town is as follows:

**Dorrigo + 245 dwellings**

**Bellingen + 343 dwellings**

**Urunga +371 dwellings**

**Mylestom, Repton, Raleigh + 56 dwellings** (in the R1 zone only when sewer connection becomes available)

For more information on the capacity of our existing towns to accommodate more development refer to the *Infill Capacity Study*. For more information on actions promoting housing diversity and affordability refer to the *Action Plan*.

#### Greenfield

There is over 270 hectares of vacant land zoned R1 General Residential across the Bellingen Shire and therefore significant capacity for greenfield housing (housing in newly subdivided areas/new housing estates).

In order to more accurately consider the potential of greenfield areas to deliver housing growth over the life of the strategy, a review has been undertaken of the overall capacity that is considered to exist for future subdivision within key greenfield areas. Refined estimates have been informed by factors such as actual development consent that have been issued for subdivision in these areas, potential layouts for subdivisions in these areas that have been developed by proponents, a specific consultant investigation commissioned by Council to determine future infrastructure requirements in the South Urunga area and projections provided to Council as part of a "Development Opportunities Report" prepared for Council by LEFTA Consultants in 2017 that estimated potential dwelling capacity within selected areas of the Shire. These capacity projections are documented in the Table below.

Although these projections are not consistent with current rates of lot creation in the Shire, it is considered that they are conservative and reasonable based upon historic rates of dwelling growth in the Shire that occurred when new greenfield housing areas were released and available. For example, between 1971-1991, Bellingen Shire added +2,397 new homes – an average of 120 homes each year. In this context, the average lot creation in this table of 42 lots is considered to be realistic and capable of achievement, once the initial investments in key supporting infrastructure are in place such as connections to water, sewer and major road intersections etc..



<b>Greenfield Area</b>	<b>Total estimated lot yield</b>	<b>% uptake projection over life of strategy</b>	<b>Projected additional lots over life of strategy 2040</b>	<b>Average lots per year 2020-2040</b>
<b>Dorrigo east</b>	240	30%	80	
<b>Dorrigo south</b>	60	30%	20	
<b>Dorrigo Total</b>	300	30%	100	5
<b>Urunga south</b>	508	80%	406	20
<b>Bellingen north</b>	187	80%	150	
<b>Bellingen south</b>	110	100%	110	
<b>Bellingen E4 proposal</b>	80	100%	80	
<b>Bellingen Total</b>	377		340	17
<b>Total Greenfield Lots estimate</b>	1185		846	

#### [Infrastructure projects supporting housing supply](#)

Pacific Highway Upgrade – this project has made Bellingen Shire more accessible within and outside the region. The Coffs Harbour Bypass is a significant part of the upgrade project. The completion of the Pacific Highway upgrade is expected to lead to greater tourism interest in the Shire as well as increased interest in migrating to the area, from areas such as South-East Queensland, the NSW Central Coast and elsewhere.

The Coffs Harbour Airport is only a fifteen-twenty minute drive from Urunga and Bellingen and approximately an hour from Torrigo. This airport provides frequent connections to Sydney and Brisbane. The planned Valla Employment Lands Area located in neighbouring Nambucca Shire will present increased job opportunities for Bellingen Shire residents.

The NSW Government announced a \$50 million package to upgrade Waterfall Way as an election commitment in March 2019. This investment is expected to benefit Torrigo and increase safety and reduce travel times along this main road and popular tourist drive. Funding was also announced by the NSW Government to assist Bellingen Council in providing sewer services to the coastal villages of Raleigh, Repton and Mylestom. This will boost their infill development capacity.

The connection of the region to the National Broadband Network could expand employment opportunities. A forthcoming Employment Lands Strategy will look at how to plan for and support jobs growth in the area.

### Areas with development capacity and areas to be conserved

**Areas with development capacity** are those zoned R1 General Residential. There is significant capacity for infill development across the Shire – as described in the *Infill Capacity Study*. What this infill could look like and design principles for infill development are explored in the *Infill Design Study*. The *Action Plan* presents a number of planning and non-planning mechanisms to protect and enhance the local character of the Shire, for example more planting of trees and increasing landscaped area requirements for developments.

There is also significant land zoned R1 General Residential that is greenfield land and has not yet been subdivided and developed for the purposes of housing.

It is not considered necessary to rezone any additional land to R1 General Residential at this time, given the suitability and capacity of existing zoned land. The strategy does however identify a parcel of land on the southern fringe of Bellingen that is currently zoned RU1 (Primary Production) and E3 (Environmental Management), and is considered to have capacity to be developed for the purposes of a Community Title subdivision, in conjunction with a Biodiversity Stewardship Site Agreement. This is further documented in Section 4.3 of the strategy.

The *Action Plan* recognises the barriers to producing additional housing in the Shire and contains several mechanisms to help stimulate housing supply in existing zoned areas (both infill and greenfield).

**Areas to be conserved generally** include:

- Land subject to coastal hazards identified in a local environmental plan, coastal zone management plan, coastal management program or development control plan.
- Land along the coastal strip (only low-impact infill development where zoning allows or minor and contiguous housing areas are permitted in this area)
- Land mapped as 'coastal wetland' or 'littoral rainforest' or 'proximity to coastal wetland or littoral rainforest' by SEPP (Coastal Management 2018).
- Land within the 1:100 year floodplain
- Steep land being land with a slope of over 33% (18 degrees), particularly in bushfire prone areas (only low-impact infill development will be permitted in already zoned areas).
- Areas of High Environmental Value Vegetation.
- Land containing Important Farmland (only low-impact infill development where zoning allows)
- Land that contains uses which are likely to result in land use conflict with some urban land uses such as sewerage treatment facilities, airports, intensive agriculture operations, offensive or hazardous industries and waste facilities.
- Land possessing Aboriginal cultural heritage value where it is deemed inappropriate to develop the land.
- Areas of core koala habitat (only low-impact infill development will be permitted in R1 General Residential zoned areas).
- Areas of bushfire-prone land that are difficult to access/evacuate (areas that do not comply with NSW Planning for Bushfire Protection).

Rezoning applications will generally not be supported for proposals that seek to provide housing in these conserved areas. Restricting development in these areas is consistent with the North Coast Regional Plan and Settlement Guidelines produced by the NSW State Government.

## Section 3 Priorities

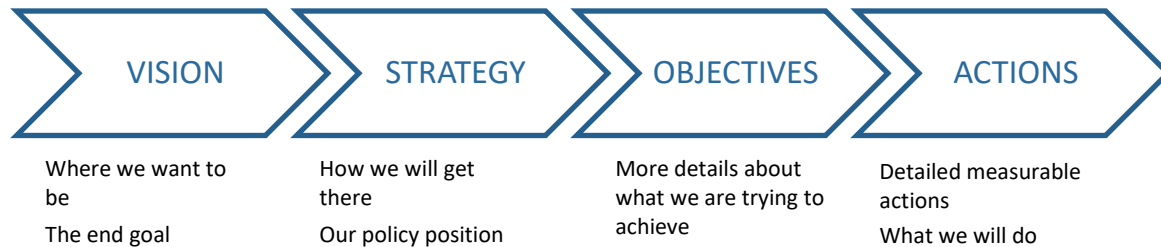


Katrina Collins – Drive Dorrigo Tourism

## 3.1 Strategies and Actions

This section explains how the Housing Vision will be achieved. Eight (8) housing strategies have been written which relate to the key themes of the Housing Vision. These strategies have been informed by community engagement and the evidence base analysis.

Each strategy has corresponding objectives, actions and performance measures. For all strategies, objectives, actions and performance measures see the **Housing Strategy Action Plan**.



### Example – Strategy 1: Housing Choices

#### Vision (excerpt)

Bellingen Shire offers housing choices by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations with varied features and characteristics.



#### Strategy 1: Housing Choices

Ensure new homes in residential areas provide for a range of household needs.

Encourage new supply to fill identified gaps in the housing market.



#### Objectives

More people can find a home that meets their needs and budget.

Bellingen Shire communities are diverse and inclusive.

There are homes and housing opportunities for everyone, and fewer people struggle to find safe, secure and affordable shelter.

Bellingen Shire offers choice in housing tenure, including increased rental supply and security.

Bellingen Shire offers a wide variety of comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money.

Increased housing supply and diversity provides for local people who want to stay in the Shire, and attracts new residents.



#### Actions

##### 1.1 Set housing diversity targets

##### 1.2 Enable more housing types by changing planning controls

##### 1.3 Enable greenfield housing diversity

##### 1.4 Encourage smaller homes

##### 1.5 Promote Universal Design

##### 1.6 Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

##### 1.7 Encourage a variety of tenure types



## Strategies

1

### **Housing choices**

Ensure new homes in residential areas provide for a range of household needs.  
Encourage new supply to fill identified gaps in the housing market.

2

### **High-quality infill housing**

Encourage building of new homes in the existing towns of Dorriggo, Bellingen and Urunga.  
Invest in infrastructure in areas of infill housing growth.

3

### **Walking and cycling**

Design subdivisions, buildings and public spaces to encourage walking and cycling.  
Connect key destinations by providing footpaths, cycle paths and supportive infrastructure.

4

### **Affordability**

Advocate for improved housing affordability, especially for people on low and middle incomes.  
Encourage and facilitate the building of Affordable (subsidised) Housing, as well as homes that are more likely to be affordable (e.g. smaller homes, homes with high-quality lower-cost specifications/finishes, homes with shared spaces).

5

### **Community connections**

Build upon our community's sense of care, creativity and resilience and support new and existing connections.  
Include social considerations in decision-making and deliver socially inclusive outcomes.  
Increase community engagement in strategic planning and encourage community partnerships.

6

### **Design and character**

Showcase high quality design that provides for household needs and respects local character.  
Respect and appreciate local history and culture and cherish the unique characteristics of Bellingen Shire.  
Promote understanding and conservation of Gumbaynggirr heritage and culture, historical buildings, heritage items, natural landscapes & notable people, groups and stories.

7

### **Environmental protection and sustainable living**

Protect ecologically sensitive areas from development and emphasis an environmentally-sustainable approach to growth.  
Continually improve environmental performance and be a leader in sustainable living.  
Mitigate and adapt to climate change, and support community sustainability initiatives.

8

### **Country towns and farming**

Support compact growth in Dorriggo and country villages, with a focus on leveraging sustainable and regenerative farming opportunities.

## List of Actions

For more detail see the **Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy Action Plan**.

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## ACTIONS

1.1 Set housing diversity targets	3.7 Foster a walking culture	6.5 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study
1.2 Enable more housing types by changing planning controls	3.8 Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs	6.6 Heritage Listing Review
1.3 Enable greenfield housing diversity	4.1 Provide Affordable Housing on government-owned sites	6.7 Greening Programs
1.4 Encourage smaller homes	4.2 Define and promote affordable housing,	6.8 Incentive programs
1.5 Promote Universal Design	4.3 Affordability objectives	6.9 Local character in greenfield areas
1.6 Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	4.4 DA Management Policy	7.1 Planning for long-term water security
1.7 Encourage a variety of tenure types	4.5 Promote housing diversity	7.2 Looking after Water
1.8 R5 Large Lot Residential Zone review	4.6 Reduce ongoing housing-related costs	7.3 Update natural hazard risk plans
2.1 Planning controls for best-practice infill house design	4.7 Advocacy and partnerships	7.4 Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living
2.2 A guide to best-practice infill examples	4.8 Strategies to reduce homelessness	7.5 Climate-responsive house design
2.3 Infrastructure planning and studies	5.1 Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy	7.6 Support biodiversity in our backyards
2.4 Key sites	5.2 Funding public space infrastructure	7.7 Reduce construction and domestic waste
2.5 Focus on low-rise housing	5.3 Creating socially sustainable places	7.8 Mainstream sustainable living, reduce consumption
2.6 Laneway Housing Investigation	5.4 Ageing in place	7.9 Cooling urban areas
2.7 Promote retrofitting buildings as infill	5.5 Aboriginal Connections to Country and Community	8.1 Compact growth in rural areas
2.8 Employment Lands Study	5.6 Mixed Tenure Housing	8.2 Country town revitalisation
3.1 Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan	5.7 Workforce housing	8.3 CT Subdivision of existing MOs
3.2 Review Contributions Plan and seek funding opportunities	5.8 Equitable Access to High Speed Internet	8.4 Eco Village Pilot Project
3.3 Street Design Standards	6.1 Character Statements	8.5 Review coastal village capacity after sewer services
3.4 Manage car parking	6.2 Planning controls for high quality design and character	8.6 Information about moving to rural areas
3.5 Connect greenfields areas to town centres	6.3 Innovative demonstration projects	8.7 Support for local food production and small farmers
3.6 Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport	6.4 Build upon the Shire's creative and design culture	8.8 Rural Lands Study

## 3.2 Land Use Planning Approach

### A focus on Infill Housing

People have different housing needs, and these needs can change over a lifetime (sometimes multiple times). The best way to provide housing for a broad range of people is to provide a variety of different homes to suit different budgets.

Bellingen Shire has a lot of 3 bedroom homes on relatively large blocks of land, mostly developed before 1980. Recently built homes are generally 4 bedrooms. Bellingen Shire has relatively little 1 and 2 bedroom homes, but the population make-up is changing. In the 1980s, couples with children were the largest household type, now it is couples without children, and single-person households have significantly increased. House prices across the Shire have increased quite dramatically in recent times and many households are seeking smaller, more affordable homes. Infill housing is proposed as the best way for the Shire to provide these desired housing types.

Infill housing can deliver housing variety and increase choices for the community. However, care must be taken because infill housing is not a silver bullet – infill housing can also deliver housing that is all the same size and similar in style. There needs to be strategic oversight and appropriate controls and incentives to encourage the type of housing and quality design that is needed. For more information see the *Infill Design Study* and *Action Plan*.

### Greenfield Housing – stimulating development in already-zoned areas

There is also significant land zoned R1 General Residential that is greenfield land, and has not yet been subdivided and developed for the purposes of housing. It is not considered necessary to rezone any additional land to R1 General Residential at this time, given the suitability and capacity of existing zoned land. The *Action Plan* recognises the barriers to producing additional housing in the Shire and contains a number of mechanisms to help stimulate housing supply in existing zoned areas (both infill and greenfield).

### Infill Focus Areas and Key Sites

The *Infill Capacity Study* illustrates that some areas have more opportunities to provide infill housing than others. These areas are designated 'infill focus areas'. These areas may see more change than others but could also become the focus for development incentives, desired future character statements/planning design guidance and infrastructure and sustainability improvements.

Key sites are sites with considerable infill potential, and generally the potential to deliver greater housing diversity, for example townhouses, flats or small villa development. These sites are well-located close to shops, services and open space. Key sites recognised in planning policies could be accompanied by a set of design principles and there is the possibility of including incentives should these principles be observed. Key sites may offer good yields and present development partnership opportunities. The draft Infill Focus Areas and draft Key Sites are shown in the maps on the following pages. For more information see the Infill Capacity Study.

### List of Potential Key Sites

#### Dorrigo

- 85 Hickory Street Dorriggo, Lot 2 DP 628931 – Former Bowling Club

#### Bellingen

- 6 Bowra Street Bellingen, Lot 570 DP 755557 – Former Bowling Club
- 15 Watson Street Bellingen, Lot 1 DP 863743 – Former Aged Care Units Bellorana

#### Urunga

- 4121 Giinagay Way Urunga, Lot A DP 104582 – Vacant Lot, western side of Giinagay Way, north of Bellinger Keys
- 4 Riverwood Place Urunga, Lot 130 DP 755552 – Gundamain Caravan Park and Manufactured Home Estate – retain home estate as affordable housing and potential to redevelop vacant land fronting Giinagay Way
- 4160 Giinagay Way, Lot 2 DP 530493 – large lot with single house. Property has frontage to Giinagay Way and Hillside Drive

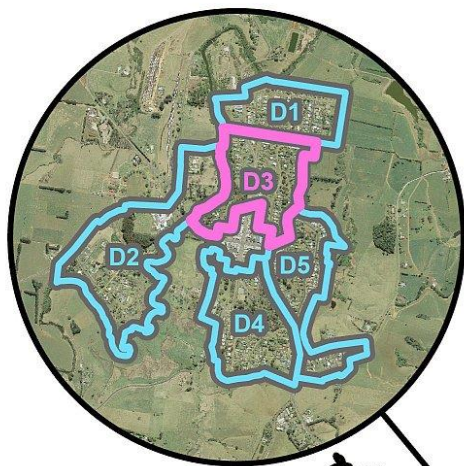
#### Town Centre Sites

Potential shop-top housing

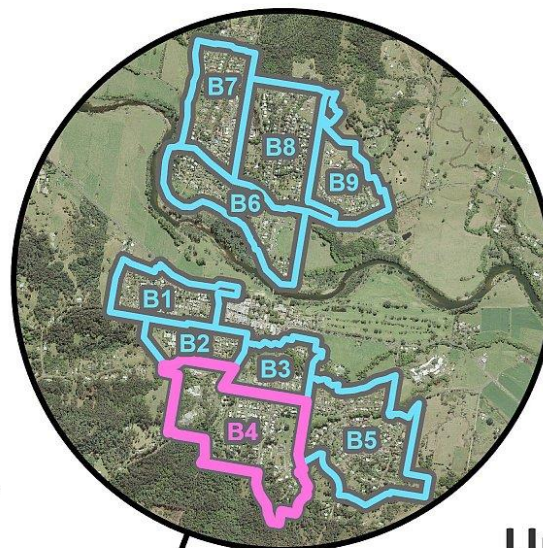
- 77-79 Hickory Street Dorriggo, Lot 4 Sec 10 DP 758357, Lot 1 DP 1039586 – Dorriggo adjacent to Coronation / Pioneer Log Park
- 21-23 Morgo Street Urunga, Lot 1 Sec 2 DP 759026, Lot 9 Sec 2 DP 759026 & Lot 10 Sec 2 DP 759026, Vacant land south of the Ocean View Hotel



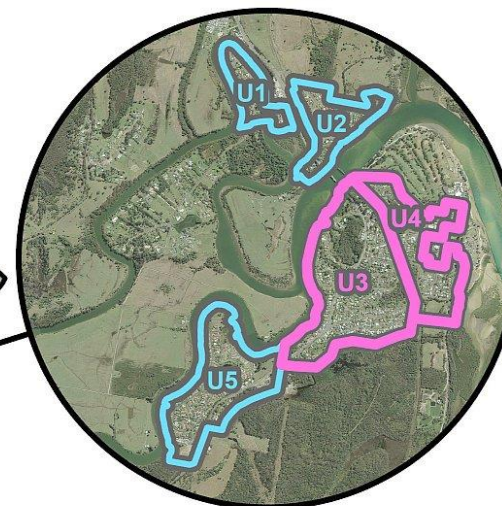
## Dorrigo



## Bellingen



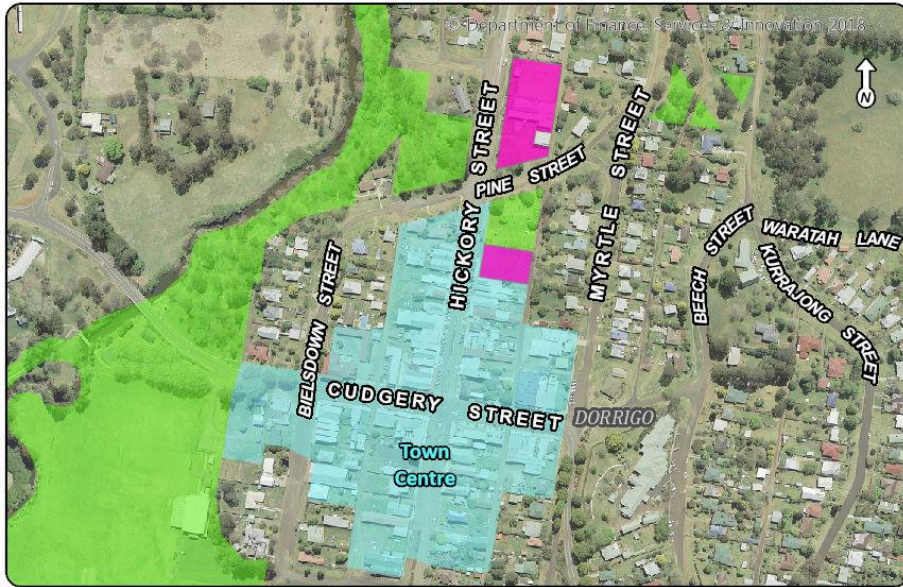
## Urunga



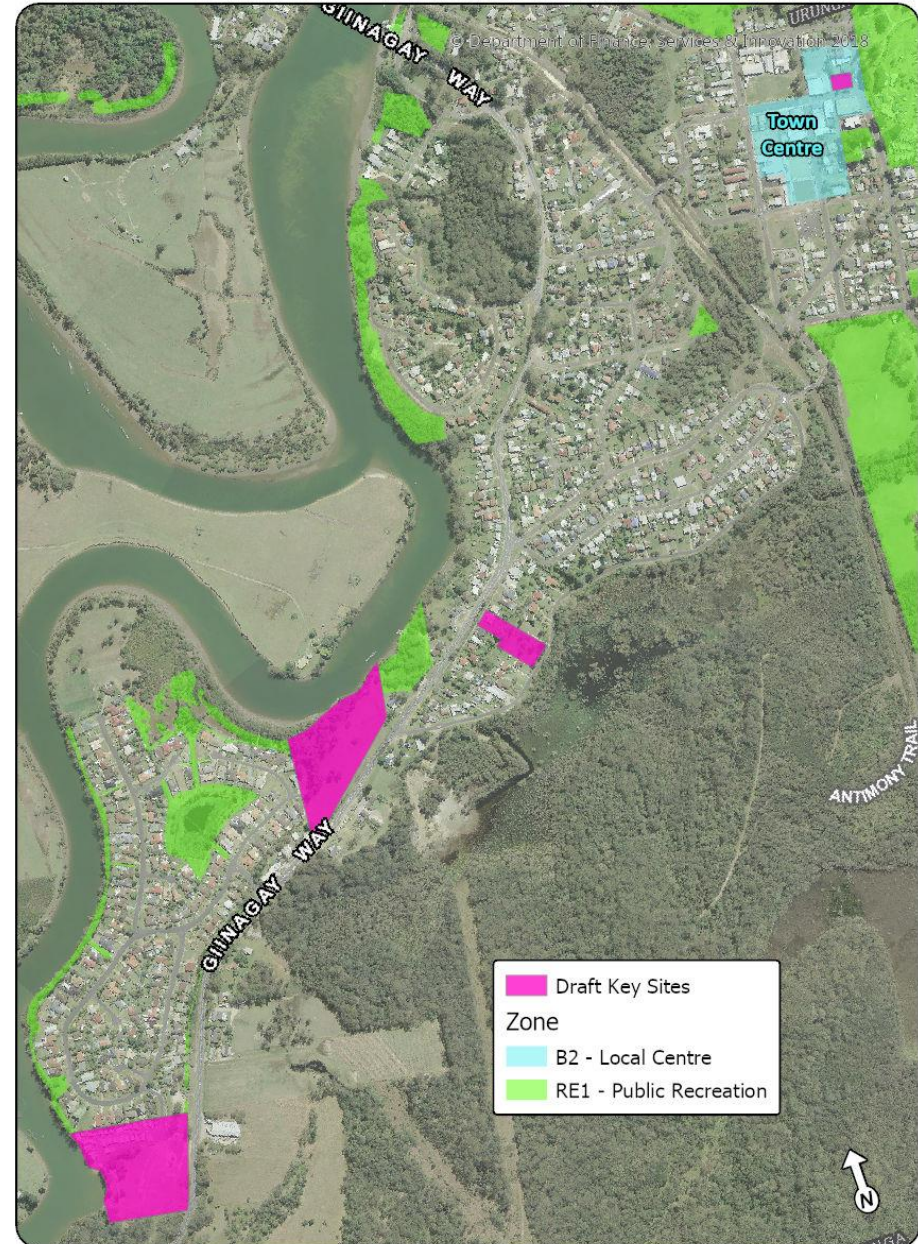
 Infill Focus Areas



## Dorrigo



## Urunga



## Bellingen



- Draft Key Sites
- Zone
- B2 - Local Centre
- RE1 - Public Recreation



### 3.3 Roadmap

This draft Housing Strategy proposes a focus on infill housing growth. For more information about what this infill could look like and where it will be accommodated see the Infill Capacity Study and Infill Design Study. The following is a summary of housing growth in residential areas of Bellingin Shire (areas already zoned R1).

#### **Projected growth to 2040 = + 1861 homes (+ 3852 people)**

Bellingin Shire population 2040 = 16,852

1015 infill dwellings

846 greenfield lots

New Torrens Title lots infill + greenfield (1,353 additional lots) (assuming 50% of infill is subdivided into TT)

#### **Geographic breakdown**

~345 homes Dorriggo (245 infill, 100 greenfield)

~ 683 homes Bellingin (343 infill, 340 greenfield)

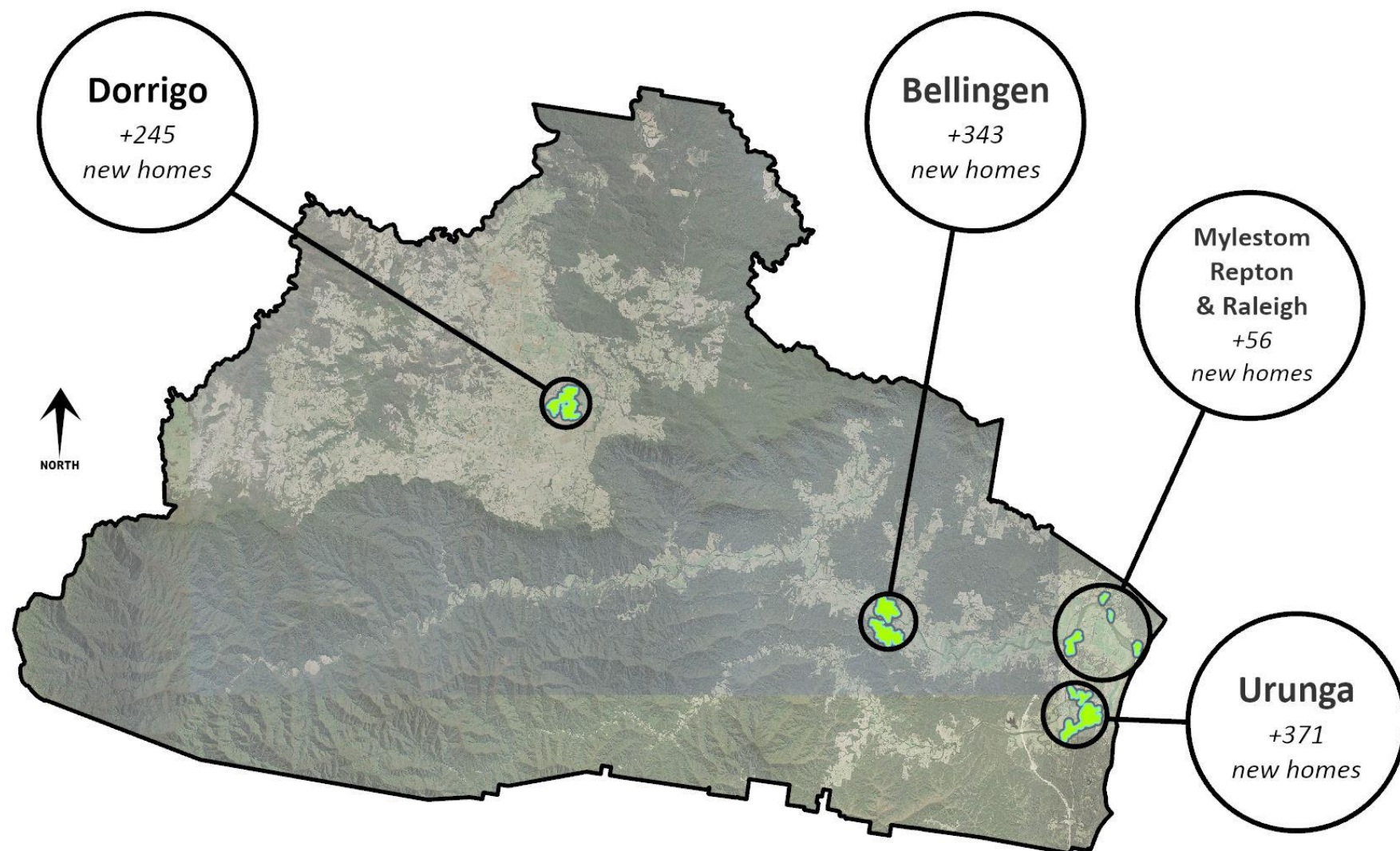
~777 homes Urunga (371 infill, 406 greenfield)

+ 56 Mylestom, Raleigh, Repton (infill only)

#### **Assumptions**

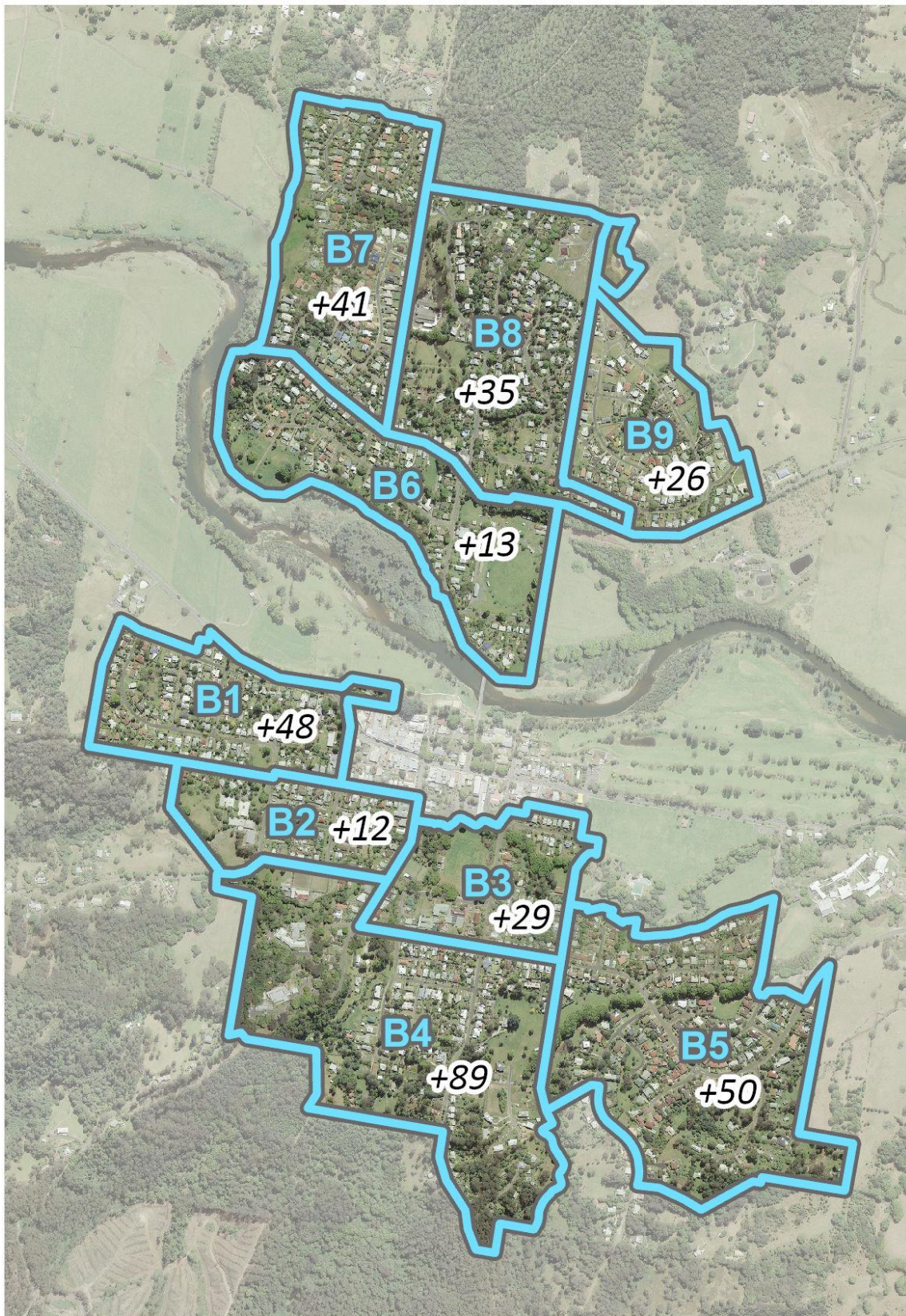
- Projections are optimistic rather than conservative; and rely on housing growth in excess of recent times. Reflective of a medium growth scenario. Actual growth may be less (or more, although less is considered more likely at this time). There is a need to continually monitor growth and update projections and modelling to reflect actual growth and emerging trends.
- Population projections based on 10% vacancy rate and assumed household size of 2.3 persons/household
- Population projection based on 2019 ERP population of ~13,000
- Assume most growth is infill housing (~55% vs 45% greenfield). Assume 50% of infill development is subdivided into Torrens Title.
- Full-take up of greenfield capacity across the Shire has not been assumed – capacity for additional greenfield development will remain past 2040 (without the need to rezone more land). Assumed take-up rates of greenfield development vary according to locality.
- Rural and rural-residential growth (R5) not yet known development potential of R5 land to be reviewed at later date.
- The greenfield development potential of Repton and Raleigh will be reassessed once sewer is connected – this will be a separate planning project in medium-longer term.

## Maps – Estimated Infill Housing Growth



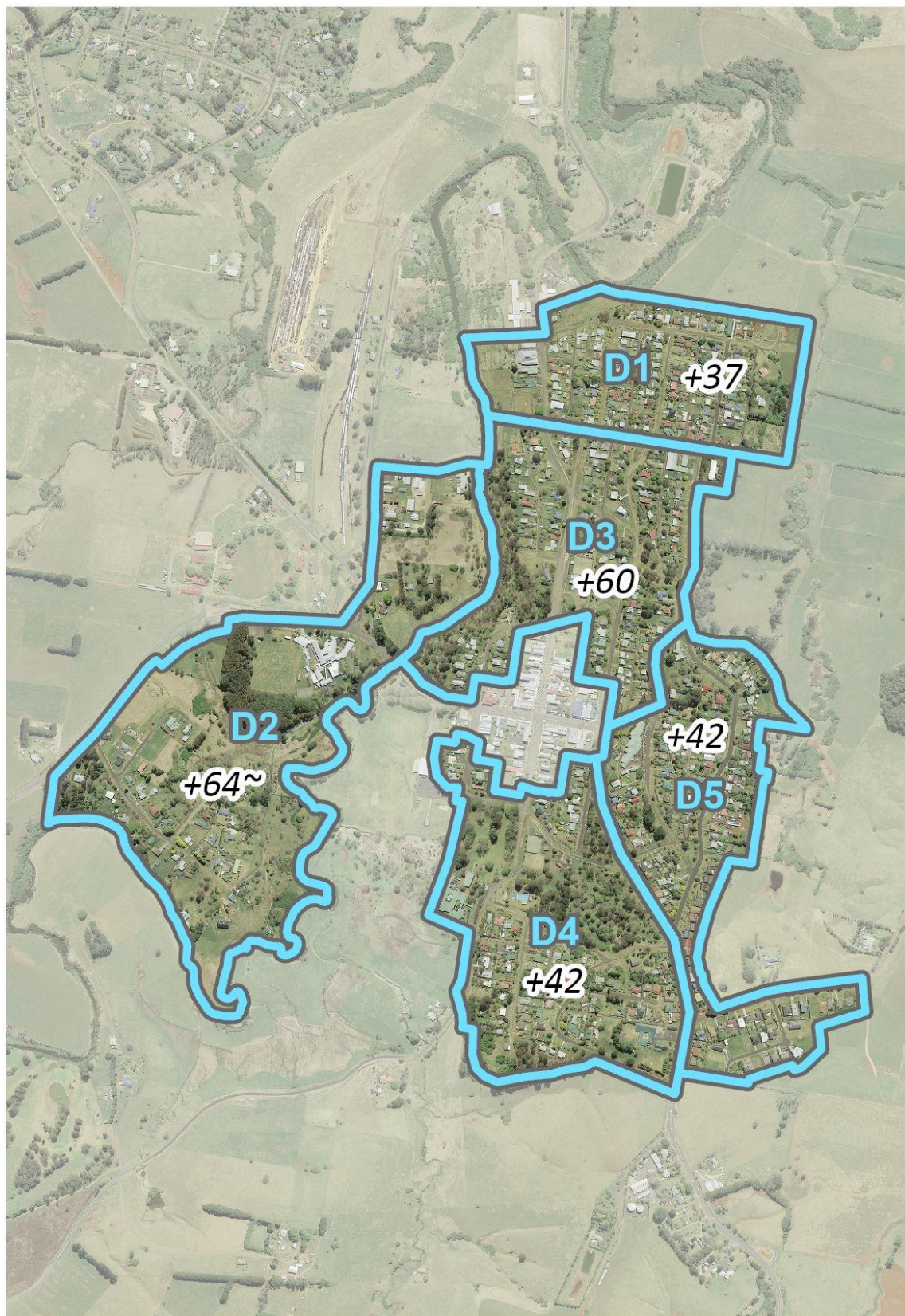


## Estimated Infill Housing to 2040 - Bellingen



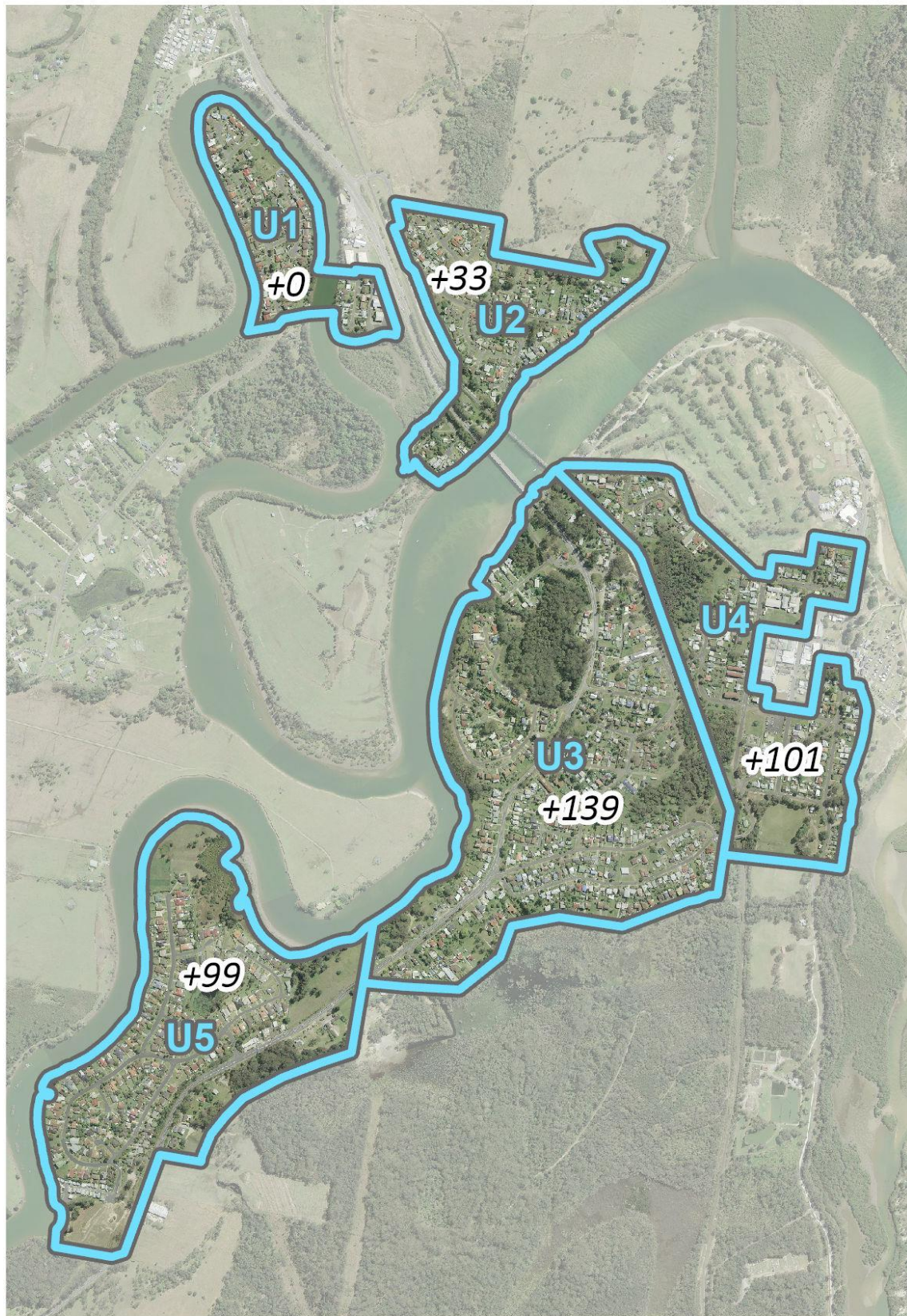


## Estimated Infill Housing to 2040 – Dorriggo



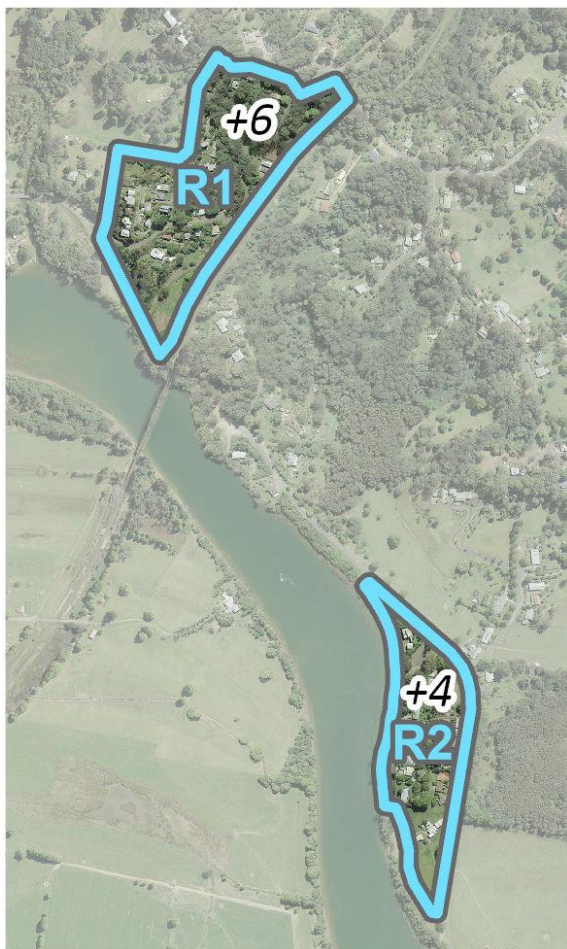


Estimated Infill Housing to 2040 – Urunga





Estimated Infill Housing to 2040 Mylestom, Repton, Raleigh





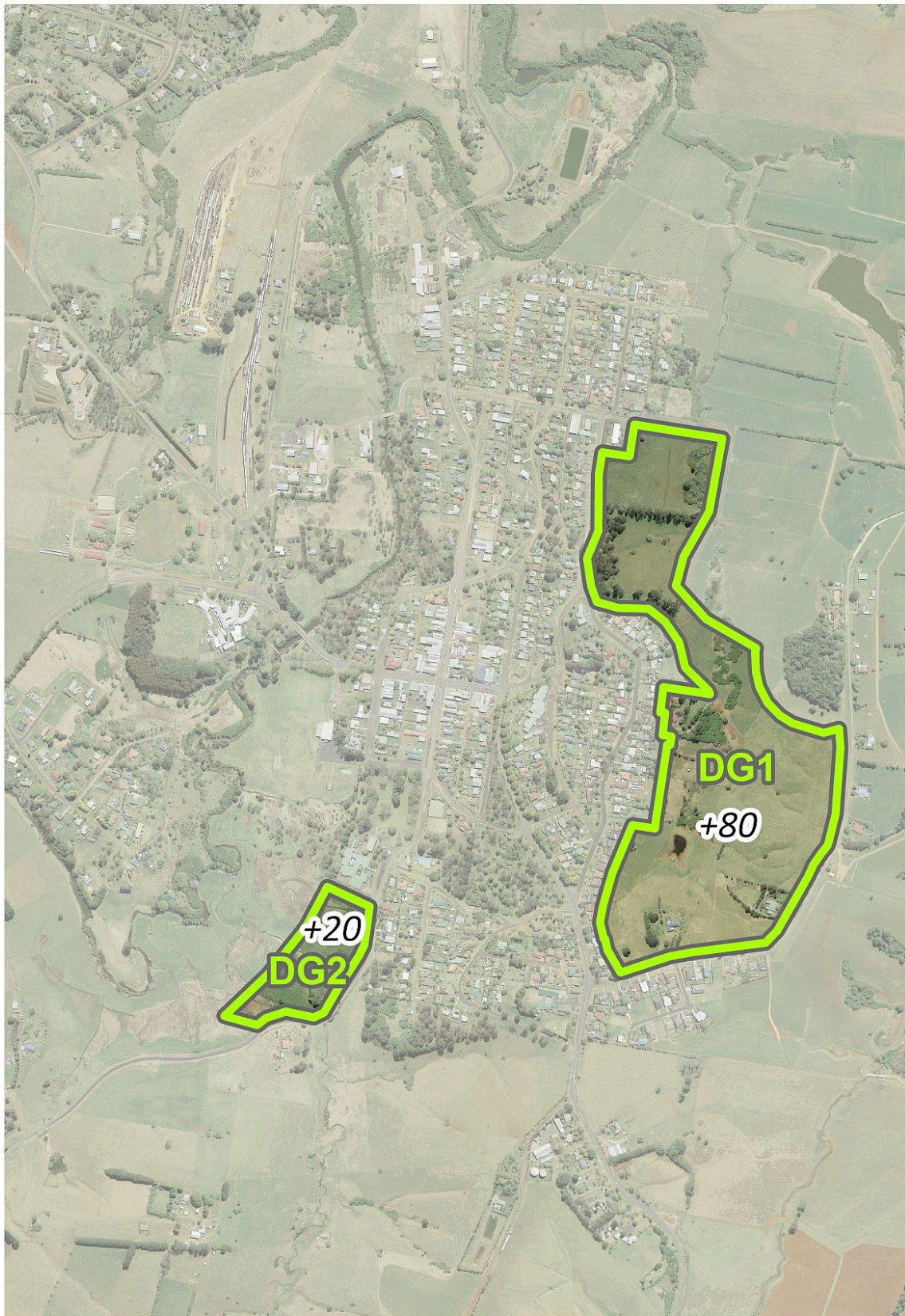
## Maps – Estimated Greenfield Housing Growth

Estimated Greenfield Housing to 2040 - Bellingham



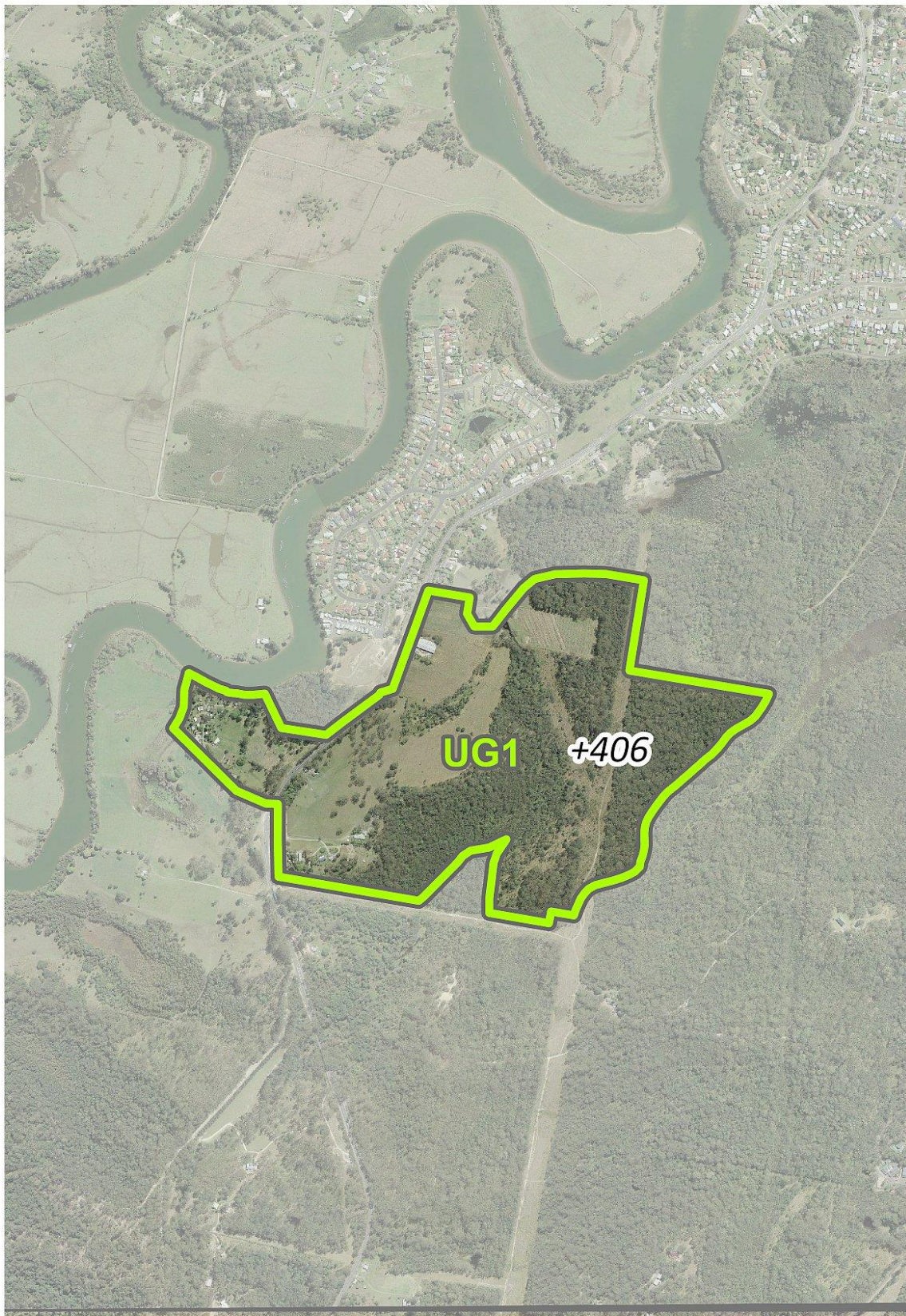


Estimated Greenfield Housing to 2040 - Dorriggo



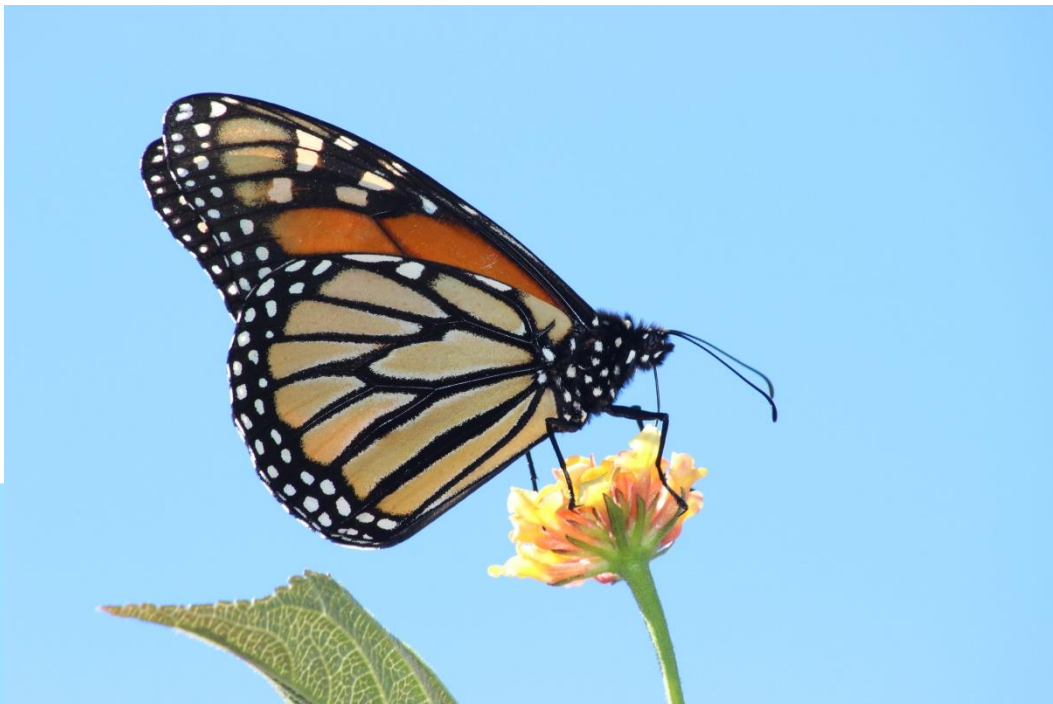


## Estimated Greenfield Housing to 2040 - Urunga





## Section 4 Actions



Birdy b – p - Butterflies

## 4.1 Implementation Timing and Delivery Plan

Refer to the **Action Plan - Bellinghen Shire Housing Strategy** for a comprehensive list of all proposed actions.

The Bellinghen Shire Housing Strategy is a 20 year plan and actions will be completed in stages over this time period.

Many actions are ongoing and are intended to support planning and decision-making processes. Some actions will run over multiple years/timeframes or be dependent upon funding and resourcing. The following is a guide to the expected staging of the Housing Strategy actions, but is subject to change.

Proposed actions and timing of delivery are shown in the following tables.

### Immediate actions (within the next year)

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (commence)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (commence)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (commence)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (commence)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (commence)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.2	Review Contributions Plan
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (commence)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.2	Define affordable housing
4.3	Affordability objectives (commence)
4.4	DA Management Policy (commence)
6.1	Character Statements (and Local Strategic Planning Statement)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (commence)
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls commence)
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (commence)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan commence)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (commence)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (commence)
8.8	Rural Lands Study (commence)



### Short-term actions (1-3 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (finalise)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (finalise)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (finalise)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (finalise)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (continue)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (finalise)
2.8	Employment Lands Study
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (commence)
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.3	Affordability objectives (finalise)
4.4	DA Management Policy (finalise)
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.1	Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy
5.2	Funding public space infrastructure – review Contributions Plan
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places –planning control changes (commence)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (finalise)
6.6	Heritage listing review (commence)
6.7	Greening programs
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls finalise)
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (finalise)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan finalise)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (continue)
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (finalise)
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.6	Information about moving to rural areas
8.8	Rural Lands Study (finalise)

### Medium-term actions (3-10 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places – planning control changes (finalise)
5.7	Workforce housing
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.5	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study
6.6	Heritage listing review (finalise)
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (finalise)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project

### Long-term actions (10-20 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.5	Review residential capacity of coastal villages after sewer services provided

## Ongoing actions to support decision-making

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets (monitor)
1.4	Encourage smaller homes
1.5	Promote Universal Design
1.6	Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
1.7	Encourage a variety of tenure types
2.4	Key Sites
2.5	Focus on low-rise housing
2.7	Promote retrofitting buildings as infill
3.4	Manage car parking
3.5	Connect greenfields areas to town centres
3.7	Foster a walking culture
3.8	Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs
4.2	Promote affordable housing benefits to the community
4.5	Promote housing diversity
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.7	Advocacy & partnerships
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Create socially sustainable places
5.4	Support ageing in place
5.5	Support Aboriginal connections to Country and Community
5.6	Support mixed tenure housing
5.8	Equitable access to high-speed internet
5.9	Community engagement and participation in strategic planning
6.3	Support innovative demonstration projects
6.4	Build upon Bellingen Shire's creative and design culture
6.7	Undertake greening programs
6.8	Support incentives, including heritage conservation grants
6.9	Shape local character in greenfield areas
7.1	Planning for long term water security
7.2	Looking after Water
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
7.7	Reduce construction and domestic waste
7.8	Mainstream sustainable living and reduce consumption impacts
7.9	Cooling urban areas
8.1	Encourage compact growth in rural areas
8.2	Support country town and village revitalisation
8.7	Support local food production and small farmers



## 4.2 Planning Proposals

Council will undertake several planning proposals over the life of the strategy to deliver upon the Action Plan. A planning proposal is the mechanism by which Council makes alterations to its Local Environmental Plan, which is the key planning document that determines what sorts of developments are permissible and where.

Key planning proposals that will be initiated and completed by Council over the life of the Strategy include;

- Amending the lot size map to reduce the minimum lot size for subdivision in town areas from 600m<sup>2</sup> to 500m<sup>2</sup>.
- Inserting provisions that will enable the community title subdivision of existing multiple occupancies.
- Amendments to the LEP and zone objectives that will properly convey to the community the strategic intent of Council to encourage increased levels of infill development, and a greater variety of housing product within greenfield areas.

A range of other planning proposals may also be initiated and completed by Council depending upon the outcomes of further investigations. This includes matters such as the Rural Lands Study and associated R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review. Planning Proposals that are initiated by Council will be scheduled for completion as part of the annual cycle of setting strategic planning priorities, and under normal resourcing allocations.

In addition to these matters, Council received several requests from interested parties during the two phases of community engagement that advocated for a change in development controls to facilitate particular development outcomes. Whilst most of these requests were not considered to be consistent with the strategy, it is considered that some of them are worthy of support. These are itemised below.

### Eco-village Pilot Project

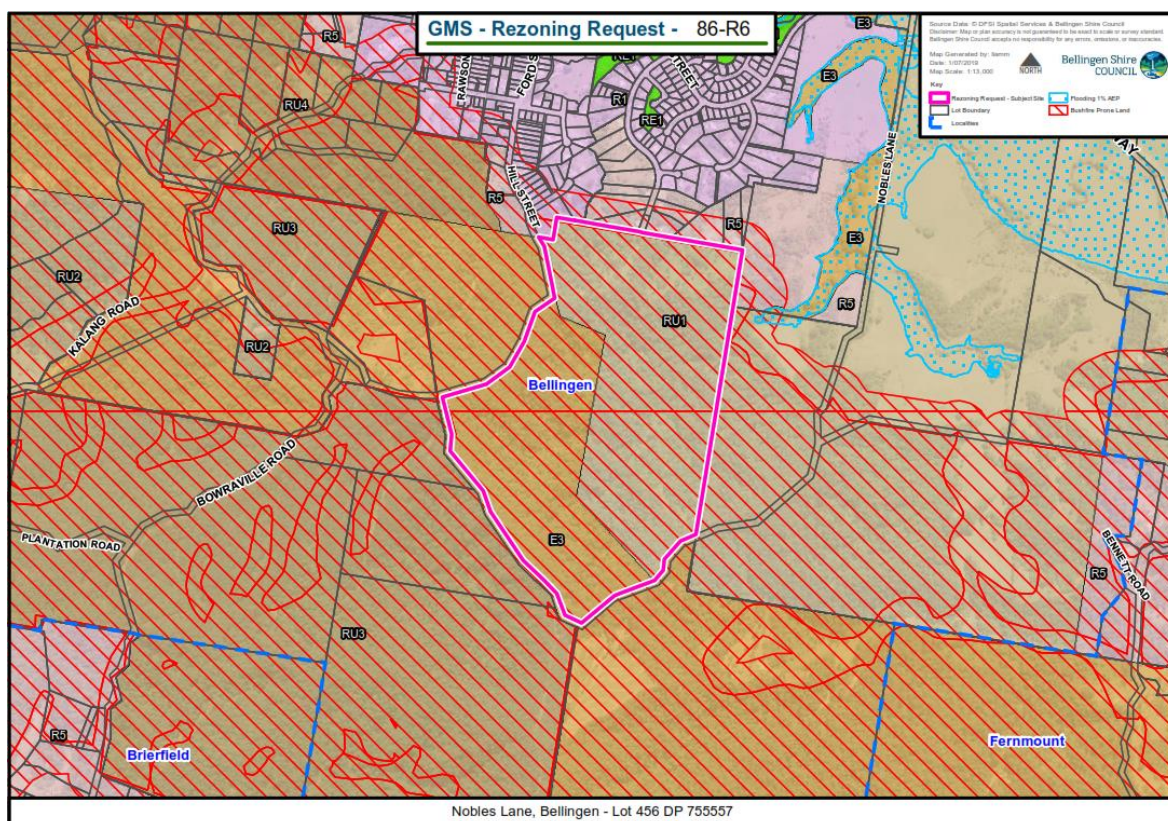
Eco-villages were broadly supported during the first phase of community engagement and there was continued support for this concept during the second phase. The Action Plan indicates support for this concept and elaborates upon some of the criteria that will be relevant to the selection of an appropriate site, and the types of outcomes that Council would expect from the proposed village.

The onus for developing a project, finding a site and constructing the enabling planning documents for such a project will fall chiefly upon the proponent rather than Council. Although the potential learnings from support of a pilot project of this nature are considered important, and may lead to the subsequent development of planning policies to facilitate more of this type of development, there are over 60 other actions within the strategy that are more central to achieving the housing vision for the shire and that deserve priority in terms of the allocation of resources by Council.

### Rezoning Request – Land at end of Endeavour Drive Bellingen currently zoned RU1 (Primary Production) and E3 (Environmental Management).

Council received a request to rezone the subject land during the initial exhibition of the “Homes for Our Future” document in 2018. This request was carefully considered by Council at the time, and it was recommended that Council support the rezoning subject to the resolution of bushfire and sewer capacity issues.

The location of the land is shown in the map extract below.



The proposed rezoning would allow for a community title subdivision of the land to create approximately 80 lots, with most of the site being protected via the registration of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site over the property. The rezoning request is supported having regard to matters such as the environmental focus of the proposal, the community title status (which means key infrastructure such as roads are not owned or maintained by Council) and the potential to increase the variety of options for housing in the Shire.

Comments received from the NSW Department of Planning Industry & Environment have indicated that it would be appropriate to also stipulate that the land the subject of the community title subdivision should be designated as an E4 – Environmental Living Zone, in view of the proposed environmental focus of the development. The objectives of the E4 Zone seek to permit low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values, and to ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.

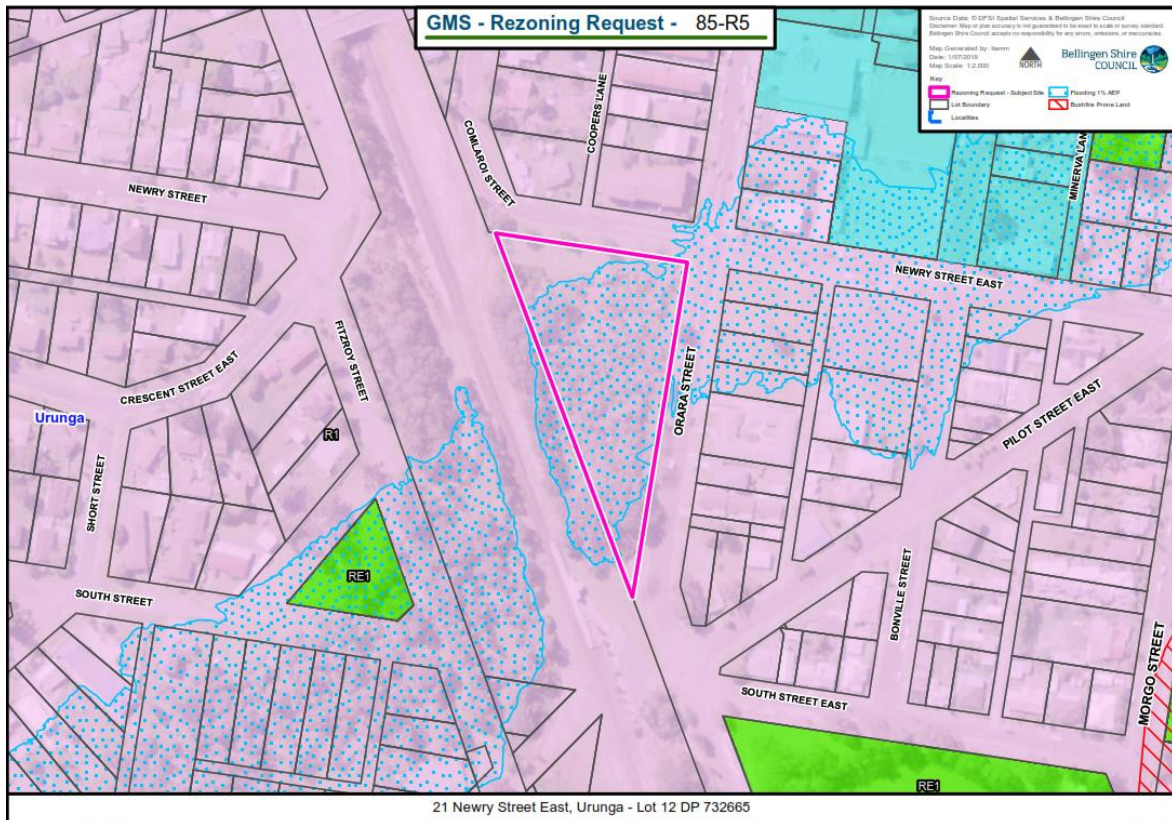
The application of the E4 zone is considered to have merit. It distinguishes the proposed development from the conventional “greenfield” offering that will remain available elsewhere within Bellinghen and will assist in managing expectations regarding development in this area.

Accordingly, subject to the submission of an appropriately detailed and justified planning proposal request from the proponents, and registration of a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement over the property, it is considered that the request is strategically consistent with the strategy and capable of support.

#### **Rezoning request – Rezone part of site from R1 (General Residential) to E3 (Environmental Management) – 21 Newry Street East, Urunga.**

Council received a request from the owner of the land to rezone part of this property, in order to better reflect its constrained nature and limited development potential. The location of the land is shown in the map extract below.





The majority of the floodprone land on this property is likely to comprise the “Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains of the NSW North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner bioregions endangered ecological community (EEC)” . The request to limit development potential on this land by virtue of an E3 zoning is an appropriate response to the constrained nature of the land, and is strategically consistent with the strategy, which in general terms aims to limit new residential development in areas with significant development constraints such as habitat or flood affectation.

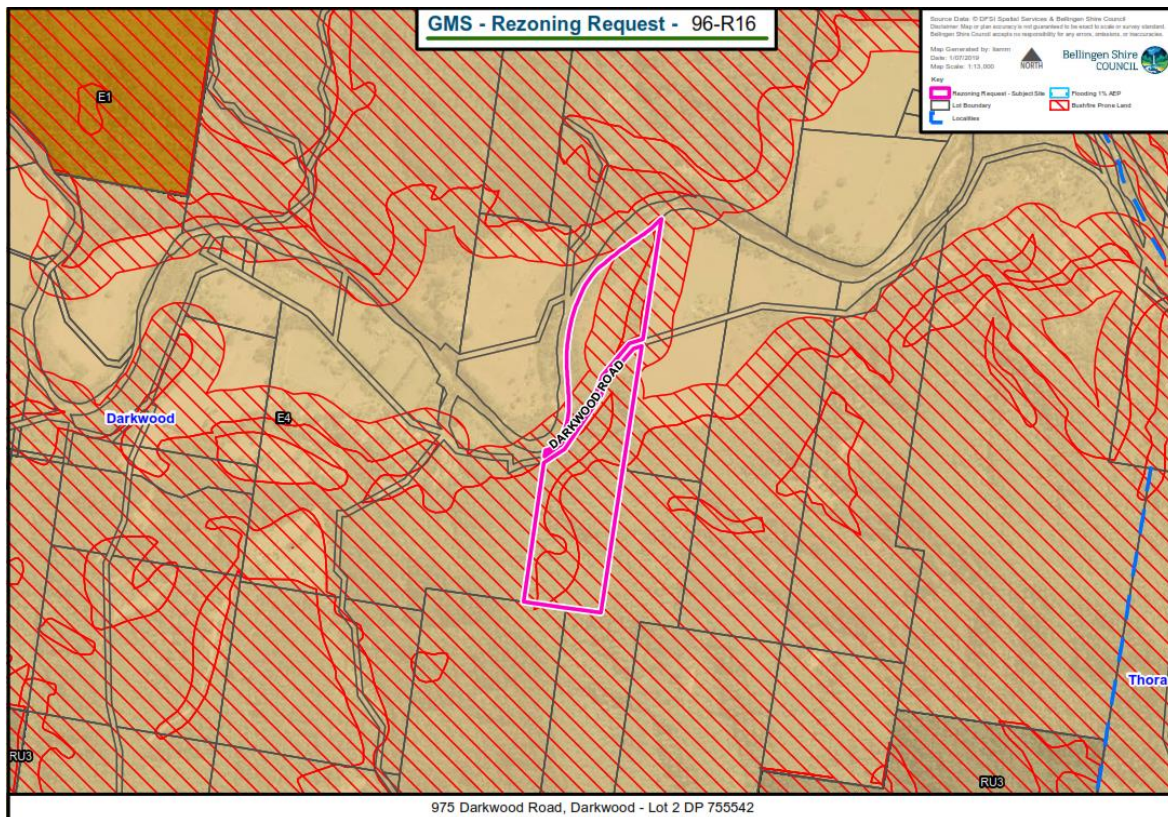
It is expected that this request can be facilitated when Council next undertakes a “housekeeping” amendment to its Local Environmental Plan

#### **Rezoning Request – Seek Dwelling Entitlement, 975 Darkwood Road, Thora**

Council received a request from a planning consultant engaged by the landowner requesting that Council amend its LEP to provide the subject land with a “dwelling entitlement”. The land formerly had the ability for a dwelling to be erected upon it, however planning controls were changed before the owners were able to build a dwelling on the land, meaning that this is now no longer permissible.

The location of the land is shown in the map extract below.





Council has historically supported requests of this nature. Specifically, it was common practice for properties that had been recognised on a Council file as meeting the pre-requisites to be considered a “de-facto” concessional lot to be afforded a dwelling entitlement. A review of the property files has uncovered the relevant written evidence confirming that this was the case for this property and accordingly, it is recommended that this property is now also recognised as such and appropriate provisions are inserted into the BLEP 2010 to allow for the erection of a dwelling on the subject property.

It is noted that resolution of this matter is not central to the housing aspirations of the Shire, however Council has historically used the Growth Management Strategy process as an opportunity to indicate its support for such matters. It is expected that this request can be facilitated when Council next undertakes a “housekeeping” amendment to its Local Environmental Plan.

## 4.3 Monitoring and Reviews

Planning strategies need to be adaptable to change and long-term strategies such as this Housing Strategy, which spans 20 years or more, require consistent monitoring and reporting, to ensure outcomes are consistent with what has been predicted and planned and that performance measures are being met.

It is important to be transparent and to let the community know how the strategy is being used and the progression of the proposed actions. Frequent data collection and reporting is vital.

The Strategy should also be referred to/considered and reported against wherever a large planning issue or development proposal is considered.

Significant change may occur over the life of this 20 year strategy. Therefore reviews, both minor and major will be required to ensure the Strategy best serves the community's needs of the time.

Much of the data presented in this report is very dynamic, for example house price data and affordability trends and various government and non-government agencies are constantly updating data. An action of this strategy is to establish baseline data and consistently monitor changes in order to report upon housing targets and other actions such as improving affordability.

### Review Periods

The Housing Strategy should undergo a minor review at 7 years from adoption to coincide with Council review of other important planning strategies, such as Local Strategic Planning Statements, with the need for any larger review contingent upon significant changes emerging in demographics, market trends or environmental factors.

After undergoing considerable community engagement and being adopted by Councillors and the NSW Government, a Housing Strategy should remain relevant over the long-term and be relied upon irrespective of political cycles, offering greater certainty to landowners, residents and the wider community, business and the development industry, investors, advocacy groups, agencies and other levels of government regarding the strategic direction and future aspirations of the Shire. However, the Strategy may need to be refined following any major unforeseen events – e.g. if growth projections are risk of being exceeded or if new vital planning information comes to hand (e.g. updated natural hazard modelling).

### Monitoring Actions

1. A Baseline Data Report will be written, to establish baseline (or base case/current) data on performance measures. Where this data does not yet exist, efforts should be made to access it, or plans made to enable collection of this data into the future. The progress of the Strategy and efficacy of the actions will be reported against using data compared with the baseline.
2. Monitoring of housing approval and construction data will be improved, to enable analysis of changes in housing types (housing diversity) over time.
3. Local housing affordability data should be collected and reported upon.
4. Reviews and audits of how the Housing Strategy is being used internally, across various divisions of Council will also occur and be reported upon to management, to ensure the Strategy is embedded across the organisation and remains relevant.

### Reporting Actions

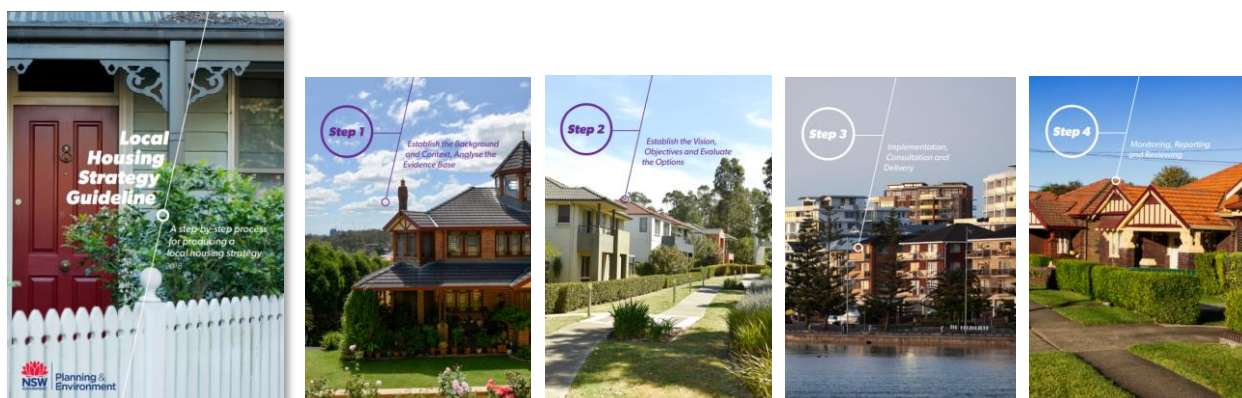
1. The first report on progress of the Housing Strategy should be prepared and reported to Council (and made public) one year from adoption of the Strategy.
2. After the first report, reporting on progress of this Strategy should be biennial (every two years) and made accessible to the public.
3. Consideration should be given to providing easy access to housing data to the public, for example via a webpage, or online mapping system.



## Appendix A – Consistency with NSW Planning Instruments

### Local Housing Strategy Guideline

The Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Government's **Local Housing Strategy Guidelines and Template**.



<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Local-Housing-Strategy-Guideline-and-Template>

### North Coast Regional Plan

The Local Housing Strategy for Bellingen Shire is consistent with the North Coast Regional Plan as discussed in Section 1.3 of this document. The North Coast Regional Plan is a comprehensive document with over 25 directions and hundreds of actions. This section discusses the Bellingen Shire Local Housing Strategy's consistency with additional sections of the North Coast Regional Plan. Consistency with the North Coast Regional Plan is a requirement of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, before it can endorse a Housing Strategy/Growth Management Strategy.



<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/North-Coast/Plan>



## Planning Principles Guiding Growth on The North Coast (Page 16)

Principle	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
Principle 1: Direct growth to identified Urban Growth Areas	The Local Housing Strategy does not propose additional urban development outside of identified Urban Growth Areas (UGA).
Principle 2: Manage the sensitive coastal strip	The Local Housing Strategy does not propose expansion of residential zones within the coastal strip. The existing urban release area of South Urunga (zoned R1 General Residential in a previous Growth Management Strategy and part of the UGA) will need to consider protection of coastal ecology in design and during delivery of new housing in the area.
Principle 3: Provide great places to live and work in a unique environment	The Housing Strategy makes existing centres the focus for growth – for housing diversity, jobs and activities, making communities more active and vibrant, reducing pressure in the environment and making it easier for residents to travel to work and access services.

## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
1.1 Focus future urban development to mapped urban growth areas	Complies
1.2 Review areas identified as 'under investigation' within urban growth areas to identify and map sites of potentially high environmental value	N/A no areas 'under investigation' in Bellingen Shire
1.3 Identify residential, commercial or industrial uses in urban growth areas by developing local growth management strategies endorsed by DPE	Complies. The Housing Strategy forms part of a LGMS
1.4 Prepare land release criteria to assess appropriate locations for future residential, commercial and industrial uses	N/A This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE)
2.1 Focus development to areas of least biodiversity sensitivity in the region and implement the 'avoid, minimise, offset' hierarchy to biodiversity, including areas of high environmental value	Complies.
2.2 Ensure local plans manage marine environments, water catchment areas and groundwater sources to avoid potential impacts.	Complies – see water security planning actions in Action Plan
3.1 Reduce the risk from natural hazards, including the projected effects of climate change, by identifying, avoiding and managing vulnerable areas and hazards.	Complies
3.2 Review and update floodplain risk, bushfire and coastal management mapping to manage risk, particularly where urban growth is being investigated.	Complies – new action added to final Housing Strategy – <i>Action 7.1 Review and update natural hazard risk plans</i>
3.3 Incorporate new knowledge on regional climate projections and related cumulative impacts in local plans for urban development.	Complies - <a href="#">Bellingen Climate Risk Report 2010</a> considered as part of LHS and Bellingen Shire Council has declared climate emergency, elevating climate change considerations in strategies and operations.
4.1 Diversify the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network	This action requires high level co-ordination between federal, state and local governments and electricity providers. Housing Strategy provides good foundation for concentrating growth in areas already serviced by electricity network.
4.2 Enable appropriate smaller-scale renewable energy projects using bio-waste, solar, wind, small-scale hydro, geothermal or other innovative technologies	Complies – see Action Plan (Strategy 7)
4.3 Promote appropriate smaller and community scale renewable energy projects	Complies – see Action Plan (Strategy 7)
5.1 Collaborate on regional and intra-regional housing and employment land delivery and industry development	Complies

## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
5.2 Integrate cross-border land use planning between NSW and SE Qld, and remove barriers to economic, housing and jobs growth	N/A This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others)
5.3 Encourage ongoing cooperation and land use planning between Gold Coast City Council and Tweed Shire Council	N/A
5.4 Prepare a regional economic development strategy that drives economic growth opportunities by identifying key enabling infrastructure and other policy interventions to unlock growth	N/A This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others)
6.1 Facilitate economic activity around industry anchors such as health, education, airport facilities by considering new infrastructure needs and introducing planning controls that encourage clusters of related activity	Complies – infill growth support industry/service clusters
6.2 Promote knowledge industries by applying flexible planning controls, providing business park development opportunities and identifying opportunities for start-up industries	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
6.3 Reinforce centres through local growth management strategies and local environmental plans as primary mixed-use locations for commerce, housing, tourism, social activity and regional services	Complies
6.4 Focus retail and commercial activities in existing centres and develop place-making focused planning strategies for centres.	Complies
6.5 Promote and enable an appropriate mix of land uses and prevent the encroachment of sensitive uses on employment land through local planning controls.	Complies
6.6 Deliver an adequate supply of employment land through local growth management strategies and local environmental plans to support jobs growth.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
6.7 Ensure employment land delivery is maintained through an annual North Coast Housing and Land Monitor	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
7.1 Prepare action plans for regional cities	N/A This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others). Bellingen Shire has been involved in Action Plan discussions with Coffs Harbour and DPIE as a community of interest
8.1 Facilitate appropriate large-scale tourism developments in prime tourism development areas such as Tweed Heads, Tweed Coast, Ballina, Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
8.2 Facilitate tourism and visitor accommodation and supporting land uses in coastal and rural hinterland locations through local growth management strategies and local environmental plans.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
8.3 Prepare destination management plans or other tourism-focused strategies that: • identify culturally appropriate Aboriginal tourism opportunities; • encourage tourism development in natural areas that support conservation outcomes; and • strategically plan for a growing international tourism market.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
8.4 Promote opportunities to expand visitation to regionally significant nature-based tourism places, such as Ellenborough Falls, Dorrigo National Park, Wollumbin-Mount Warning National Park, Iluka Nature Reserve and Yuraygir Coastal Walk.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
8.5 Preserve the region's existing tourist and visitor accommodation by directing permanent residential accommodation away from tourism developments, except where it is ancillary to existing tourism developments or part of an area otherwise identified for urban expansion in an endorsed local growth management strategy.	Complies

## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
9.1 Enhance the competitive value of the region by encouraging business and employment activities that leverage major inter-regional transport connections, such as the Pacific Highway, to South East Queensland and the Hunter.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
9.2 Identify buffer and mitigation measures to minimise the impact of development on regionally significant transport infrastructure including regional and state road network and rail corridors	Complies
9.3 Ensure the effective management of the State and regional road network by: • preventing development directly adjoining the Pacific Highway; • preventing additional direct 'at grade' access to motorway-class sections of the Pacific Highway; • locating highway service centres on the Pacific Highway at Chinderah, Ballina, Maclean, Woolgoolga, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey and Port Macquarie, approved by the Department of Planning and Environment and Roads and Maritime Services; and • identifying strategic sites for major road freight transport facilities.	Complies and to be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
10.1 Deliver airport precinct plans for Ballina Byron, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie that capitalise on opportunities to diversify and maximise the potential of value-adding industries close to airports	N/A This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others).
10.2 Consider airport-related employment opportunities and precincts that can capitalise on the expansion proposed around Gold Coast Airport.	N/A
10.3 Protect the North Coast Rail Line and high-speed rail corridor to ensure network opportunities are not sterilised by incompatible land uses or land fragmentation.	Complies
10.4 Provide public transport where the size of the urban area has the potential to generate sufficient demand.	Consultation with DPIE has indicated Bellingen Shire is unlikely to reach a size to generate sufficient demand for public transport. As transport technology advances over the coming decades however, additional opportunities for smaller population centres such as Bellingen could arise. Public transport would be beneficial for the area's population.
10.5 Deliver a safe and efficient transport network to serve future release areas.	Transport network planning is required for urban release areas such as South Urunga and North Bellingen. The Housing Strategy recognises the need for additional infrastructure studies in growth areas.
11.1 Enable the growth of the agricultural sector by directing urban and rural residential development away from important farmland and identifying locations to support existing and small-lot primary production, such as horticulture in Coffs Harbour.	Complies – also to be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
11.2 Deliver a consistent management approach to important farmland across the region by updating the Northern Rivers Farmland Protection Project (2005) and Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project (2008).	Complies – also to be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
11.3 Identify and protect intensive agriculture clusters in local plans to avoid land use conflicts, particularly with residential and rural residential expansion.	Complies – also to be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
11.4 Encourage niche commercial, tourist and recreation activities that complement and promote a stronger agricultural sector, and build the sector's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
11.5 Address sector-specific considerations for agricultural industries through local plans.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
12.1 Promote the expansion of food and fibre production, agrichemicals, farm machinery, wholesale and distribution, freight and logistics, and processing through flexible planning provisions in local growth management strategies and local environmental plans.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy



## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
12.2 Encourage the co-location of intensive primary industries, such as feedlots and compatible processing activities.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
12.3 Examine options for agribusiness to leverage proximity from the Gold Coast and Brisbane West Wellcamp airports.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
12.4 Facilitate investment in the agricultural supply chain by protecting assets, including freight and logistics facilities, from land use conflicts arising from the encroachment of incompatible land uses	Complies & to be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
13.1 Enable the development of the region's natural, mineral and forestry resources by directing to suitable locations land uses such as residential development that are sensitive to impacts from noise, dust and light interference	Complies
13.2 Plan for the ongoing productive use of lands with regionally significant construction material resources in locations with established infrastructure and resource accessibility	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
14.1 Prepare precinct plans in growth areas, such as Kingscliff, or centres bypassed by the Pacific Highway, such as Woodburn and Grafton, to guide development and establish appropriate land use zoning, development standards and developer contributions.	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE) (Urunga may qualify for precinct planning)
14.2 Deliver precinct plans that are consistent with the Precinct Plan Guidelines (Appendix C).	See above
15.1 Deliver best-practice guidelines for planning, designing and developing healthy built environments that respond to the ageing demographic and subtropical climate.	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE). Complementary local actions described in Action Plan.
15.2 Facilitate more recreational walking and cycling paths and expand interregional and intra-regional walking and cycling links, including the NSW Coastline Cycleway	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others)
15.3 Implement actions and invest in boating infrastructure priorities identified in regional boating plans to improve boating safety, boat storage and waterway access	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE and others)
15.4 Create socially inclusive communities by establishing social infrastructure benchmarks, minimum standards and social impact assessment frameworks within local planning.	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE). Complementary local actions described in Action Plan.
15.5 Deliver crime prevention through environmental design outcomes through urban design processes.	Complies
16.1 Develop partnerships with Aboriginal communities to facilitate engagement during the planning process, including the development of engagement protocols.	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE). Complementary local actions described in Engagement Reports and Action Plan
16.2 Ensure Aboriginal communities are engaged throughout the preparation of local growth management strategies and local environmental plans.	See Engagement Reports and Action Plan.
17.1 Deliver opportunities to increase the economic independence of Aboriginal communities through training, employment and tourism.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
17.2 Foster closer cooperation with Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify the unique potential and assets of the North Coast communities.	See Engagement Reports and Action Plan also to be to be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy & Rural Lands Strategy
17.3 Identify priority sites with economic development potential that Local Aboriginal Land Councils may wish to consider for further investigation.	See Engagement Reports and Action Plan. Also to be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
18.1 Ensure Aboriginal objects and places are protected, managed and respected in accordance with legislative requirements and the wishes of local Aboriginal communities.	Complies – see Action Plan

## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
18.2 Undertake Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments to inform the design of planning and development proposals so that impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage are minimised and appropriate heritage management mechanisms are identified.	Complies – see Action Plan
18.3 Develop local heritage studies in consultation with the local Aboriginal community, and adopt appropriate measures in planning strategies and local plans to protect Aboriginal heritage.	Complies – see Action Plan
18.4 Prepare maps to identify sites of Aboriginal heritage in 'investigation' areas, where culturally appropriate, to inform planning strategies and local plans to protect Aboriginal heritage.	Complies – see Action Plan
19.1 Ensure best-practice guidelines are considered such as the Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter for Places of Cultural Significance and the NSW Heritage Manual when assessing heritage significance	Complies – see Action Plan
19.2 Prepare, review and update heritage studies in consultation with the wider community to identify and protect historic heritage items, and include appropriate local planning controls.	Complies – see Action Plan
19.3 Deliver the adaptive or sympathetic use of heritage items and assets	Complies – Housing Strategy focuses on protecting local character, heritage and good design
20.1 Deliver new high-quality development that protects the distinct character of the North Coast, consistent with the North Coast Urban Design Guidelines (2009).	Complies – Housing Strategy focuses on protecting local character, heritage and good design
20.2 Review the North Coast Urban Design Guidelines (2009).	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE). Complementary local actions described in Action Plan.
21.1 Undertake detailed infrastructure service planning to support proposals for new major release areas.	N/A no new major release areas are proposed. Infrastructure service planning is required for South Urunga and other URAs across the Shire
21.2 Maximise the cost-effective and efficient use of infrastructure by directing development towards existing infrastructure or promoting the co-location of new infrastructure.	Complies – infill achieves this aim
22.1 Deliver an appropriate supply of residential land within local growth management strategies and local plans to meet the region's projected housing needs	Complies
22.2 Facilitate housing and accommodation options for temporary residents by: • preparing planning guidelines for seasonal and itinerant workers accommodation to inform the location and design of future facilities; and • working with councils to consider opportunities to permit such facilities through local environmental plans.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy & Rural Lands Strategy
22.3 Monitor the supply of residential land and housing through the North Coast Housing and Land Monitor.	Complies – refinements will be made to monitoring data relating to housing supply to better capture housing diversity statistics
23.1 Encourage housing diversity by delivering 40 per cent of new housing in the form of dual occupancies, apartments, townhouses, villas or dwellings on lots less than 400 square metres, by 2036.	Complies
23.2 Develop local growth management strategies to respond to changing housing needs, including household and demographic changes, and support initiatives to increase ageing in place	Complies, LHS is part of LGMS

## North Coast Regional Plan Actions (pages 17-57)

Action	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
24.1 Facilitate the delivery of well-planned rural residential housing areas by: • identifying new rural residential areas in a local growth management strategy or rural residential land release strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment; and • ensure that such proposals are consistent with the Settlement Planning Guidelines: Mid and Far North Coast Regional Strategies (2007) or land release criteria (once finalised).	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy
24.2 Enable sustainable use of the region's sensitive coastal strip by ensuring new rural residential areas are located outside the coastal strip, unless already identified in a local growth management strategy or rural residential land release strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment.	Complies – no rural residential housing proposed in the Coastal Strip. A proposal to rezone land at South Arm Road Urunga (in the Coastal Strip) has been postponed for consideration as part of future Rural Lands Strategy.
25.1 Deliver more opportunities for affordable housing by incorporating policies and tools into local growth management strategies and local planning controls that will enable a greater variety of housing types and incentivise private investment in affordable housing.	Complies – see Action Plan
25.2 Prepare guidelines for local housing strategies that will provide guidance on planning for local affordable housing needs.	This action is to be completed by state government (DPIE). Complementary local actions described in Action Plan.

## Local Government Narratives Regional Priorities (page 72)

Priority	Local Housing Strategy Alignment
Identify additional urban and employment investigation areas for inclusion in the urban growth areas, to secure future housing and employment land supply in proximity to Bellingen and Urunga.	Local Housing Strategy investigations found that existing capacity exists in already zoned urban growth areas, both for infill and greenfield housing and additional residential areas are not required at this time. The community also told us they preferred infill as a growth option. Additional employment lands will be investigated as part of Employment Lands Strategy
Support the growth and diversification of the Bellingen Shire's agricultural base by leveraging the strength of dairy and livestock activities to encourage new opportunities for agribusiness, support emerging organic and boutique food production and maximise connections with the New England.	To be considered as part of Rural Lands Strategy. The Housing Strategy protects rural land from encroachment of residential estates and potential land use conflicts.
Identify opportunities to expand nature based, adventure and cultural tourism by leveraging natural and heritage assets and the emerging creative industries sector.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
Foster stronger connections and alignment with the Coffs Harbour and Nambucca local government areas.	Complies & to be considered as part of Employment and Rural Lands Strategies
Support the development of employment land at Raleigh to maximise the opportunities associated with the Pacific Highway upgrade and supplement employment land delivery in Coffs Harbour.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
Protect regionally important farmland areas, including the Dorrigo Plateau and the Kalang and Bellinger valleys, to support the agricultural sector.	Complies. The Housing Strategy protects rural land from encroachment of residential estates and potential land use conflicts.
Identify opportunities to enhance natural and cultural tourism assets such as the Dorrigo and Bellinger River national parks, and coastal and heritage assets that support the tourism sector.	To be considered as part of Employment Lands Strategy
Deliver housing at North Bellingen, South Urunga and East Dorrigo	Complies
Enhance the variety of housing options to cater for an ageing population in Bellingen and Dorrigo, and support the distinctive character of Bellingen Shire's towns and villages.	Complies



## State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)

State Environment Planning Policies (SEPPs) are environmental planning instruments which address numerous planning issues within the State. They apply to all areas within NSW (except for site-specific SEPPs and where areas are excluded in certain SEPPs). SEPPs override local planning instruments where there is any inconsistency.

The table below illustrates the Housing Strategy's alignment with all relevant SEPPs. The year in parentheses represents when the SEPP was first introduced, although many SEPPs have been amended (some numerous times) since their introduction. This list represents SEPPs current as of October-November 2019. For more information on SEPPs, visit [www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
SEPP No 1—Development Standards (1980)	This SEPP allows for requests to be made to vary development standards where a development proposal meets the underlying intent of a standard but does not comply with the numeric/prescriptive controls. Clause 4.6 Exceptions to Development Standards in all Standard Instrument LEPs) also provides a mechanism for varying development standards. These mechanisms exist to provide flexibility in the planning system. To justify a variation to development standards a series of steps must be followed and certain criteria met.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP No. 1 or Clause 4.6 of the LEP.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 19—Bushland in Urban Areas (1986)	This SEPP aims to protect and preserve bushland within the urban areas of Greater Sydney.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire – only applies to Greater Sydney area.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 21—Caravan Parks (1992)*	Provides permissibility for caravan parks that overrides local LEP controls, but provides that a caravan park can only be permitted with consent from Council. Provides a series of assessment considerations and standards/restrictions on the operation of any new caravan parks approved under this SEPP.	The Housing Strategy does not limit the application of SEPP 21. Caravan Parks can be a form of low-cost housing, however market, development and tourism pressures are influencing the affordability and security of this traditionally lower-cost housing type. Legislation, strategies and policies surrounding caravan parks require review and streamlining at both the State and Local government levels, especially with regards to provision/retention of secure low-cost housing and the quality and amenity of housing in these parks.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 33—Hazardous and Offensive Development (1992)	This SEPP provides controls about where hazardous or offensive industries can locate, definitions of such development (and storage facilities) and provides requirements on safety and pollution control.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP 33.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 36—Manufactured Home Estates (1993)*	Provides permissibility for manufactured home estates on any land that may be developed for a caravan park (regardless of local LEP controls) but there are many excluded areas (all non-urban areas of Bellingen Shire are excluded) and locational and servicing requirements.	The Housing Strategy does not limit the application of SEPP 36. As for provisions relating to caravan parks, legislation relating to manufactured home estates requires review and streamlining, especially in relation to provision of long-term affordable housing opportunities.

\*For more information on legislation relating to caravan parks and manufactured home estates see: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Caravan-Camping-and-Manufactured-Homes>

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy No 44— Koala Habitat Protection (1995)	<p>This SEPP encourages conservation and management of koala habitat. While the application of SEPP 44 has led to areas of koala habitat being protected, koala populations in NSW continue to decline.</p> <p>This SEPP is under review by the NSW State Government in order to update controls to better protect koala habitat.</p>	<p>This SEPP applies, in addition to Bellingen Shire’s Koala Plan of Management (prepared in accordance with this SEPP). The Housing Strategy supports application of these policies to protect koala habitat and supports review of this SEPP to better protect koala habitat.</p> <p>Loss, modification and fragmentation of habitat and activities associated with urban development (vehicle strikes, dog attacks) are listed as threats to koala populations in NSW. Recent bushfires have further threatened koala populations and decimated habitat.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy for Bellingen Shire focuses on infill development and the position of the strategy to not to expand urban growth areas into natural areas supports protection of koala habitat.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy No 47— Moore Park Showground (1995)	Provides development controls for Moore Park in Sydney.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy No 50— Canal Estate Development (1997)	Prohibits canal estate development. Canal estate development involves artificially creating waterways or land masses for residential purposes and can have negative environmental impacts and increase flooding and inundation risks.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP 50. Residential canal estate development is considered inappropriate for Bellingen Shire and its prohibition at the State level is supported.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 55— Remediation of Land (1998)	Provides a State wide planning approach to the remediation of contaminated land.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP 55. Bellingen Shire has a Contaminated Lands Policy and register and new development must consider contamination issues. The Housing Strategy does not propose additional urban expansion into rural areas (which could potentially be contaminated).
State Environmental Planning Policy No 64— Advertising and Signage (2001)	This SEPP provides limits and standards relating to advertising signage.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP 64.

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy No 65— Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (2002)	<p>This SEPP promotes better apartment design by establishing a consistent approach to the design and assessment of apartments and the way they are assessed by councils across the State.</p> <p>The Apartment Design Guide explains how to apply SEPP 65's design principles to the design of new apartments.</p> <p>The Guide is a useful tool for councils, planners, architects and developers who are planning residential apartments, designing a building, or assessing applications. The ASDG also needs to be considered in the preparation of local DCPs. The ADG also supports improved energy efficient design.</p> <p>SEPP 65 allows councils to appoint design review panels, which can advise on whether an apartment development meets the design principles and, if not, make recommendations on ways to comply.</p> <p>More information can be found at: <a href="https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Better-Apartments">https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Better-Apartments</a></p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of SEPP 65.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy emphasises the importance of quality design processes, and broadly supports the aims and design guidelines associated with this SEPP.</p> <p>This SEPP applies to buildings that are 3 or more storeys high (with 4 or more dwellings) therefore is only applied in limited cases across the Shire (the 10m height limit offers few instances/opportunities for 3 storey development or higher).</p> <p>Nevertheless this SEPP is recognised as an important planning and design tool and can achieve good outcomes where it is applied correctly with increased focus on the ADG's principles of design and in response to a development's unique context. Unfortunately poor outcomes can result where the principles of the design guide are ignored by consent authorities and too much focus is given to compliance with the prescriptive elements.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Aboriginal Land) (2019)	<p>The SEPP provides for the making of 'development delivery plans' ('DDPs') for land owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils ('LALCs') which must be considered when preparing planning proposals and determining development applications.</p> <p>This SEPP currently only applies to certain mapped lands owned by the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. This pilot project and the operation of the Aboriginal Land SEPP will be reviewed 12 months following its commencement.</p>	<p>This SEPP is currently being tested via a pilot project, but should its provisions be extended to other areas, it may provide opportunities for Local Aboriginal Land Councils in Bellingen Shire to make development delivery plans on Aboriginal-owned land and allow LALCs to create new economic, employment and housing opportunities. This is supported by the Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy and associated actions.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004	<p>BASIX requirements were introduced to reduce water and energy consumption in homes across NSW.</p> <p>BASIX applies to all residential dwelling types and is part of the development application process in NSW – all new dwellings and significant alterations and additions require compliance with BASIX. BASIX is assessed online using the BASIX assessment tool. The tool checks elements of a proposed design against sustainability targets. BASIX targets for energy and thermal comfort were increased in 2017.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of BASIX.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy places a strong emphasis on sustainable house design and building practices and seeks to encourage development that goes beyond the minimum sustainability requirements of BASIX. The Housing Strategy supports continually improving environmental performance and emphasising the role of good design to improve sustainability outcomes in house building and living (the operation phase of homes). The strategy supports wider community understanding of BASIX and other sustainability (and cost saving) design measures, including adoption of suggestions outlined in the UNSW and University of Canberra Review/Study on Perceptions of BASIX.~</p>

~ <https://www.basix.nsw.gov.au/iframe/images/reports/User-survey-Overview.pdf>



Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
<p>State Environmental Planning Policy No 70—Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes) (2002)</p>	<p>The SEPP allows councils to levy contributions for affordable housing. In lieu of a monetary contribution, completed affordable dwellings can be dedicated to a Community Housing Provider to be managed as affordable housing.</p> <p>It is optional for a council to develop an affordable housing contribution scheme. Affordable housing contribution schemes are council-led documents which set out how, where, and at what rate development contributions can be collected by councils for affordable housing. Until recently this option was only available and used by the City of Sydney. In 2019, the SEPP was amended to allow all council areas the option of charging a levy for affordable housing development fund, recognising the significant state-wide issue of deteriorating housing affordability.</p> <p>The guidelines attached to this SEPP recognise that an affordable housing contribution scheme may not work in all areas and suits specific contexts.</p> <p>There is helpful guidance within the guidelines, relating to the management of any eventual affordable housing and Community Housing Provider requirements and resources.</p> <p>For more information see:  <a href="https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Diverse-and-affordable-housing/SEPP-70-Affordable-Housing-Revised-Schemes">https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Diverse-and-affordable-housing/SEPP-70-Affordable-Housing-Revised-Schemes</a></p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not propose to develop an affordable housing contributions scheme for Bellingen Shire at this time. This is because the current low growth market and predicted housing growth across the Shire would be unlikely to produce sufficient levy income to provide for any timely delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>It is also likely that the costs of an effective levy would render many developments in current market conditions unviable. For this SEPP 70 mechanism/levy to work efficiently to produce enough income to fund a reasonable amount of affordable housing in this LGA, significant rezoning of land from rural to residential land would be required (capturing land value uplift) which is contrary to the direction of the Housing Strategy which focuses on infill development using existing ample residential capacity and does not propose rezoning of land, or density uplift to accommodate more residential development.</p> <p>Thus, this levy is considered more useful for high growth areas such as the Sydney metro areas, where medium-high density housing is an already established/accepted housing type or where significant tracts of land are to be rezoned for new residential suburbs and is not appropriate in the Bellingen context currently. If other Councils in the region did not adopt the levy, and Bellingen was on its own, this would act as a disincentive to development, in an already low growth area, precluding additional housing supply.</p> <p>In addition, developing a scheme is resource-intensive and expensive. Bellingen Shire does require affordable housing however; alternative measures are proposed to influence affordable housing in the area, consistent with the guidelines attached to this SEPP.</p> <p>An opportunity to utilise the provisions of this SEPP may arise should any greenfield areas be investigated for upzoning and afforded additional density, or if any R5 lands are proposed to be rezoned to R1 during the life of the strategy. In the longer term, if market conditions changed significantly in the Shire and rezoning of land to enable more residential development was reconsidered (once existing capacity is taken up) Council may consider creating an affordable housing contributions scheme.</p>

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009	<p>The policy's intent is to facilitate the increased supply and diversity of affordable rental and social housing in NSW.</p> <p>The ARHSEPP covers housing types including in-fill affordable housing, along with secondary dwellings (granny flats), boarding houses, group homes, social housing and supportive accommodation.</p> <p>This SEPP provides a fast track approval process for secondary dwellings (granny flats) if they meet certain criteria.</p> <p>This SEPP also provides for the retention of existing affordable rental housing stock. Development applications to demolish, alter or add, change the use of, or strata subdivide existing low cost rental dwellings may require a contribution towards the provision of alternative affordable housing.</p>	<p>The Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy supports the aims of the ARHSEPP and also seeks to increase supply of housing types that provide greater affordability for the community. The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy advocates for additional government intervention in the provision of affordable housing. Whilst the intent of this SEPP is sound, it requires additional monitoring to gauge its effectiveness in providing genuine affordable housing and review to ensure its provisions are not being misused to provide additional development that is not truly affordable, especially for very low and low income earners. Recent academic research carried out by UNSW has indicated that often developments approved under the ARHSEPP are afforded density bonuses and additional yields without providing significant community benefits by way of improving overall housing affordability, especially for very low-low income earners.*</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018	<p>This SEPP updates and consolidates SEPP 14 (Coastal Wetlands), SEPP 26 (Littoral Rainforests) and SEPP 71 (Coastal Protection). These policies are now repealed.</p> <p>The Coastal Management SEPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continues strong protections for our coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests</li> <li>• Encourages appropriate development in environmentally sensitive areas such as near coastal lakes and waterways</li> <li>• Enshrines and promotes public access, use and enjoyment of our beaches and foreshore areas</li> <li>• Advocates good design outcomes in coastal areas</li> <li>• Promotes development that minimises risk to human life and property in areas subject to coastal hazards.</li> </ul> <p>The Coastal Management SEPP specifies how development proposals are to be assessed if they fall within the coastal zone and includes maps which show what type of coastal area a property falls within (different planning controls apply to each coastal area type and some areas may fit into more than one area type). The Coastal Management SEPP does not change what is permissible on any land, does not rezone land and does not prohibit development. The SEPP maps are a planning overlay that identify assets and values of the land and the SEPP controls inform development assessment. This will maintain and enhance the attributes of the coast and coastal living for the benefit of current and future generations.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy is consistent with this SEPP because it does not propose to rezone any coastal areas for additional housing development and instead focuses on promoting infill development in existing towns (in areas that are not affected by 1% AEP flood extent of mapped coastal hazards as currently modelled).</p> <p>Development proposed in mapped coastal areas will need to take into account the provisions of the SEPP – mapped areas include existing residential areas of Urunga, Mylestom, Raleigh, Repton and parts of Bellingen (associated with the tidal extent of Bellinger River and surrounds)</p> <p>This SEPP will apply to the development of the South Urunga Urban Release Area – which was rezoned for greenfield development as part of a previous housing strategy.</p>

\* <https://cityfutures.be.unsw.edu.au/research/projects/affordable-housing-sepp-and-southern-sydney/>

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (Concurrences) 2018	An environmental planning instrument might require a state government agency to grant its concurrence to an application before it can be determined by the relevant council. This SEPP allows the Planning Secretary to elect to be the concurrence authority for certain development if state agencies do not respond to concurrence requests within 21 or 40 days depending on the type of application. This SEPP coincides with the introduction of an online concurrence and referral portal intended to make referral and concurrence processes easier and quicker.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017	This SEPP has provisions that will make it easier for child-care providers, schools, TAFEs and Universities to build new facilities and improve existing ones by streamlining approval processes (including making various types of development exempt or complying development) .	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008	<p>This SEPP sets out which types of works and development are exempt development (low impact and not requiring Council approval) and what types of development can be approved as Complying Development - a fast track approval process where you can apply for a Complying Development Certificate (CDC) instead of going through a Development Application (DA) process). CDCs can be approved by Council or a private accredited certifier.</p> <p>The SEPP contains requirements and standards that need to be met for development to be classified as either exempt or complying.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP. Whilst complying development is excluded in Bellingen Shire in areas affected by heritage, in environmentally sensitive or flood-affected areas, some complying development is permitted, particularly in new greenfield areas and will be expected as the Shire grows.</p> <p>Community engagement on the Housing Strategy noted many residents are concerned about ‘cookie cutter’ and environmentally-poor performing homes proliferating across the Shire, creating a ‘sameness’ and impacting negatively on local character. Unfortunately, the Complying Development Housing Code currently enables the building of standardised and context-insensitive homes. There is limited opportunity to require house design that is more responsive to local character and site opportunities and constraints using this approval pathway. The Housing Strategy seeks to educate residents and provide better information and processes to support design-led planning and development and would encourage amendments to the General Housing Code to require more consideration of sustainability and design – seeking better protection of local character not necessarily in a prescriptive manner but using a place-based design response or robust independent design verification process.</p> <p>The introduction of the Low-rise Medium Density Housing Code (or Two Storey Housing Diversity Code) will enable a range of diverse housing types as complying development. This code is supported by comprehensive design guidelines. Making it easier to build diverse housing types is consistent with the vision and strategies of this Housing Strategy. However, obtaining good outcomes from this code rests on how well the design process is followed and how the design verification works.</p>



Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004	<p>This SEPP built upon previous SEPPs providing for seniors housing and housing for people with a disability. The SEPP provides opportunities for the development of housing that is located and designed in a manner particularly suited to both those seniors who are independent, mobile and active as well as those who are frail, and people with a disability regardless of their age. Housing of these types are subject to development and design standards within this SEPP (if they can meet certain locational and site criteria) and many local planning controls are superseded by this policy.</p> <p>In 2004, this SEPP introduced a mechanism called a site compatibility certificate (scc). Subject to certain criteria, a SCC allows a DA for seniors housing to be considered on land where it would otherwise be prohibited. SCC applications are made to and issued by the State Government. The issuing of a SCC does not mean the development has been approved and can be constructed and is the first step in the assessment process. More information, including a register of current and refused SCCs can be found here: <a href="https://scc.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/currentproposal.php">https://scc.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/currentproposal.php</a></p> <p>Recent changes to the SEPP have tightened rules so that Seniors Housing Developments no longer 'creep' into rural land areas on the fringes of urban areas and cumulative impacts need to be more carefully considered in response to concerns raised by Councils and communities.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not impact application of this SEPP. There are no current Site Compatibility Statements issued under this SEPP in the Bellingen LGA.</p> <p>Bellingen Shire has an ageing population and an identified gap in sufficient housing stock that is affordable and suitable for older households and also an undersupply of homes suitable for people with a disability who need a modified/adaptable dwelling.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy supports Universal Design of dwellings and ageing in place in addition to development of seniors housing and residential care facilities to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of our ageing population.</p> <p>Design processes and greater emphasis on good design is necessary to ensure good housing outcomes for older residents and people with a disability. Providing greater housing diversity and interventions to improve affordability will also assist in providing housing for our ageing population. Increasingly older people who do not own their own homes are under increased housing stress and are a growing cohort at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Recent changes to the SEPP sought to address locational and amenity issues in response to concerns but limited information can be found as to the overall effectiveness of the SEPP in delivering well-designed seniors housing (or housing for people with a disability) that meets the needs of our ageing population.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007	<p>This SEPP simplifies approval processes for providing infrastructure like hospitals, roads, railways, emergency services, water supply and electricity delivery carried out by the NSW Government, private infrastructure providers, and local councils.</p> <p>Amendments to the Infrastructure SEPP made in December 2017 included new provisions for health service facilities, public administration buildings, state sports and recreation centres, and lead-in sewer and water infrastructure. They also optimised the use of commuter hubs and enabled councils to better manage and maintain their lands, including their operational lands.</p>	The Housing Strategy does not impact application of this SEPP.

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007	Applies to Kosciuszko National Park	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Kurnell Peninsula) 1989	Applies to Kurnell in Sydney	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007	This SEPP governs the way that mining, petroleum production and extractive material resource proposals are assessed and developed in NSW. Most mine and extractive industry developments are categorised as State Significant Development where the Department of Planning or Planning Assessment Commission are the consent authorities (i.e. Council has little regulatory role in approving mines or extractive industries in most cases).	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP. A focus on infill development minimises the risk of land use conflicts between extractive industries and residential areas.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Miscellaneous Consent Provisions) 2007	This SEPP contains provisions for temporary structures and requires subdivision, demolition, certain changes of use and fire alarm link communication to be development permissible with consent.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Gosford City Centre) 2018	Provides site specific controls for Gosford	N/A Does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Penrith Lakes Scheme) 1989	Applies to Penrith Lakes, Sydney	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Primary Production and Rural Development) 2019	This recent SEPP consolidates, updates and repeals provisions from five former agriculture-themed SEPPs. The SEPP supports the NSW Right to Farm Policy.	<p>This Housing Strategy is consistent with the aims of this SEPP. By focusing on infill development reduces the risk of land use conflict and rural land fragmentation by preventing urban development encroaching on rural lands.</p> <p>Agriculture is a significant industry in Bellingen Shire and ways to support farmers and local food and fibre production will be explored in a forthcoming Rural Lands Strategy and Employment Lands Strategy.</p>

Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011	This SEPP identifies State and Regionally Significant development. Assessments of State Significant developments are undertaken at the state level with limited involvement from Council. Regional developments are assessed by Councils but determined by a Joint Regional Planning Panel.	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP.
State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005	State Significant Precincts are areas with state or regional planning significance because of their social, economic or environmental characteristics. They include many sites in Sydney: e.g. the Sydney Opera House, Sirius site, Barangaroo and also the Kings Forest and Rise Bilambil Heights sites in Tweed.  They are typically large sites owned by the state government. Plans are typically prepared by the relevant government agency and assessed by the Department, working closely with the community and local council. For more information see: <a href="https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/State-Significant-Precincts">https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/State-Significant-Precincts</a>	The Housing Strategy does not impact the application of this SEPP. There are no state significant precincts in the Bellingen Shire currently listed in this SEPP.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011	This SEPP relates to the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006	This SEPP relates to the Sydney Region Growth Centres	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Three Ports) 2013	This SEPP relates to Port Botany, Port of Port Kembla and Port of Newcastle.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Urban Renewal) 2010	The Urban Renewal SEPP provides for the Minister for Planning (the Minister) to nominate potential precincts for urban renewal on a map within the SEPP. These precincts are expected to be based in cities.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009	This SEPP relates to Western Sydney.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Parklands) 2009	This SEPP relates to Western Sydney.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire



Name of SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017	<p>This SEPP was introduced as part of recent reforms to native vegetation management. The Vegetation SEPP (the SEPP) works together with the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> and the <i>Local Land Services Amendment Act 2016</i> to create a framework for the regulation of clearing of native vegetation in NSW.</p> <p>The Vegetation SEPP regulates clearing of native vegetation on urban land and land zoned for environmental conservation/management that does not require development consent.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy has the same aims as this SEPP - to protect the biodiversity and amenity values of trees and other vegetation in urban and environmental zones.</p> <p>Actions within the Housing Strategy such as developing a Significant tree Register (in the DCP) complement this SEPP.</p>

### Draft SEPPs

A review program for State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) to deliver a modern planning system is underway. This review process, undertaken by the NSW State Government, aims to modernise, simplify and improve the effectiveness and usability of policies. The review will be rolled out in several phases. Stage 1 is now complete with amendments commenced on 5 August 2016. Stage 2 of the review is now underway. For more information see: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/State-Environmental-Planning-Policies-Review>

Relevant draft SEPPs (as at October 2019) are considered below.

Name of Draft SEPP	Short Description of Provisions	Housing Strategy Comments
Draft Environment SEPP	Planning provisions for waterways, catchments, world heritage and urban bushland are currently contained in seven State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs). Most of the SEPPs have been in place for more than a decade.	The Housing Strategy will not impact on the application of this future SEPP, which represents consolidation of a number of SEPPs addressed above.
Draft koala habitat protection SEPP	<p>The key changes in the proposed amended SEPP relate to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definitions of koala habitat;</li> <li>• list of tree species;</li> <li>• list of councils; and</li> <li>• development assessment process.</li> </ul> <p>Feedback on an updated SEPP to protect koala habitat was placed on exhibition seeking community feedback between November 2016 - March 2017.</p>	The Housing Strategy aims to protect koala populations and koala habitat and is consistent with the aims of this draft SEPP.

## Policy Directions for Plan Making

Under Section 9.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, certain directions are required to be followed when preparing planning proposals for new Local Environment Plans (LEPs). Where a Housing Strategy proposes to change planning zones, standards or controls within the LEP (Local Environmental Plan) a planning proposal process must be followed. Planning Proposals cannot be inconsistent with the following Policy Directions (except in limited circumstances outlined within the directions). For more information on the planning proposal process visit the NSW State Government Planning Department's website.

#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
<b>1</b>	<b>Employment and Resources</b>			
1.1	Business and Industrial Zones	To: (a) encourage employment growth in suitable locations, (b) protect employment land in business and industrial zones, and (c) support the viability of identified centres.	A planning proposal must: (a) give effect to the objectives of this direction, (b) retain the areas and locations of existing business and industrial zones, (c) not reduce the total potential floor space area for employment uses and related public services in business zones, (d) not reduce the total potential floor space area for industrial uses in industrial zones, and (e) ensure that proposed new employment areas are in accordance with a strategy that is approved by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment.	The Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction. Housing and population growth will support existing town centres and businesses. This is particularly relevant for Dorrigo where encouraging a small amount of growth will sustain services and businesses in the town centre into the future. In addition, the Shire has an ageing population and the Housing Strategy aims to provide for a wide range of housing needs for a wide range of demographics to sustain the viability of centres over the longer term.  The Housing Strategy focuses on infill development clustered around existing town centres, so will support ongoing viability of existing centres. The Housing Strategy will not reduce the supply of employment land zoned for business and industrial uses.  An Employment Lands Strategy will be prepared to complement the Housing Strategy, and will look at ways to encourage job creation and retention in Bellingen Shire.
1.2	Rural Zones	To protect the agricultural production value of rural land	A planning proposal must not rezone land from a rural zone to a residential, business, industrial, village or tourist zone.	The Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction. No rural land is proposed to be rezoned to a residential, business, industrial, village or tourist zone. The Strategy proposes to focus on infill housing to protect important farmland.  A planning proposal for rural zoned land in Bellingen at the end of Endeavour Drive is proposed be prepared seeking rezoning to a series of environmental zones, including an area zoned E4 Environmental Living (or via a Schedule 1 amendment) which will facilitate some eco-conscious residential development. This land has environmental value (the majority of which is proposed to be protected via a Biodiversity Stewardship Site Agreement); is not currently being used for rural purposes or identified as Important Farmland; and is located on the fringe of the Bellingen suburb. This planning proposal requires additional investigations in relation to

				bushfire protection and sewer and water servicing but is not inconsistent with this direction.
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
1	Employment and Resources			
1.3	Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries	To ensure that the future extraction of State or regionally significant reserves of coal, other minerals, petroleum and extractive materials are not compromised by inappropriate development	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that would have the effect of: (a) prohibiting the mining of coal or other minerals, production of petroleum, or winning or obtaining of extractive materials, or (b) restricting the potential development of resources of coal, other minerals, petroleum or extractive materials which are of State or regional significance by permitting a land use that is likely to be incompatible with such development.	The Housing Strategy does not compromise the future extraction of minerals so is consistent with the objective of this direction. The Housing Strategy does not propose the expansion of existing residential zones (enabling development that could cause land use conflicts) and focuses on development in existing built-up areas.
1.4	Oyster Aquaculture	(a) to ensure that Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas and oyster aquaculture outside such an area are adequately considered when preparing a planning proposal, (b) to protect Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas and oyster aquaculture outside such an area from land uses that may result in adverse impacts on water quality and consequently, on the health of oysters and oyster consumers.	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares any planning proposal that proposes a change in land use which could result in: (a) adverse impacts on a Priority Oyster Aquaculture Area or a "current oyster aquaculture lease in the national parks estate"; or (b) incompatible use of land between oyster aquaculture in a Priority Oyster Aquaculture Area or a "current oyster aquaculture lease in the national parks estate" and other land uses.	The Bellinger and Kalang Rivers are identified as priority oyster aquaculture areas in the <i>NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy 2006</i> .  The Housing Strategy does not propose to prepare a planning proposal to change land uses that would affect any priority oyster aquaculture area or lease areas as identified in the above strategy. The Housing Strategy is therefore consistent with this direction.  The <i>Rezoning Request Submissions – Background Report</i> that formed part of the documents exhibited with the Draft Housing Strategy proposed to consider preparation of a Planning Proposal for land at 169, 172, 180, 186, 194, 200, 201 & 261 South Arm Road, Urunga to rezone land currently RU4 Rural Smallholdings to R5 Large Lot Residential. This background report recognises environmental constraints within the area, which could include impacts on oyster aquaculture and notes landowners need to prepare additional justifications and studies in relation to the proposal.  This planning proposal request was reconsidered post-exhibition of the Draft Housing Strategy. This planning proposal request will be deferred and explored further as part of the Rural Lands Strategy which will investigate issues and opportunities of all lands zoned



				RU4 Rural Smallholdings and R5 Large Lot Residential (rural residential development).
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
1	Employment and Resources			
1.5	Rural Lands	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) protect the agricultural production value of rural land,</li> <li>(b) facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of rural lands for rural and related purposes,</li> <li>(c) assist in the proper management, development and protection of rural lands to promote the social, economic and environmental welfare of the State,</li> <li>(d) minimise the potential for land fragmentation and land use conflict in rural areas, particularly between residential and other rural land uses,</li> <li>(e) encourage sustainable land use practices and ensure the ongoing viability of agriculture on rural land</li> <li>(f) support the delivery of the actions outlined in the New South Wales Right to Farm Policy</li> </ul>	<p>(4) A planning proposal must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) be consistent with any applicable strategic plan, including regional and district plans endorsed by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment, and any applicable local strategic planning statement</li> <li>(b) consider the significance of agriculture and primary production to the State and rural communities</li> <li>(c) identify and protect environmental values, including but not limited to, maintaining biodiversity, the protection of native vegetation, cultural heritage, and the importance of water resources</li> <li>(d) consider the natural and physical constraints of the land, including but not limited to, topography, size, location, water availability and ground and soil conditions</li> <li>(e) promote opportunities for investment in productive, diversified, innovative and sustainable rural economic activities</li> <li>(f) support farmers in exercising their right to farm</li> <li>(g) prioritise efforts and consider measures to minimise the fragmentation of rural land and reduce the risk of land use conflict, particularly between residential land uses and other rural land uses</li> <li>(h) consider State significant agricultural land identified in State Environmental Planning Policy (Primary Production and Rural Development)</li> </ul>	<p>The Housing Strategy is broadly consistent with this direction.</p> <p>This Direction and numerous other State Policies (including the North Coast Regional Plan, Primary Production and Rural Lands SEPP, NSW Right to Farm Policy etc) offer strong protections for rural land, preventing rural land from being rezoned to facilitate rural residential or residential housing developments without significant and compelling strategic work and justification.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy contains a strong focus on infill development, and includes some greenfield development in areas already zoned for residential purposes. This focus protects agricultural land, and minimises risk of fragmentation of rural land and land use conflicts between rural and residential activities. This approach also protects the environmental values of rural lands.</p> <p>A planning proposal for rural zoned land in Bellingen at the end of Endeavour Drive is proposed be prepared seeking rezoning to a series of environmental zones, including an area zoned E4 Environmental Living which will facilitate some eco-conscious residential development. This land has environmental value; is not currently being used for rural purposes or identified as Important Farmland; and is located on the fringe of the Bellingen suburb. This planning proposal requires additional investigations in relation to bushfire protection and sewer and water servicing and further justification in relation to this direction.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy does not propose to create any additional R5 Large Lot Residential zoned area (rural-residential lots) recognising there is significant land area already zoned and available for subdivision for this purpose (~670ha).</p> <p>Supporting rural land uses will be further explored in a forthcoming Rural Lands Strategy and this strategy will also investigate rural housing and rural-residential land issues and opportunities, with particular regard to protecting and encouraging local food production and encouraging sustainable and regenerative agriculture.</p>

			2019 for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing viability of this land	
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
1	Employment and Resources			
1.5	Rural Land (continued from previous page)	See previous page.	<p>(i) consider the social, economic and environmental interests of the community.</p> <p>(5) A planning proposal to which clause 3(b) applies must demonstrate that it:</p> <p>(a) is consistent with the priority of minimising rural land fragmentation and land use conflict, particularly between residential and other rural land uses</p> <p>(b) will not adversely affect the operation and viability of existing and future rural land uses and related enterprises, including supporting infrastructure and facilities that are essential to rural industries or supply chains</p> <p>(c) where it is for rural residential purposes:</p> <p>i. is appropriately located taking account of the availability of human services, utility infrastructure, transport and proximity to existing centres</p> <p>ii. is necessary taking account of existing and future demand and supply of rural residential land.</p> <p>Note: where a planning authority seeks to vary an existing minimum lot size within a rural or environment protection zone, it must also do so in accordance with the Rural Subdivision Principles in clause 5.16 of the relevant Local Environmental Plan</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy includes an action to support an eco-village pilot project if it is designed, built and certified to internationally renowned Living Future Challenge standards, including on-site food production. The location for an eco-village would likely be in a rural (or rural-residential) zone and a rezoning may be required. Should a site be identified, further site-specific assessment against this direction and other planning policies will be carried out.</p>

#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
2	Environment and Heritage			
2.1	Environment Protection Zones	To protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas	<p>A planning proposal must include provisions that facilitate the protection and conservation of environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>(5) A planning proposal that applies to land within an environment protection zone or land otherwise identified for environment protection purposes in a LEP must not reduce the environmental protection standards that apply to the land (including by modifying development standards that apply to the land). This requirement does not apply to a change to a development standard for minimum lot size for a dwelling in accordance with clause (5) of Direction 1.5 "Rural Lands".</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy emphasises environmentally sustainable development and protects environmentally sensitive areas by precluding additional expansion of residential zones and suburban development into natural or forested areas.</p> <p>A planning proposal for rural zoned land in Bellingen at the end of Endeavour Drive is proposed be prepared seeking rezoning from rural land to a series of environmental zones, including an area zoned E4 Environmental Living which will facilitate some eco-conscious residential development. This land has environmental value; is not currently being used for rural purposes or identified as Important Farmland; and is located on the fringe of the Bellingen suburb. This planning proposal requires additional investigations in relation to bushfire protection and sewer and water servicing and further justification in relation to this direction.</p> <p>In addition, the Housing Strategy proposes an action relating to supporting an eco-village pilot project. This pilot project would likely require a planning proposal but due to the nature of the objectives of an eco-village, environmental protections within the eco-village site would aim to be strengthened rather than reduced. A site for the eco-village pilot project has not yet been identified and further details, assessment and environmental studies will be provided should a suitable site emerge.</p>
2.2	Coastal Management	To protect and manage coastal areas of NSW	This direction applies to land that is within the coastal zone, as defined under the Coastal Management Act 2016 - comprising the coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area, coastal vulnerability area, coastal environment area and coastal use area - and as identified by the State	<p>The Bellingen Shire contains land within the coastal zone, in the towns of Urunga, Mylestom, Raleigh, Repton and Bellingen (within the tidal extent of the Bellinger River) as well as surrounding rural areas.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy is broadly consistent with this Direction. This Housing Strategy does not propose to extend residential</p>



			Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018.	development beyond areas already zone for this purpose within the coastal zone.
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
2	Environment and Heritage			
2.2	Coastal Management (continued from previous page)	To protect and manage coastal areas of NSW	<p>A planning proposal must include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with:</p> <p>(a) the objects of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and the objectives of the relevant coastal management areas;</p> <p>(b) the NSW Coastal Management Manual and associated Toolkit;</p> <p>(c) NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2003; and</p> <p>(d) any relevant Coastal Management Program that has been certified by the Minister, or any Coastal Zone Management Plan under the Coastal Protection Act 1979 that continues to have effect under clause 4 of Schedule 3 to the Coastal Management Act 2016, that applies to the land.</p> <p>A planning proposal must not rezone land which would enable increased development or more intensive land-use on land:</p> <p>(a) within a coastal vulnerability area identified by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018; or</p> <p>(b) that has been identified as land affected by a current or future coastal hazard in a local environmental plan or development control plan, or a study or assessment undertaken: (i) by or on behalf of the relevant planning authority and the planning proposal authority, or (ii) by or on behalf of a public authority and provided to the relevant planning authority and the planning proposal authority.</p>	Intensification of development in the existing R1 General Residential Zone is proposed, to facilitate infill development by lowering the minimum lot size requirement for subdivision from 600m <sup>2</sup> to 500m <sup>2</sup> in existing town areas zoned R1 General Residential. The effect of this change may include properties that are partially affected by coastal hazards, however this inconsistency is considered minor because it will not allow additional development in areas affected by flooding or coastal hazards.

			A planning proposal must not rezone land which would enable increased development or more intensive land-use on land within a coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area identified by the SEPP (Coastal Management) 2018.	
<b>#</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Provisions</b>	<b>Housing Strategy Consistency</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Environment and Heritage</b>			
2.3	Heritage Conservation	To conserve items, areas, objects and places of environmental heritage significance and indigenous heritage significance	A planning proposal must contain provisions that facilitate the conservation of: (a) items, places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects or precincts of environmental heritage significance to an area, in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item, area, object or place, identified in a study of the environmental heritage of the area, (b) Aboriginal objects or Aboriginal places that are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, and (c) Aboriginal areas, Aboriginal objects, Aboriginal places or landscapes identified by an Aboriginal heritage survey prepared by or on behalf of an Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal body or public authority and provided to the relevant planning authority, which identifies the area, object, place or landscape as being of heritage significance to Aboriginal culture and people.	The Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction as it seeks to prioritise heritage protection and protection and enhancement of local character. The Housing Strategy and Action Plan emphasis the role of good design and propose a number of actions to preserve European and Aboriginal heritage across the Shire (including updating heritage studies). Changes to planning controls such as reduction of minimum lot size and a focus on infill housing may allow for additional homes in heritage precincts or near heritage buildings but will be accompanied by complementary planning controls, guideline's and processes that will emphasise sensitive design and encourage adaptive reuse and increased appreciation for heritage. Refer to the Action Plan for more details.
2.4	Recreation Vehicle Areas	To protect sensitive land or land with significant conservation values from adverse impacts from recreation vehicles	These provisions limit enabling recreation vehicle areas	N/A the Housing Strategy does not propose any recreational vehicle areas.
2.5	Application of E2 and E3 Zones and Environmental Overlays in Far North Coast LEPs	to ensure that a balanced and consistent approach is taken when applying environmental protection zones and overlays	This direction applies to the local government areas of Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore and Tweed.	N/A Bellingen Shire is located on the NSW Mid-North Coast

		to land on the NSW Far North Coast		
3	<b>Housing, Infrastructure and Urban Development</b>			
3.1	Residential Zones	See following page	See following page	See following page
#	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Provisions</b>	<b>Housing Strategy Consistency</b>
3	<b>Housing, Infrastructure and Urban Development</b>			
3.1	Residential Zones	<p>(a) to encourage a variety and choice of housing types to provide for existing and future housing needs,</p> <p>(b) to make efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and ensure that new housing has appropriate access to infrastructure and services, and</p> <p>(c) to minimise the impact of residential development on the environment and resource lands.</p>	<p>This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will affect land within: (a) an existing or proposed residential zone (including the alteration of any existing residential zone boundary), (b) any other zone in which significant residential development is permitted or proposed to be permitted.</p> <p>(4) A planning proposal must include provisions that encourage the provision of housing that will: (a) broaden the choice of building types and locations available in the housing market, and</p> <p>(b) make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, and</p> <p>(c) reduce the consumption of land for housing and associated urban development on the urban fringe, and</p> <p>(d) be of good design.</p> <p>(5) A planning proposal must, in relation to land to which this direction applies:</p> <p>(a) contain a requirement that residential development is not permitted until land is adequately serviced (or arrangements satisfactory to the council, or other appropriate authority, have been made to service it), and</p> <p>(b) not contain provisions which will reduce the permissible residential density of land.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy Vision is very similar to the objectives of this direction and is considered to give effect to this direction.</p> <p>The focus of the Strategy on infill housing and increasing housing choices, minimises impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and uses existing infrastructure efficiently.</p> <p>This direction preferences infill housing development and places provisos on greenfield proposals – that they be of good design, broaden housing choices, reduce development on the urban fringe and not permit residential development until the land is (or can be) satisfactorily serviced with adequate infrastructure.</p> <p>This direction also prevents backzoning of existing residential zoned areas to reduce allowable residential densities. This is not proposed as part of the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Whilst the majority of the Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction, proposals/requests for rezoning on the fringes of towns (e.g. Endeavour Drive proposal) require additional information and assessment against the provisions of this direction, particularly in relation to design (and environmental/character impacts), housing types and choice and especially ability to be adequately and cost effectively serviced.</p>



3.2	Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home Estates	(a) to provide for a variety of housing types, and (b) to provide opportunities for caravan parks and manufactured home estates.	These provisions relate to identifying zones for caravan parks and manufactured home estates. Planning proposals cannot limit existing areas allowing this type of development and require reference to various state locational guidelines.	The Housing Strategy does not include planning control changes that limit current ability to carry out development for the purposes of a caravan park or manufactured home estate. The Strategy supports a tiny home village pilot and affordable housing but does not seek to provide a site/s for additional caravan parks/MHE recognising the limited security these tenancies currently offer.
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
3	Housing, Infrastructure and Urban Development			
3.3	Home Occupations	To encourage the carrying out of low-impact small businesses in dwelling houses	Planning proposals must permit home occupations to be carried out in dwelling houses without the need for development consent.	N/A the Housing Strategy has no impact on permissibility of home occupations. Additional infill development could expand opportunities for home occupations in accessible locations.
3.4	Integrating Land Use and Transport	to ensure that urban structures, building forms, land use locations, development designs, subdivision and street layouts achieve the following planning objectives: (a) improving access to housing, jobs and services by walking, cycling and public transport, and (b) increasing the choice of available transport and reducing dependence on cars, and (c) reducing travel demand including the number of trips generated by development and the distances travelled, especially by car, and (d) supporting the efficient and viable operation of public transport services, and (e) providing for the efficient movement of freight	A planning proposal must locate zones for urban purposes and include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with the aims, objectives and principles of: (a) Improving Transport Choice – Guidelines for planning and development (DUAP 2001), and (b) The Right Place for Business and Services – Planning Policy (DUAP 2001).	The Housing Strategy shares many of the same objectives as this direction; however as a rural and regional Shire, Bellingen is lacking in access to meaningful public transport. Nevertheless the Strategy focuses on infill development and accessibility, seeking to reduce car dependence and encourage beneficial subdivision and housing design. As a 20 year strategy, advance in transport technology could also make public transport forms and community transport/car sharing more viable into the future and the Housing Strategy supports these forms of transport to increase equity and accessibility to services and jobs.

3.5	Development Near Regulated Airports and Defence Airfields	to ensure the effective and safe operation of regulated airports and defence airfields etc.	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to land near a regulated airport which includes a defence airfield.	The Housing Strategy is not inconsistent with the provisions of this direction. The Coffs Harbour Airport Masterplan update has just been finalised (Nov 2019) and will be considered in any future planning proposals.
3.6	Shooting Ranges	See direction	This direction applies to land adjacent to and/ or adjoining an existing shooting range.	N/A The Housing Strategy does not propose any land intensification that would affect any shooting ranges
#	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Provisions</b>	<b>Housing Strategy Consistency</b>
3	<b>Housing, Infrastructure and Urban Development</b>			
3.7	Reduction in non-hosted short term rental accommodation period	to: (a) mitigate significant impacts of short-term rental accommodation where non-hosted short-term rental accommodation period are to be reduced, and (b) ensure the impacts of short-term rental accommodation and views of the community are considered.	This direction applies to Byron Shire Council.	N/A This direction currently does not apply to Bellingen Shire. Short-term holiday letting was raised as an issue by the community concerns about affordability impacts, loss of long-term rental opportunities and amenity issues. Council is currently limited by state planning controls surrounding the regulation of unhosted short-term holiday letting.
4	<b>Hazard and Risk</b>			
4.1	Acid Sulfate Soils	to avoid significant adverse environmental impacts from the use of land that has a probability of containing acid sulfate soils	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will apply to land having a probability of containing acid sulfate soils as shown on the Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Maps.	The Housing Strategy does not propose a change in planning processes relating to Acid Sulfate Soils. Parts of the Shire are affected by Acid Sulfate Soils, especially in floodplain areas. Acid Sulfate Soil risks will be considered as part of any site-specific planning proposals and developments.
4.2	Mine Subsidence and Unstable Land	to prevent damage to life, property and the environment on land identified as unstable or potentially subject to mine subsidence	These provisions apply to land that has been deemed unstable or within a Mine Subsidence District	N/A Bellingen Shire is not within a Mine Subsidence District nor does the proposal relate to any areas identified as unstable land. Individual planning proposals for specific sites will consider land stability where necessary.
4.3	Flood Prone Land	(a) to ensure that development of flood prone land is consistent with the NSW Government's Flood	This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that creates, removes or alters a zone or a provision that affects flood prone land.	The Housing Strategy is broadly consistent with this direction. The Strategy does not propose to expand housing settlements or residential zones into flood-affected areas. However the Housing Strategy does seek to encourage densification of existing town

		Prone Land Policy and the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005, (b) to ensure that the provisions on flood prone land are commensurate with flood hazard and considers potential flood impacts		centres and the development of some already-zoned greenfield areas and some of this land is flood-affected. Flood affected land (1% AEP) was excluded from infill capacity calculations and is not able to be developed for residential purposes under existing planning restrictions in the Bellingen LEP and DCP. These restrictions controlling additional development in flood affected areas comply with NSW Floodplain Manual and policies and will not change.
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
4	Hazard and Risk			
4.3	Flood Prone Land (continued from previous)	(a) to ensure that development of flood prone land is consistent with the NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy and the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005, (b) to ensure that the provisions on flood prone land are commensurate with flood hazard and considers the potential flood impacts	<p>(4) A planning proposal must include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy and the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005</p> <p>(5) A planning proposal must not rezone land within the flood planning areas from Special Use, Special Purpose, Recreation, Rural or Environmental Protection Zones to a Residential, Business, Industrial, Special Use or Special Purpose Zone.</p> <p>(6) A planning proposal must not contain provisions that apply to the flood planning areas which: (a) permit development in floodway areas, (b) permit development that will result in significant flood impacts to other properties, (c) permit a significant increase in the development of that land, (d) are likely to result in a substantially increased requirement for government spending on flood mitigation measures, infrastructure or services, or (e) permit development to be carried out without development consent except for the purposes of agriculture (not including dams, drainage canals, levees, buildings or structures in floodways or high hazard areas), roads or exempt development.</p> <p>(7) A planning proposal must not impose flood related development controls above the</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy does not propose changes to existing planning controls that relate to flood planning areas. These controls are consistent with state flood policies.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy does not include any planning proposals rezoning land from Special Use, Special Purpose, Recreation, Rural or Environmental Protection Zones to a Residential, Business, Industrial, Special Use or Special Purpose Zone.</p> <p>The impacts of growth as proposed in the Housing Strategy consider flood risks based on completed flood studies, recognising Bellingen Shire has a geography prone to flooding, a history of floods, ongoing flood risks, including isolation in large floods. The Housing Strategy does not allow additional housing in floodway areas, thereby not allowing additional people to live in especially risky areas. It is recognised that additional housing and built up areas in towns could affect stormwater run-off and by association flood behaviour, therefore a landscaping control is proposed to limit the amount of built-up area allowed and to assist with stormwater infiltration. The main aim of this control is to protect the leafy character and gardens of Bellingen Shire and the effect of the control on flooding behaviour has not yet been tested in a flood study. Additional mechanisms to reduce flood risks will be explored as part of catchment-based Floodplain Risk Management Plans. Reducing flood risks relies on many factors, land use planning being one important element. Overall, the Housing Strategy aims to reduce flood impacts by allowing for growth in existing residential townships (not extending risk to other areas) and retaining existing controls relating to building in flood affected areas.</p>

			residential flood planning level for residential development on land, unless a relevant planning authority provides adequate justification for those controls to the satisfaction of the Director-General (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Director-General)...	
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
4	Hazard and Risk			
4.4	Planning for Bushfire Protection	<p>(a) to protect life, property and the environment from bush fire hazards, by discouraging the establishment of incompatible land uses in bush fire prone areas, and</p> <p>(b) to encourage sound management of bush fire prone areas.</p>	<p>(3) This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will affect, or is in proximity to land mapped as bushfire prone land.</p> <p>(4) In the preparation of a planning proposal the relevant planning authority must consult with the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service following receipt of a gateway determination under section 56 of the Act, and prior to undertaking community consultation in satisfaction of section 57 of the Act, and take into account any comments so made,</p> <p>(5) A planning proposal must:</p> <p>(a) have regard to Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006,</p> <p>(b) introduce controls that avoid placing inappropriate developments in hazardous areas, and</p> <p>(c) ensure that bushfire hazard reduction is not prohibited within the APZ.</p> <p>(6) A planning proposal must, where development is proposed, comply with the following provisions, as appropriate:</p> <p>(a) provide an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) incorporating at a minimum: (i) an Inner Protection Area bounded by a perimeter road or reserve which circumscribes the hazard side of the land intended for development and has a</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy is broadly consistent with this direction. The focus on infill housing is consistent with this direction as it focuses on growth in existing built up areas, which are considered safer places in terms of bushfire risk.</p> <p>Over half of Bellingen Shire is National Park and State Forest, making it susceptible to bushfire. Whilst the Shire has in recent decades experienced many more floods than bushfires, the area has experienced sever bushfires in the 1940s-60s and residents need to be aware of bushfire risks, especially in the context of climate change exacerbating dry periods and intense weather events.</p> <p>The approach of the Housing Strategy seeks to avoid placing additional property and people in hazardous areas surrounded by bushland. Requests to rezone land to allow additional housing in rural or natural areas have been resisted, and part of the reason is to not increase risk to life and property from natural hazards such as bushfire.</p> <p>Some areas along the fringes of existing residential area are already bushfire affected, and infill development in these areas needs to comply with Planning for Bushfire Protection requirements, including construction methods and provision and maintenance of Asset Protection Zones.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy provides many actions that seek to educate the community and build upon resilience which includes reducing bushfire risks. A holistic and strategic approach to bushfire risk is necessary in all future planning policies, considering Bellingen Shire is heavily forested and even many urban areas are leafy and tree planting is encouraged.</p>



			building line consistent with the incorporation of an APZ, within the property, and (ii) an Outer Protection Area managed for hazard reduction and located on the bushland side of the perimeter road...	The NSW Rural Fire Service were consulted twice as part of the Housing Strategy project and did not object to the Draft Strategy, and did not offer place-based or site specific commentary, but did note that bushfire constraints should be communicated to residents within the Shire via the Strategy.
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
4	Hazard and Risk			
4.4	Planning for Bushfire Protection (continued from previous page)	(a) to protect life, property and the environment from bush fire hazards, by discouraging the establishment of incompatible land uses in bush fire prone areas, and (b) to encourage sound management of bush fire prone areas.	[(6) A planning proposal must, where development is proposed, comply with the following provisions, as appropriate:] b) for infill development (that is development within an already subdivided area), where an appropriate APZ cannot be achieved, provide for an appropriate performance standard, in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service. If the provisions of the planning proposal permit Special Fire Protection Purposes (as defined under section 100B of the Rural Fires Act 1997), the APZ provisions must be complied with, (c) contain provisions for two-way access roads which links to perimeter roads and/or to fire trail networks, (d) contain provisions for adequate water supply for firefighting purposes, (e) minimise the perimeter of the area of land interfacing the hazard which may be developed, (f) introduce controls on the placement of combustible materials in the Inner Protection Area.	In terms of site specific planning proposals, the request to rezone land at the top of Endeavour Drive in Bellingen to allow for homes to be built (whether via a Schedule 1 amendment, E4 or R1 land zoning) has significant bushfire constraints that at this time remain unresolved. These include land clearing requirements for APZs, access/egress route issues and water supply for fire-fighting purposes. Further information is required as to how this proposal will comply with Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006 should a Planning Proposal be pursued, including consultation with the NSW RFS.  The <i>Rezoning Request Submissions – Background Report</i> that formed part of the documents exhibited with the Draft Housing Strategy proposed to consider preparation of a Planning Proposal for land at 169, 172, 180, 186, 194, 200, 201 & 261 South Arm Road, Urunga to rezone land currently RU4 Rural Smallholdings to R5 Large Lot Residential. This background report recognises the land is bushfire-prone. This planning proposal request was reconsidered post-exhibition of the Draft Housing Strategy. This planning proposal request will be deferred and explored further as part of the Rural Lands Strategy which will investigate issues and opportunities of all lands zoned RU4 Rural Smallholdings and R5 Large Lot Residential (rural residential development).
5	Regional Planning			
5.1	Implementation of Regional Strategies	to give legal effect to the vision, land use strategy, policies, outcomes and actions	(2) This direction applies to land to which the following regional strategies apply: (a) South Coast Regional Strategy (excluding land in the	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire

		contained in regional strategies	Shoalhaven LGA) (b) Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy	
5.2	Sydney Drinking Water Catchment	To protect water quality in the Sydney drinking water catchment.	N/A	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
5	Regional Planning			
5.3	Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast	(a) to ensure that the best agricultural land will be available for current and future generations to grow food and fibre, (b) to provide more certainty on the status of the best agricultural land, thereby assisting councils with their local strategic settlement planning, and (c) to reduce land use conflict arising between agricultural use and non-agricultural use of farmland as caused by urban encroachment into farming areas.	N/A does not apply to Bellingen Shire	N/A Bellingen Shire is not part of the NSW Far North Coast
5.4	Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast	(a) to protect the Pacific Highway's function, that is to operate as the North Coast's primary inter- and intra-regional road traffic route; (b) to prevent inappropriate development fronting the highway; (c) to protect public expenditure invested in the Pacific Highway; (d) to protect and improve highway safety and highway efficiency; (e) to provide for the food, vehicle	These provisions relate to commercial and retail development and are therefore more relevant to an Employment Lands Strategy. Nevertheless these provisions emphasise the need to keep commercial development concentrated in existing centres.	The Housing Strategy supports existing centres through emphasising infill development and does not propose out-of-centre commercial or retail development.

		service and rest needs of travellers on the highway; and (f) to reinforce the role of retail and commercial development in town centres, where they can best serve the populations of the towns.		
#	Direction	Objectives	Provisions	Housing Strategy Consistency
5	Regional Planning			
5.5	Development in the vicinity of Ellalong, Paxton and Millfield (Cessnock LGA) (Revoked 18 June 2010)	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.6	Sydney to Canberra Corridor (Revoked 10 July 2008. See amended Direction 5.1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.7	Central Coast (Revoked 10 July 2008. See amended Direction 5.1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.8	Second Sydney Airport: Badgerys Creek (Revoked 20 August 2018)	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.9	North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy	(a) promote transit-oriented development and manage growth around the eight train stations of the North West Rail Link (NWRL)	This Direction applies to Hornsby Shire Council, The Hills Shire Council and Blacktown City Council.	N/A Does not apply to Bellingen Shire
5.10	Implementation of Regional Plans	To give legal effect to the vision, land use strategy, goals, directions and actions contained in Regional Plans	This direction applies to land to which a Regional Plan has been released by the Minister for Planning.  (4) Planning proposals must be consistent with a Regional Plan released by the Minister for Planning.	The Housing Strategy is consistent with this direction as it is consistent with the directions of the North Coast Regional Plan 2036. Refer to commentary on consistency with the North Coast Regional Plan in Section 1.3 of this Strategy and at the beginning of this Appendix.





## Appendix B – Consistency with Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Shire of Bellingen 2027 Our Community Vision

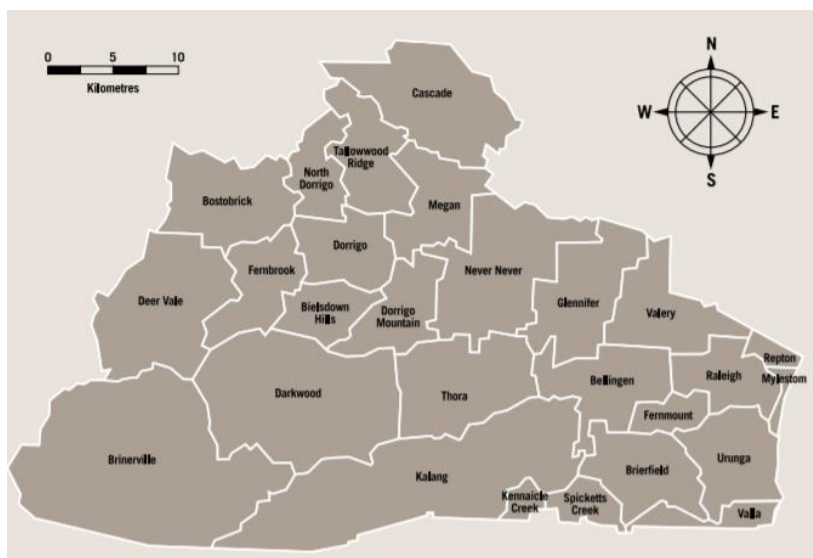
The Community Vision is a high level plan for our Shire developed in partnership with the community to outline the future for the local community. The plan sets out all the strategic priorities, outcomes and aspirations for the future of our local community, and is structured under five themes - Resilient Economy, Community Wellbeing, Places for People, Living Environment and Civic Leadership.

It identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of our local government area and addresses a broad range of issues and challenges that are relevant to the whole community and link to the agreed Community Vision.

While Council is responsible for leading the development of the Community Strategic Plan, it has been done with the understanding that it will be delivered as a partnership between Council, and other stakeholders such as federal/state agencies, community groups and individuals. The CSP can be accessed at:

<https://www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au/council/reports-policies-and-plans/integrated-planning-reporting>

**This Housing Strategy is closely aligned with the CSP as detailed below.**



## CSP Vision

The CSP Vision is: *Connected, Sustainable Creative*. This simple vision is elaborated upon within the Housing Strategy which seeks to provide housing in an equitable and inclusive manner, giving new and existing residents more housing choices and retaining the Shire's valued social connections whilst encouraging new connections. The growth pattern, focusing on more housing in existing towns, also emphasises physical and social connectedness, supporting town centres and thriving, walkable neighbourhoods.

The Housing Strategy places a strong emphasis on sustainable housing and environmental protection and seeks to improve the design of new homes to improve sustainability. The Housing Strategy focus on infill is also seen as a more sustainable growth pattern, reducing impacts of sprawl and encouraging efficient, shared use of existing built-upon land. Finally, the Housing Strategy seeks to retain and build upon the Shire's creative community, by focusing on good design, varied and diverse housing and inclusive population growth.

## Gumbaynggirr Community Vision

The Gumbaynggirr Community Vision is:

*A place where there is genuine respect for the land and the original people of this country. A place where the ancestors' way of holding country is recognised.*

*A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for Elders and the children of the future. A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life.*

*The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that's not separating.*

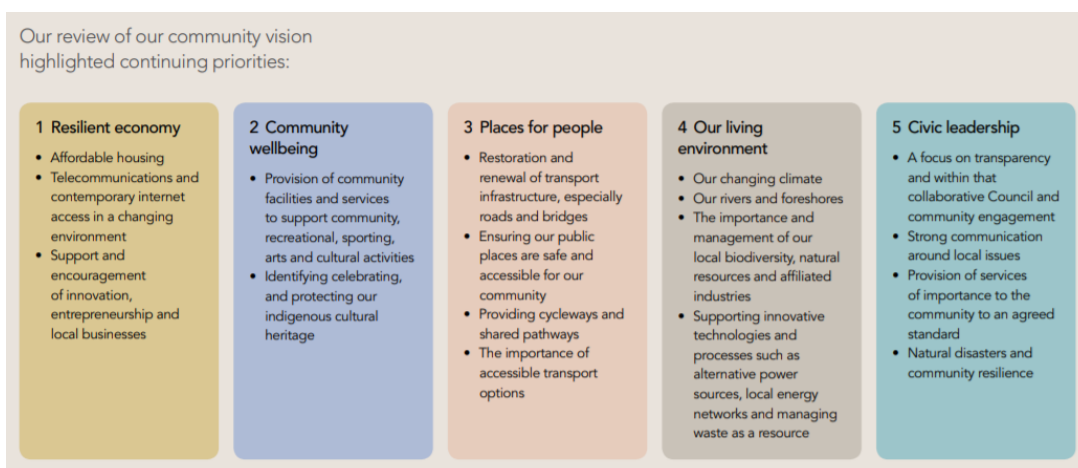
The Housing Strategy includes a number of actions to increase relationships and trust between Council and Aboriginal people and groups, to recognise culture, care for Country and improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing indicators and outcomes. More broadly, the Housing Strategy seeks to improve sustainability of housing and for greater opportunity, equity and affordability in the local housing market, to welcome a wide range of people to live in the Shire, regardless of background, age, household type or income.

## Our Values and Key Priorities

The Shire of Bellingen 2027 Community Vision is about creating a sustainable future together for the good of all. The key priorities that we will strive towards are:

- Respect and understanding of our community's needs
- Fairness and equity
- Stewardship
- Responsible decision-making
- Co-operative Partnerships
- Pride in our community

The Housing Strategy is closely aligned with these priorities. Two comprehensive engagement projects were carried out to understand the community's needs; fairness has underpinned the approach to providing more, and a greater diversity, of homes; the strategy emphasises stewardship and care for the environment and the Strategy and Action Plan will be used over the next 20 years to guide responsible, strategic and informed decision-making. The Strategy was produced in partnership with the Bellingen Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group and others, and includes actions for future partnerships. The Housing Strategy recognises and takes pride in what is special about our Shire, seeking to protect these elements for future generations.



## Community Vision Aspirations for our future

Aspiration	Housing Strategy alignment
<b>RESILIENT ECONOMY</b>	
<b>We have meaningful work and vibrant businesses within our community</b>	
Our community has a diversity of businesses and new industries	<i>Housing and population growth will support local businesses, especially growth in existing towns</i>
We have innovative and alternative local trading systems	<i>To be explored as part of Employment Lands Strategy</i>
Businesses within our shire are ethical and sustainable	<i>See above</i>
We have the public infrastructure to appropriately support business activity	<i>The Strategy includes actions to invest in public infrastructure to support growth (see Actions 2.3; 3.1; 3.2; 5.1; 5.2; 5.8; 7.1; 7.2; 8.2)</i>
We are a disaster resilient community	<i>The Strategy includes actions to increase community resilience (see Actions 1.5; 1.7; 4.6; 4.8; 5.1; 5.3; 5.4; 5.8; 5.9; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4; 7.5; 7.6; 7.8; 7.9; 8.2; 8.6; 8.7; 8.8)</i>
Our families are able to support themselves locally	<i>The Strategy supports population and housing growth to sustain local services within the Shire.</i>
<b>We have balanced, sustainable tourism</b>	
Our Shire offers a broad range of experience for visitors	<i>To be explored as part of Employment Lands Strategy. Natural areas and rural character attractions are protected through a focus on infill development.</i>
Our regional tourism assets are enhanced	<i>See above.</i>
Our tourism providers strive for sustainable operation	<i>See above.</i>
Our creative communities including craftspeople, writers and musicians are promoted and encouraged	<i>The Housing Strategy seeks to provide affordable and diverse housing types for a range of people and households including key workers and people working in the creative industries (who are at risk of being priced out of the area). See Action 4.7.</i>
<b>We have a sustainable local farming sector that provides us with healthy, fresh food</b>	
Local food growing, sharing and education initiatives are supported and developed	<i>The Housing Strategy supports local food production as part of the Housing Vision (see also Actions 8.1-8.8).</i>
Alternative farming systems are employed with examples including cooperative farming and Landshare	<i>To be explored as part of a Rural Lands Strategy</i>
Farming practices are financially and environmentally sustainable	<i>See above</i>
Agriculture is a valued part of our economy	<i>The Housing Strategy supports local food production as part of the Housing Vision. Important Farmland is protected from encroachment of housing developments via a focus on infill housing.</i>
<b>COMMUNITY WELLBEING</b>	
<b>Our children, youth and seniors are valued, involved and supported</b>	
Youth and seniors programs and activities are in place and actively supported	<i>The Housing Strategy focuses on making the Shire welcoming for people of all ages.</i>
Strong partnerships between schools and our community are in place to allow for intergenerational and cultural learning	<i>See above.</i>
Students have a variety of mechanisms such as a support centre and local scholarships	<i>See above.</i>
Opportunities exist to share the experience and wisdom of seniors	<i>The project included engagement activities for seniors.</i>
<b>We are a learning and creative community</b>	
The benefits and understanding of lifelong learning are promoted	<i>The Housing Strategy promotes community education.</i>
There are opportunities for lifelong learning including regaining and retaining traditional skills	<i>See above.</i>
Our community is motivated to participate in lifelong learning activities	<i>See above.</i>

A diversity of cultural and artistic activities are available across the Shire	<i>See above.</i>
<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Housing Strategy alignment</b>
<b>COMMUNITY WELLBEING</b>	
<b>We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage</b>	
We actively engage with and include the perspectives and knowledge of Aboriginal people	<i>The project involved consultation with Aboriginal people and actions to build upon</i>
Opportunities exist to learn about our Aboriginal language, history and culture	<i>The Housing Strategy includes these actions (see Actions 1.6; 5.5; 5.9; 6.1; 6.4; 6.5)</i>
We have regular Aboriginal events, activities and storytelling in an appropriate cultural space	<i>See Action 5.5</i>
Gumbaynggirr place and language is acknowledged through signage and other mechanisms	<i>See above.</i>
<b>We are connected, safe and healthy with a strong sense of community</b>	
Community groups actively communicate and collaborate	<i>The Strategy promotes ongoing engagement &amp; partnerships</i>
There is connection between and across our communities	<i>The Housing Vision promotes equity and inclusivity</i>
We have the programs, services and infrastructure to ensure a safe and healthy community	<i>The Strategy includes planning for services &amp; infrastructure</i>
Our community is diverse, tolerant and understanding	<i>See above</i>
<b>PLACES FOR PEOPLE</b>	
<b>We have a diversity of beautiful spaces that foster community happiness and wellbeing</b>	
We have a variety of passive recreation spaces including riversides, parks and reserves	<i>The Strategy emphasises the importance of public recreation space – see Actions 5.1 &amp; 5.2</i>
We have a variety of active recreation spaces including playgrounds, sporting fields and multipurpose centres.	<i>See above</i>
We have a variety of shared community spaces including meeting spaces accommodating public art, cultural and environmental amenity	<i>See above</i>
<b>We have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community</b>	
There are affordable housing options for all through a diversity of mechanisms including increased public and community housing	<i>Providing more affordable housing is a key priority of the Strategy – see actions 1.1-1.7; 2.7; 4.1-4.8; 5.3-5.7; 7.5; 7.8)</i>
Sustainable building and retrofitting of existing housing stock is the standard approach	<i>This is encouraged by the strategy – see action 2.7</i>
Eco-village and community living developments for mixed ages are encouraged	<i>An eco-village pilot project that emphasises regenerative development is proposed – see action 8.4</i>
Heritage buildings and sites are protected	<i>A key part of the Strategy – see actions 2.1;2.2;2.5;6.1-6.9</i>
<b>We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way</b>	
We have effective public and community transport linking townships in the Shire and linking to regional centres	<i>Reducing private car dependence is an objective of the Strategy – see actions 3.1-3.8</i>
Our existing rail network is optimised for freight and local trains	<i>See above</i>
We have a network of cycleways, footpaths and walking trails, supported by maps and signage which encourage active transport and reduce car dependency	<i>See above, promoting walking and cycling is a key priority in the Housing Vision. Infill development supports walkability.</i>
Our local infrastructure supports electric vehicles and non-motorised forms of transport	<i>See above</i>
We have a system of safe, well-maintained roads including car calming infrastructure	<i>See above</i>
<b>We have the facilities and services needed to be a healthy and active community</b>	



Health care options and facilities are enhanced across the Shire including birthing, palliative and aged care support	<i>Population growth will support health service and support spending in towns</i>
There is a holistic approach to health	<i>The Strategy considers public health and wellbeing</i>
There is active participation in a range of sporting and recreational pursuits	<i>The Strategy encourages healthy lifestyles and equitable and efficient access to recreation services</i>
Healthy lifestyles and practices are enhanced	<i>See above</i>
<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Housing Strategy alignment</b>
<b>LIVING ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably</b>	
Our waterways and wetlands are valued, protected and enhanced	The Strategy prioritises environmental and resource protection. See actions 2.1; 2.2; 6.2; 7.1-7.9; 8.1-8.8
We minimise our use of water	See actions 7.1 & 7.2
We use our water and wastewater using best management practices	See above
<b>Our surroundings are quiet and clean</b>	
Noise pollution is managed	Strategy encourages considerate design
Air pollution is minimised	See above, also seeks to reduce emissions
<b>We reduce, reuse, recycle</b>	
The consumption of resources is minimised	See actions 1.4; 2.1-2.3; 2.7; 3.7; 4.6; 6.2; 7.1-7.9
We reduce, reuse and recycle our waste	See actions 7.7-7.8
Our community has access to convenient recycling facilities and services	See above
<b>We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change</b>	
Our community is informed and acts to reduce our ecological footprint	Increasing sustainability of built environment and encouraging sustainable behaviours key facet of Vision
Alternative forms of energy are embraced	See actions 7.4; 7.5
<b>We protect and enhance our biodiversity</b>	
Our community understands the value of biodiversity	See action 7.6
Biodiversity is managed and protected for future generations	Infill housing supports biodiversity by reducing urban footprint and land clearing
Threats to biodiversity are identified and mitigated	See above
<b>We work together to protect and enhance our environment</b>	
The guidance of the custodial people is recognised	Strategy recognises importance of partnerships, especially with custodial people
Our community is informed and educated on environmental issues, threats and opportunities	Strategy focuses on information, education, advocacy and continued conversations, debate and learning
The contribution of our community groups are fostered, supported and celebrated	Strategy emphasises importance of partnerships and communities
Our natural environment is valued, protected and enhanced	Key tenant of Housing Vision supported by multiple actions
<b>CIVIC LEADERSHIP</b>	
<b>Council is an organisation that embraces business excellence</b>	
Financial sustainability is maintained through effective short and long term financial management	The Strategy supports efficient, equitable and evidence-based spending
We attract ,develop and retain highly skilled staff	N/A
High quality services to the community and cost effective solutions are delivered	See above
Best practice, sustainability principles, accountability and good governance are incorporated in all that we do	See above
<b>Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership</b>	
The community is engaged in decision-making and implementation using modern communication methods	The Strategy included comprehensive engagement
Civic leadership is recognised, supported and rewarded	See above

We are proactive in supporting, through representation and celebration, the needs and desires of the community	See above
<b>Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community</b>	
Strong partnerships exist with all levels of government, peak bodies and the community	Strategy includes actions on strengthening partnerships
We engage	The Strategy included comprehensive engagement
The principles of social justice underpin our activities and decision making processes	Strategy reflects social justice principles

### Directions and Partnerships

The following is an outline of the principles involved in our directions and partnerships. These principles underpin the direction and actions of the Housing Strategy.

#### Ecologically Sustainable Development

The national strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development defines ESD as: Development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends. The principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development include:

- Sustainable use – considering the total quality of life, now and in the future, and using natural resources in a manner which is sustainable.
- Integration – integrating environmental sustainability concerns with economic goals to ensure that development minimises environmental harm.
- Inter-generational and intra-generational equity – ensuring equity in the use of our natural resources within the present generation, and ensuring that the health, diversity and productivity of our environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.
- Conservation of our biodiversity and ecological integrity – ESD implies that conservation of our biological diversity is a fundamental consideration in economic or development plans and projects. Within that, biological diversity is understood to include genetic diversity, species diversity, and ecosystem diversity.
- Internalisation of environmental sustainability costs – wherein the cost of goods and services should include full-life cycle costs including the use of natural resources and assets and the disposal of associated waste.

#### Social justice

Local communities are required to consider the NSW Government's social justice principles (which are underpinned by legislation) when preparing long-term plans, and to test their community's goals and aspirations against these principles. The principles of social justice include:

- Equity – there should be fairness in decision-making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Planning processes should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.
- Access – all people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- Participation – everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Rights – equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

For more information please visit: <https://www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au/council/reports-policies-and-plans/integrated-planning-reporting>

## **Attachment Index**

**Attachment 1 - Action Plan - Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040**

**Attachment 2 – Infill Capacity Study – Background Report for Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040**

**Attachment 3 – Infill Design Study - Background Report for Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040**





# **Attachment 1**

## **Action Plan**

### **Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040**

Bellingen Shire Council acknowledges the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

#### DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Version #	Date	Brief Description	Council Minute Number
0.1	16.9.19	Draft v.1	-
0.2	20.6.19	Draft for Report	

#### DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information within this publication, Bellingen Shire Council disclaims any liability to any person in respect of anything done or not done as a result of the contents of this Plan.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Housing Strategy and relevant legislation. This Plan does not constitute legal or planning advice and should not be relied upon as such. It should not be used by anyone as a basis for investment or other private decision-making purposes about land purchase or land use. Landowners are encouraged to speak to Council about development proposals.

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## Homes for Our Future Vision

Bellinghen Shire offers **housing choices** by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations, with varied features and characteristics.

New housing is located mostly **in and around existing town centres**. Shops, services, parks and community facilities are close by, encouraging **walking and cycling**.

We strive for greater opportunity and **affordability** in the housing market. Our homes cater for a wide range of people and households, including for all incomes, people with a disability, and for our ageing population.

High quality **design** of housing and public space encourages **community connections**, and enhances **neighbourhood character** whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

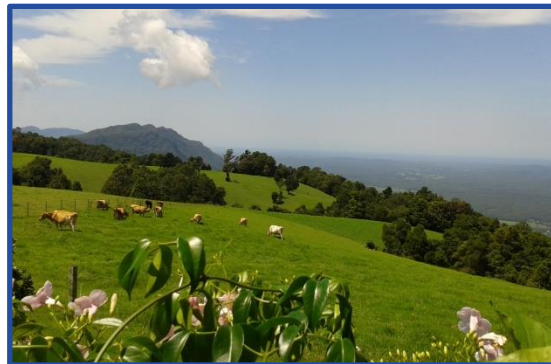
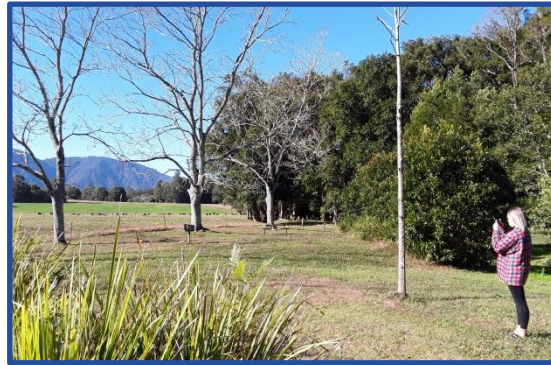
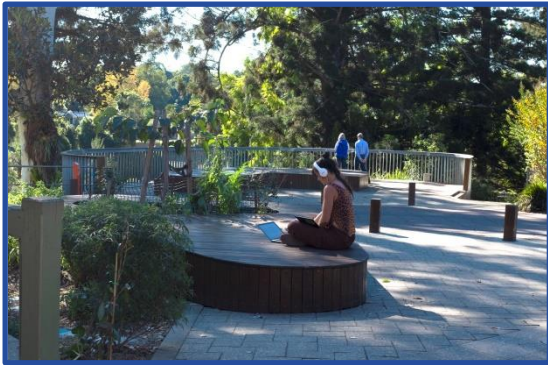
Our housing reflects the **environmental ethos** of the community, respecting our precious natural environment and supporting eco-conscious lifestyles and habits.

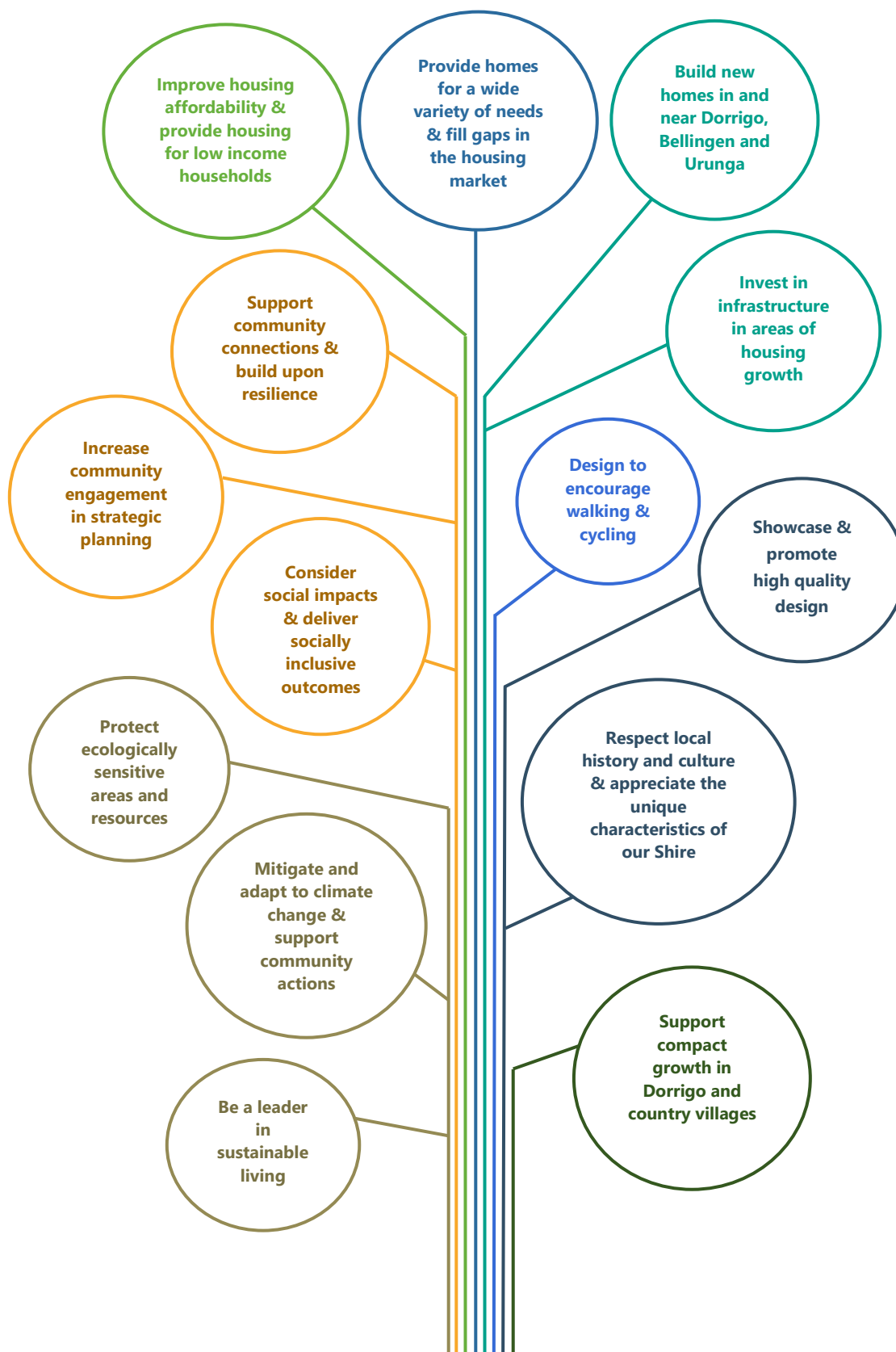
The **farmland** and **rural character** of the Shire is protected, and offers **regenerative and innovative** farming opportunities, supporting our country towns and villages.



# What do you love about your neighbourhood?

Some photo competition entries





## Bellingen Shire Homes for Our Future

Summary of Strategies Factsheet

## **Strategy 1**

### **Housing Choices**

#### **Vision**

Bellinghen Shire offers housing choices by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations with varied features and characteristics.

#### **Strategies**

Ensure new homes in residential areas provide for a range of household needs.

Encourage new supply to fill identified gaps in the housing market.

# Actions

## 1.1 Set housing diversity targets

Housing diversity targets for residential areas are for growth to deliver at least **50% diverse housing types** (including: granny flats, dual occupancies, townhouses, villas, flats and houses on lots smaller than 600m<sup>2</sup>) to provide housing choices to meet the needs of the community.

Regular monitoring of housing approvals and completions by housing type and size will be required to ensure policies remain on track to deliver housing diversity.

## 1.2 Enable more housing types by changing planning controls

A greater variety of housing types and sizes will better meet the needs of a wide range of people (young people, families with children, older people wanting to age in place or downsize), and households (single people, couples and multigenerational families).

A Planning Control review, including additional built form and feasibility testing, will look at changing planning controls to encourage a wider range of well-designed housing types. Controls proposed to be reviewed include:

**a) Reduce minimum lot size required for subdivision**

It is proposed to allow land in the R1 Zone to be subdivided into lots measuring 500m<sup>2</sup> in town areas.

**b) Review controls relating to small lot subdivision**

Review planning controls that allow small lot subdivision (lot sizes <500m<sup>2</sup>), to encourage provision of smaller lots for well-designed homes including:

- Small footprint, low-impact single homes; and
- a greater variety of housing types (e.g. townhouses, terraces, semi-detached, villas etc)

in suitable locations.

**c) Review Chapter 3 Subdivision of DCP**

Review design and planning controls to promote high-quality design, including passive design, and beneficial built form and character outcomes for lots of all sizes.

**d) Review Chapter 2 Multiple Dwelling Construction in DCP (Development Control Plan)**

Provide planning and design controls to facilitate and encourage diverse housing types in appropriate locations, whilst protecting amenity and character.

**e) Review landscaped area controls**

Landscaping controls provide homes and neighbourhoods with green space on private land. New landscaped area objectives, controls and definitions will be introduced to limit overall density and built up area/building footprints, whilst allowing for a range of housing types and sizes. Landscaped area controls will seek to maintain and enhance the character of our Shire.

## 1.3 Enable greenfield housing diversity

Ways to encourage more housing diversity in greenfield areas will be investigated. Greater variety of lot sizes and housing types, sizes and designs will deliver beneficial character, affordability and social outcomes. Council will support proposals for housing diversity in greenfield areas (existing zoned areas) where consistent with the Housing Vision and where physical and environmental constraints do not preclude more homes.

## 1.4 Encourage smaller homes

There is a gap in the market for smaller homes, especially 1 and 2 bedroom homes to cater for changing needs of our community. Actions to encourage smaller homes include:

- clarifying planning controls and simplifying approval pathways
- reducing minimum lot sizes
- investigating incentive-based controls
- education about the affordability and environmental benefits of smaller homes

Useful and inspirational guides for homebuilders and buyers will be produced, providing good examples of well-designed and space efficient homes.

## 1.5 Promote Universal Design

Universal Design means designing homes so they can be accessed and used by all people regardless of age or ability. Council introduced planning controls to increase supply of adaptable and accessible homes in 2017 to meet an identified need. A review of these controls is proposed to ensure they are effective, feasible and user-friendly. The move towards more accessible dwellings is a necessary change for the housing industry. Council is committed to additional research, policy refinement and ongoing advocacy and education on the importance of Universal Design and accessible housing.

## 1.6 Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Council recognises that improved access to local housing will allow Gumbaynggirr people to live on Country and connect to Country.

Council will support initiatives by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, community groups, local Land Councils and Aboriginal housing providers to increase investment in, and supply of, housing that meets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents' needs. Council will encourage partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and Community Housing Providers, State Government, housing advocacy groups and others to facilitate housing projects, such as development of land holdings owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils for Aboriginal housing.



## 1.7 Encourage a variety of tenure types

Provide housing choices for purchase and for rent (short-term and long-term). Currently, the rental market within the Shire is relatively expensive with a low supply of rental dwellings and high levels of rental stress. Ways to encourage additional rental dwelling supply and increased rental security will be investigated.

There are a variety of alternative/hybrid tenures and models that could provide greater housing choice and affordability. For example, Council will work with proponents to support not-for-profit or capped profit housing; Community Land Trusts; co-operatives/co-housing/baugruppen; new-generation boarding houses; rent-to-buy and build-to-rent projects and pilots (e.g. tiny house village) in suitable residentially-zoned locations and where significant community and environmental benefits can be proven.

In addition, a prospectus will be prepared to invite to new residents to the Shire and attract ethical impact investors and financial support for these alternative housing models.

## 1.8 R5 Large Lot Residential Zone review

Whilst the focus of this Housing Strategy centres on land zoned R1 General Residential, in the medium-longer term it is proposed to undertake a review of land within the R5 Large Lot Residential zone and housing and food production potential and challenges in these areas. Some of these challenges and potential responses will also be explored in the Rural Lands Strategy.

As a result of this review, planning controls may be changed where land is assessed as suitable and only where infrastructure can be provided cost-effectively.

There are significant tracts of land currently zoned R5 and able to be subdivided (~669ha); therefore, this review applies to existing R5 land only, and does not propose to rezone any additional land to R5 Large Lot Residential.

### OBJECTIVES

More people can find a home that meets their needs and budget.

Bellingin Shire communities are diverse and inclusive.  
*Linked to Strategy 5*

Increased housing supply and diversity provides for local people who want to stay in the Shire, and attracts new residents.

There are homes and housing opportunities for everyone, and fewer people struggle to find safe, secure and affordable shelter.  
*Linked to Strategy 4*

Bellingin Shire offers choice in housing tenure, including increased rental supply and security.  
*Linked to Strategy 4*

Bellingin Shire offers a wide variety of comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money.  
*Linked to Strategies 4 and 7*

Home designs are sensitive to place and local character but are also adaptable, able to be personalised and contribute to variety in the streetscape.  
*Linked to Strategy 6*

Improved investment and developer confidence leads to increased housing supply with focus on attracting ethical investors and providing long-term community benefits.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

↑ % diverse housing types  
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes  
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)  
↓ % of people in housing stress

*Census population data*

↑ % diverse housing types  
*Census migration data*  
*Diverse income, age and employment groups.*

↓ % of people in housing stress  
↓ % low-income earners in housing stress  
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)  
↑ supply of rentals  
↑ first home buyers  
↑ social/community housing  
↓ # homeless households

↑ housing supply  
↑ supply of rentals (esp. LT)  
↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts  
↑ social/community housing

↑ building completions  
↑ % diverse housing types  
*Design quality and efficiency (as built) audits*

*Character Statements*  
*Community surveys – satisfaction with/pride in built environment*

↑ # house & subdivision approvals  
↑ building completions  
↑ investment (incl. ethical investment)  
↑ investment in public infrastructure and services in growth areas  
*Census population data*  
*Community wellbeing data*

## **Strategy 2**

### **High-quality infill housing**

#### **Vision**

New housing is located mostly in and around existing town centres, with shops, services, parks and community facilities close by, encouraging walking and cycling.

#### **Strategies**

Encourage building of new homes in the existing towns of Dorriggo, Bellingen and Urunga.

Invest in infrastructure in areas of infill housing growth.

## Actions

### 2.1 Planning controls for best-practice infill house design

Planning controls will be updated to encourage low-impact infill housing that is environmentally responsible and designed to fit within existing neighbourhoods. Well-designed infill housing is sensitive to its place and context with minimal impacts to neighbouring properties and local character. It is important that controls and processes encourage good design and prevent poorly designed infill housing as bad examples will erode community support for additional housing in our towns.

Controls proposed to be reviewed include:

- a) **Simplify or remove Locality Density Provisions**  
The Locality density provisions in the DCP detail how many dwellings can be accommodated on a site based on location and site area. These requirements will be reviewed and simplified or removed to allow infill housing in more areas.
- b) **Review landscaped area controls**  
Landscaping controls provide homes and neighbourhoods with green space on private land. New landscaped area objectives, controls and definitions will be introduced to limit overall density and built up area/building footprints, whilst allowing for a range of housing types and sizes. Landscaped area controls will seek to maintain and enhance the leafy character of our Shire and encourage gardens and backyard biodiversity.
- c) **Tree planting**  
One small tree will be required to be planted on site for each new home built.
- d) **Review built form objectives and controls**  
Review objectives and controls to encourage sensitive development, e.g. review setbacks and bulk and scale controls.
- e) **Site Analysis Plans**  
Introduce requirement to submit a Site Analysis Plan for all new dwelling house applications. Site analysis encourages proactive design responses to potential challenges or impacts.
- f) **Car parking**  
Car parking controls will be reviewed to ensure all new infill homes has a minimum one off-street car space per dwelling (except granny flats and shop top housing), and that carparking and manoeuvring areas (hardstand areas) are designed to be safe yet not visually intrusive.

All proposed planning control changes will require further rounds of community consultation.

### 2.2 A guide to best-practice infill examples

Provide and promote examples of best practice infill housing for our local context in an accessible guide. Promote high-quality buildings that are built to last and illustrate how good design can address common concerns, e.g. privacy or loss of tree cover and gardens.

Promote understanding and use of the Government Architect's (*Draft*) *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* to build awareness of good design across Council, the property & development industry and the general public.

### 2.3 Infrastructure planning and studies

Long-term strategic infrastructure planning is important to support orderly and efficient growth, as well as improve environmental, social and economic outcomes. Holistic infrastructure plans should identify necessary upgrades and projects with appropriate delivery triggers to support growth, as well as develop cost-effective and equitable delivery mechanisms and report on service level provisions so residents know what to expect.

Encouraging infill growth is new for Bellingen Shire, which previously grew, and planned to grow, by expanding outwards. As town areas are expected to see more infill housing growth over the life of the strategy, investment in infrastructure upgrades including utilities (e.g. water, sewer), footpaths, roads and parks and green spaces will be required in these areas.

Infill focus areas (areas of highest infill potential as described in the *Housing Strategy* and *Infill Capacity Study*) will be prioritised for detailed infrastructure studies. These studies will investigate capacity and servicing requirements and seek to encourage small-scale, incremental infill housing projects in a cost-effective manner.

The review of the *Strategic Asset Management Plan (Civil Infrastructure and Buildings)* Feb 2019 will be updated to reflect the LSPS & Growth Management Strategy.

### 2.4 Key sites

Key sites are large sites with redevelopment potential, specifically potential to deliver greater housing diversity. For a list of key sites and map, refer to the *Housing Strategy*. Key sites may present development partnership opportunities and excellent opportunities to provide Affordable Housing. Council will prioritise proposals on key sites where alignment with the Housing Vision and any site-specific principles can be clearly demonstrated.

### 2.5 Focus on low-rise housing

Building more homes to meet changing community needs should focus on low-rise housing types. The height of new development must respond to its setting and be compatible with neighbourhood character. More homes can be delivered without increasing the height of buildings. Therefore, the 10m height limit that currently applies across the Shire will be retained.

## 2.6 Laneway Housing Investigation

Laneways in our town areas presents opportunities for infill housing. Ways to encourage housing facing laneways in preferred locations, will be investigated, focusing on infrastructure needs and best practice design.

Laneway houses are located behind existing homes and generally have minimal impacts to the streetscape. Some laneways are better suited than others due to width, slope, condition and ease of providing services like water, sewer and waste collection.

A Laneway Housing Investigation Project will take a place-based approach and involve:

- identifying lanes which can accommodate a level of additional development with little intervention;
- understanding development feasibility and planning and infrastructure barriers;
- undertaking infrastructure network strategies in priority/feasible locations identifying infrastructure capacity and required upgrades;
- additional community engagement;
- developing funding and cost-sharing mechanisms for resurfacing and service extensions where laneway housing is considered desirable;
- producing workable design guidelines and engineering standards; and
- changing planning controls and procedures where necessary.

In the interim, granny flats behind dwellings and facing lanes will be encouraged (this type of development does not require direct vehicle access from lanes).

## 2.7 Promote retrofitting buildings as infill

Retrofitting existing homes to provide additional dwellings is a very low impact form of infill development. For example splitting one large home into two smaller homes (creating a dual occupancy). This can also include strata subdivision. Using existing buildings means limited change to streetscape appearance and character. This method also represents efficient, and generally more sustainable use, of land and space. Planning controls may need to be changed to facilitate more retrofits and interested proponents need to be aware of building code regulations. Simplified factsheets, guidelines and examples could be produced to assist.

## 2.8 Employment Lands Study

As part of the ELS, investigate ways to complement infill housing growth, for example by:

- Supporting existing centres and limiting out-of-centre major developments,
- Encouraging jobs in accessible locations and small-scale, community-focused mixed use,
- Increasing employment self-sufficiency and reducing commuting times and congestion.

### OBJECTIVES

There are more homes built in well-serviced neighbourhoods, catering for a wide range of households.

[Linked to Strategy 1](#)

Housing growth is supported by well-planned and maintained infrastructure and infrastructure investment is efficient and cost-effective.

Public space quality is improved.

Growth is compact and well-connected, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing car dependence.

[Linked to Strategy 3](#)

Infill benefits local businesses and producers, town centres, main street shopping and the local economy.

Infill housing is provided at a range of price points and includes housing for low-middle income earners.

[Linked to Strategy 4](#)

The bulk and scale of infill housing is compatible with neighbourhood character and buildings and hard surfaces are softened with landscaping.

[Linked to Strategy 6](#)

Housing is located away from areas of high natural hazard and isolation risks.

Our biodiversity, water quality and natural landscapes are protected through preventing housing development in areas of high environmental value.

[Linked to Strategy 7](#)

Our Important Farmland is protected for future generations.

[Linked to Strategy 8](#)

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

↑ # of houses approved and built in infill focus areas

↑ % diverse housing types  
*Census population data*

↑ *Infrastructure upgrades & maintenance in infill focus areas*  
*Updated Development Contributions Plans*

*Neighbourhood tree canopy cover maintained or enhanced*  
*Street design standards*  
*Sporting fields (amenities/surfaces/range of users)*  
*Public space quality audits*

↑ # of houses within 800m of daily needs shops/services

↑ # of footpaths/cycleways/shared paths linking key destinations  
↓ local car trips  
*Transport surveys*

↓ *escape expenditure*  
*Low retail/business vacancy rates*  
*No out-of-centre large/major retail developments*

*Affordability data– incl. Income and house price (sale & rent) data*

*Character Statements*  
*Design quality audit*

*Natural hazard studies & planning controls*

*Area of HEV land zoned for environmental purposes only*  
*Low % vegetation change/loss due to housing/infrastructure*  
*Water quality data*

*Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only*  
*Low # of land use conflict complaints*



## **Strategy 3**

### **Walking and cycling**

#### **Vision**

New housing is located mostly in and around existing town centres, with shops, services, parks and community facilities close by, encouraging walking and cycling.

#### **Strategies**

Design subdivisions, buildings and public spaces to encourage walking and cycling.

Connect key destinations by providing footpaths, cycle paths and supportive infrastructure.

## Actions

### 3.1 Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan

Implement the recommendations of the *Bellinghen Shire Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and Bike Plan* (GHD, 2016). In the next review of the Plan, include measurable targets to increase walking and cycling. Provide links across town precincts and between town and greenfield sites. Ensure footpath, cycleway and shared path improvements are delivered where they are most needed and most likely to be well-used, having regard to construction and maintenance costs.

### 3.2 Review Contributions Plan and seek funding opportunities

Update the *Bellinghen Shire Local Roads and Traffic Infrastructure Developer Contribution Plan 2015* to include funding for strategic footpath and cycleway projects. Pursue other funding opportunities such as grants.

### 3.3 Street Design Standards

Develop Street Design Standards that provide for the needs and safety of people walking and riding bicycles. Plan for people with more restricted mobility, including children, seniors, and people with a disability to ensure that everyone in the community has the chance to use active transport. Use these standards when undertaking public works designs; advising on large developments such as large subdivisions; and when delivering new projects.

### 3.4 Manage car parking

Deliver the *Town Centres Parking Strategy* (2018). Car transport is necessary in rural areas and there is a need to provide parking near key destinations. A balanced approach is required, providing for all modes of transport and providing accessibility and mobility choice for everyone, including people with a disability. The number of accessible car parking spaces should be increased within town centres and consideration should be given to designating parking spaces for electric vehicles and car sharing programs.

The design of car parking areas and access must complement the character of our centres (developed in a time before cars were common, and creating the special sense of place we enjoy today).

Ways to practically reduce car use (especially for short local trips) and vehicle emissions should be investigated.

### 3.5 Connect greenfields areas to town centres

New housing estates need to be well-connected to surrounding neighbourhoods. Good subdivision design can encourage active forms of transport. Controls will ensure walking and cycling access provide good connectivity between old and new neighbourhoods, enhancing community connections and social cohesion.

### 3.6 Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport

Investigate planning controls and engineering standards that promote walking and cycling and manage traffic and parking impacts. Controls need to consider the needs of people walking, riding bikes and people of all abilities.

#### a) Housing and Streetscape

There are a number of additional planning controls that can be used to protect and enhance the character of existing neighbourhoods and promote walking. For example:

- providing clear pedestrian entries to homes and homes that face the street
- minimising vehicle circulation (where it is safe to do so) and hard surfaces (e.g. concrete) on properties
- providing off-street car parking that is recessive in the streetscape
- planting street trees along pedestrian/cycle routes to provide shade

#### b) Subdivision

It is very important to design for active transport at the subdivision design stage, but this is often overlooked in order to maximise developable land or streamline car traffic. Planning controls should be reviewed to ensure that making new housing areas walkable is a top priority.

#### c) Other (e.g. Commercial)

Encourage active transport by providing bike parking, end-of-trip facilities (showers, lockers). Provide accessible parking spaces and electrical vehicle charging for large proposals.

### 3.7 Foster a walking culture

Walking and other forms of active transport provide a multitude of benefits, from increasing health and fitness; promoting social activity and safety and taking pressure off the road network.

Residents value the features of a walking culture – enjoying a ‘stop and chat’ in the street; the slower pace of life in the country and living more environmentally-friendly lifestyles. In rural areas, there is the need to come into town by car, but those living near town (set to increase with infill development) should be encouraged to walk to local destinations and for most short local trips.

Council can promote active travel through actions such as:

- providing safety messages and information for drivers, walkers and cyclists
- improving signage
- marketing the benefits of walking and pedestrian-focused design
- raising awareness of local facilities and infrastructure

- engaging with frequent walkers and find out their motivations, needs and ideas
- engaging with and sharing stories of people with mobility difficulties to increase understanding
- supporting walking initiatives and challenges
- supporting active transport for events or at busy times (e.g. market days).

### 3.8 Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs

Walking or riding a bike is great exercise for kids and the only choice of transport for those without a driver's licence and access to public transport.

Council can:

- support school programs that increase walking and cycling rates amongst students;
- engage with schools and students and parents/caregivers about barriers to walking or cycling; and,
- work to reduce/remedy these barriers.

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Growth is compact and well-connected, encouraging active transport. <i>Linked to Strategy 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ # of houses within 800m (10 min walk) of daily needs</li> <li>↑ footpath/cycleway connections</li> </ul>
People have more transport and mobility choices because useful, inclusive & attractive alternatives to private car travel are provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Pedestrian and Bike Plan updated</i></li> <li><i>Transport surveys and audits</i></li> <li><i>Census data</i></li> <li>↑ investment in walking/cycling infrastructure</li> </ul>
Community health outcomes are improved including physical and mental health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Public health data</i></li> <li><i>Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar</i></li> </ul>
Social interaction opportunities are increased. <i>Linked to Strategy 5</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Community wellbeing data</i></li> <li><i>Street design standards</i></li> <li>↑ places to stop and rest</li> </ul>
More streets are pedestrian-focused, making walking comfortable and improving safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ walking journeys</li> <li>↓ road accidents</li> <li>↑ perceptions of safety</li> <li>↑ Street trees, landscaping and shade and places to stop and rest</li> </ul>
High pedestrian activity improves small business exposure and increases local spending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ pedestrian activity in centres</li> <li><i>Low commercial vacancies</i></li> </ul>
Private transport costs are reduced. <i>Linked to Strategy 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ walking journeys</li> <li><i>Household travel cost data (adjusted for inflation)</i></li> </ul>
Traffic congestion, car parking demand and noise and air pollution from vehicles is reduced. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Origin-destination surveys</i></li> <li>↓ local (short-distance) car trips</li> </ul>
Accessible car parking is prioritised (for people with a disability) and a balanced amount of car parking is provided near key destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ # accessible car parking spaces in town centres</li> <li>↑ rates of park and walk</li> <li><i>Car parking occupancy surveys</i></li> </ul>
Greenhouse gas emissions from transport are reduced. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ walking journeys</li> <li><i>Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar</i></li> </ul>
Subdivision and building design prioritises walking and cycling, respecting historical streetscape design and neighbourhood character. <i>Linked to Strategy 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Planning controls &amp; design guidelines</i></li> <li><i>Design quality audits</i></li> </ul>
New and emerging technologies are planned for and implemented in an inclusive and equitable way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ # electric vehicle charging stations</li> <li>↑ Public transport/on demand/sharing opportunities</li> </ul>

## **Strategy 4**

### **Affordability**

#### **Vision**

We strive for greater opportunity and affordability in the housing market. Our homes cater for a wide range of people and households, including for all incomes, people with a disability, and for our ageing population.

#### **Strategies**

Advocate for improved housing affordability, especially for people on low and middle incomes.

Encourage and facilitate the building of Affordable (subsidised) Housing, as well as homes that are more likely to be affordable (e.g. smaller homes, homes with high-quality lower-cost specifications/finishes, homes with shared spaces).



## Actions

### 4.1 Provide Affordable Housing on government-owned sites

Council has commenced a review of its landholdings which could identify land suitable to be used for Affordable Housing. This review is in its early stages and land suitability studies need to follow any preliminary investigations into potentially suitable land parcels. Council has limited land classified as Operational and therefore limited land available for development. This review could include analysis of Community land parcels (which could be reclassified to Operational land for the purpose of Affordable Housing). Council will also advocate to State government regarding any available State-owned or Crown land parcels that may be suitable for AH development. Any AH development on Council-owned land must cater for the needs of the community, in particular very low and low income earners, and be developed by a Community Housing Provider(s) and/or Not-for-Profit organisation.

### 4.2 Define affordable housing, and promote its benefits to the community

Council will adopt definitions of affordable housing considering local context. Benchmarks will also be provided, specifying what the cost of a home (for rent and purchase) in our Shire would need to be in order to be considered affordable for different income groups. These benchmarks must be indexed, reviewed and updated regularly across the life of the strategy. Housing-related costs like energy and water also need to be considered.

Making affordable housing a priority for our Shire will benefit a wide range of people and our community as a whole.

Council will work with partners and the community to continue to promote quality housing solutions to affordability challenges and address misconceptions and concerns about affordable housing through research, education and engagement.

### 4.3 Affordability objectives

Council supports provision of affordable housing for all residents and this intent should be clear within Council's plans and strategies.

Affordability will be included as an important objective within Council strategies and planning controls, for example within the LEP, DCP, LSPS, Employment Strategy and tourism and economic development studies.

### 4.4 DA Management Policy

Council will introduce a Development Assessment (DA) Management Policy to streamline the DA process and reduce the cost and time it takes to build more homes in our Shire. This policy will be aligned with the *Development Assessment Best Practice Guide for Councils*, written by the NSW State Government.

### 4.5 Promote housing diversity

Council will encourage houses and lots of different shapes and sizes, especially smaller homes which are a gap in the market. Small homes are generally cheaper to construct and run (depending on design and specification). Planning controls currently require a mix of bedroom numbers in multi-dwelling developments but do not restrict dwelling size, meaning a 1 or 2 bedroom home can be as large as a 3 or 4 bedroom home and retrofitted to include more bedrooms after approval. Council will encourage and promote the delivery of housing diversity and smaller homes through engagement with industry, state government and the community; through design education and training and embedded in planning objectives.

In the medium term, if the market persists in not providing a mix of house sizes, Council will consider additional development controls that mandate a greater mix of dwelling sizes and types, including maximum floor area controls.

The Infill Focus Areas are located in accessible and desirable locations, linked to higher land values. A mix of housing types and sizes will be required in these areas to encourage provision of homes at a range of pricepoints to positively influence affordability.

### 4.6 Reduce ongoing housing-related costs

#### a) Reduce ongoing costs through design and resilience-building

There are a number of ways to reduce ongoing housing costs that Council can promote. Housing that is designed to be adaptable, energy, water and space efficient and made from durable materials will be cheaper to run. Infill housing reduces private transport costs and homes that avoid hazard-prone areas have cheaper insurance.

Sometimes up-front design costs may be higher than for standardised homes but significant savings can be achieved in the long run and more information should be provided on cost-saving design measures (including for retrofitting existing buildings) that residents can adopt.

In addition, investing in climate change adaptation, fostering community resilience and encouraging greater community self-sufficiency will help reduce ongoing costs related to service provision and infrastructure.

#### b) Reduce Cooling and Heating Costs

On average, 40% of energy costs in the home are spent on air conditioning and heating. A number of house design measures and resident actions can reduce energy costs whilst maintaining comfort and benefiting the environment (less home energy use and reduced emissions).<sup>1</sup>

Council will promote resources that can assist homeowners, homebuilders and renters in reducing energy costs through good home design, retrofits and behaviours.

<sup>1</sup> <http://yourhome.gov.au/energy/heating-and-cooling>

Council will also produce location and climate-specific factsheets, outlining practical design measures and behaviours that can reduce ongoing cooling and heating costs for residents.

These guides should discuss upfront costs and benefits of energy-efficient house design in reducing ongoing costs. Greater awareness of potential costs and future potential savings can help residents choose what will work best for their needs and budgets. This action also assists with climate change adaptation and resilience, ensuring our buildings are comfortable year-round, more resilient to shocks like power outages, and appropriately designed and built for local climatic conditions.

### c) Energy justice advocacy

Energy poverty is a significant issue in Australia, exacerbated by rising electricity costs and climate change impacts. Lower-income households and renters are disproportionately affected by energy poverty and are more likely to forgo comfort and risk health issues because they cannot afford to cool or heat their homes. Council should advocate for the equitable distribution of benefits resulting from energy efficient design and technologies. This may mean social impact assessments for significant projects or targeting of programs and incentives to low-income earners or other marginalised groups.

## 4.7 Advocacy and partnerships

Providing affordable housing is the responsibility of all levels of government, Federal, State and Local. Local Governments are not responsible for many policies or actions that influence housing affordability; however can advocate for change to other levels of government and responsible agencies. An Advocacy Platform will be prepared, detailing important points and suggested policy responses, for example advocating for a National Housing Strategy, greater public investment in social and affordable housing, rental reforms to enable secure longer-term leases for tenants and embedding universal design principles in building codes.

Council will look for partnerships, and continue working with existing partners such as the Bellingin Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group. Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council. Council and partners will also continue to share stories of people experiencing housing affordability challenges, to promote understanding and spur action.

## 4.8 Strategies to reduce homelessness

Council will advocate for a whole-of government approach to addressing homelessness and engage with local and regional stakeholders to better understand how we can secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households in our area.

### OBJECTIVES

Bellingin Shire communities are diverse and inclusive.

*Linked to Strategies 1 and 5*

There are homes and housing opportunities for everyone, and fewer people struggle to find safe, secure and affordable shelter.

Bellingin Shire offers choice in housing tenure, including homes for sale at different price points and increased rental supply, affordability and security.

Bellingin Shire provides safe and secure housing for very low and low income earners, reducing social inequalities.

Homelessness in the Shire and region is reduced and prevented.

Council and the wider community understand the need for affordable housing and are supportive of affordable housing goals.

Investment in affordable housing development provides permanently affordable housing and maximises long-term social benefits.

Homes are designed or retrofitted to reduce ongoing running costs (e.g. electricity and water costs).

*Linked to Strategy 7*

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

*Census population data  
Diverse income, age and employment groups.*

↓ % of people in housing stress  
↓ % very low, low-moderate income earners in housing stress\*  
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)  
↑ supply of rentals (esp. LT)  
↑ first home buyers  
↑ key worker housing  
↑ social & community housing  
↓ # homeless households

↑ housing supply  
↑ supply of rentals  
↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts  
↑ social/community housing

↑ # affordable rental dwellings for very low and low income households  
↑ # affordable dwellings for low-income purchasers  
↓ % of very low and low income earners in housing stress  
↑ # lower cost housing types/products

↓ # homeless households  
↑ support services

*Housing Strategy*  
↑ housing supply at various price points  
*Positive media about affordable housing developments*

↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts  
↑ social/community housing  
↑ key worker housing

↑ energy and water efficiency  
↑ low-energy design/passive design  
↑ renewable energy

\* Levels of housing stress on lower income households can be reduced if higher housing costs cause these people to move out of the area. Therefore, we need to also consider population and income diversity measures.

## **Strategy 5**

### **Community connections**

#### **Vision**

High quality design of housing and public space encourages community connections and enhances neighbourhood character whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

#### **Strategies**

Build upon our community's sense of care, creativity and resilience and support new and existing connections.

Include social considerations in decision-making and deliver socially inclusive outcomes.

Increase community engagement in strategic planning and encourage community partnerships.

## Actions

### 5.1 Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy

Infill housing provides an impetus to better our public spaces. As some people's private backyards will be smaller, public open space and trees and plants in streets and parks become more important.

Council will produce a strategy that identifies the public open space (e.g. parks, playgrounds, sporting fields) and community facility needs of the Bellingen Shire, taking into account predicted growth. The strategy will build upon the recommendations of the *Open Spaces Management Plan July 2012* and provide benchmarks (including public space requirements for new developments), design principles, recommendations and funding priorities for public space and community facility projects.

The strategy will explore ways to support greater social interactions and welcome people of all ages and abilities in public spaces. Opportunities to create interconnected networks of open space (e.g. along creek corridors) and support biodiversity and climate change adaptation will also be explored. The strategy must consider the different needs of greenfield and infill housing areas, ensuring new, established and changing neighbourhoods are well-connected and well-serviced.

### 5.2 Funding public space infrastructure – review Contributions Plan

The *Community Facilities & Open Space Infrastructure Contributions Plan* will be reviewed to ensure adequate and fair levies on development are applied. Council will also seek to fund public space improvements in line with a *Parks and Public Spaces Strategy* through a variety of other mechanisms including grants. Proposals which include new or embellished public spaces will need to consider the costs of maintenance and ongoing workforce implications.

### 5.3 Creating socially sustainable places – Social Impact Assessment

Environmental and economic considerations are often addressed in development proposals, but social considerations can be less tangible and less often considered or assessed. Social considerations are broad and can include health, equality and cultural impact assessments. Council will investigate ways to better integrate social considerations into planning and design decision-making.

### 5.4 Ageing in place

Towns and homes need to be designed to help people stay at home as they age, if they want to. Council will review planning controls and barriers to ageing in place and encourage age-friendly housing (Universal Design); and a variety of housing types including supporting co-housing for older age groups. Council will also prioritise age-friendly design principles for public space and facility planning and providing information and support for housing options for older residents.

### 5.5 Aboriginal Connections to Country and Community

Council recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, culture and knowledge and deep and continuing connections to place. Council will work on engaging and developing relationships with Aboriginal people, groups and agencies to better understand and plan for the needs and aspirations of local Aboriginal people.

Council will support projects, programs and partnerships run by Aboriginal community groups that strengthen community connections, share experience and knowledge, including sharing Gumbaynggirr language, and projects which empower Aboriginal people. Other actions for investigation, suggested during engagement include establishing Aboriginal Reference Groups and including more Aboriginal representation on panels and committees.

### 5.6 Mixed Tenure Housing

Mixed tenure housing means development that includes a mix of social and affordable (sold or leased below-market rate) dwellings and market rate homes. Mixed tenure allows more expensive homes to cross-subsidise social and affordable housing.

Council supports best-practice mixed tenure development in residential areas, and will support best practice proposals (assessed on merit). Some aspects of best practice include:

- tenure blindness (subsidised dwellings must be largely indistinguishable from market-rate dwellings);
- all tenants must have equal access to facilities and open spaces;
- quality design and build for all dwellings that considers lifetime maintenance costs;
- mixing of different tenures so subsidised housing is not all in the one place or block.
- Community housing providers are involved early in the design stages of a proposal, and
- Development is sensitive to its surrounds and designed to maximise amenity

These features of best practice mixed tenure encourage community connections, create “bridging” social opportunities, reduce inequalities and can help address stigma.

### 5.7 Workforce housing

Home ownership and private rental is becoming less affordable for a range of workers across the Shire, including retail, hospitality, education, health and emergency services workers. Council will investigate ways to encourage development of affordable housing options for local workers, including working families and single people with low-moderate incomes, so local people can remain able to afford to live near their jobs and to attract new working age people to the Shire. Strategies to provide greater affordability can include rent-to-buy, subsidised key worker housing, shared equity, co-ownership, long term leasing and capped profit developments, targeting low-middle income workers.



## 5.8 Equitable Access to High Speed Internet

Council will continue to advocate for fair and equitable high quality access to high-speed internet for all Shire residents. Quality internet access is a socio-economic wellbeing indicator and can support social connectedness, employment, education and health outcomes. A digital divide exists in Australia where access to internet is not equally distributed and lower socio-economic groups tend to receive poorer quality digital infrastructure<sup>2</sup>. Access to reliable high speed and high quality internet is also a key area for investigation in Council's forthcoming Employment Strategy.

Council must also consider residents' access and ability to use digital services when transitions to more digitally-focused services are proposed. Council will support projects that build residents' digital skills, and enhance digital access, especially for marginalised groups.

## 5.9 Community Engagement and Participation in Strategic Planning

Council recognises that local knowledge and community participation is key to effective strategic planning. Whilst not everyone will agree with each other, plans that are developed with community input are more likely to result in action. Council will continue to build upon the processes and learnings of the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement and seek to improve engagement in strategic planning projects and build trust in planning functions and processes.

There are many people and groups who do not feel empowered by our current planning system and processes. Council will continue to focus on engaging with a wide range of people and groups across the Shire and to listen to a wide range of people, capturing voices less commonly heard.

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Bellingen Shire communities are diverse and inclusive. <i>Linked to Strategies 1 and 4</i>	<i>Census population data</i> <i>Diverse income, age and employment groups.</i>
Bellingen Shire residents maintain strong social networks, fostering feelings of belonging, trust and empowerment.	↑ <i>Volunteering</i> ↑ <i>Local, community driven events</i> <i>Connections between and across our communities</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i>
Community members have access to being able to actively participate in community life and civic activities.	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> <i>Disability and Inclusion Plan</i> <i>Internet connectivity</i> ↑ <i>community participation in planning</i>
Community health outcomes are improved including physical and mental health and wellbeing.	<i>Public health data</i>
Social interaction opportunities are increased and people feel safe. <i>Linked to Strategy 3</i>	<i>Community wellbeing data</i>
People have improved access and connections to parks, green space, water and nature, enhancing community wellbeing. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	<i>Parks and Public Spaces Plan</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i>
Connections to place are strengthened, through protecting and celebrating the special and unique aspects of our Shire. <i>Linked to Strategy 6</i>	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> ↑ <i>community participation in planning</i> <i>Heritage strategies and programs</i>
The principles of social justice underpin our activities and decision making processes	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> ↑ <i>trust</i>
More homes support ageing in place, allowing older residents to stay in their homes and within their local communities. <i>Linked to Strategies 1 and 4</i>	<i>Census population data</i> ↑ <i>% diverse housing types</i> ↑ <i>supply 1 &amp; 2 bedroom homes</i> ↑ <i># inclusive homes (UD)</i>
We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage.	<i>Engagement with Aboriginal community</i> ↑ <i>Aboriginal events, activities, learning opportunities and storytelling in appropriate cultural spaces</i> ↑ <i>use of Gumbaynggirr language</i>
Our communities and towns are resilient and made safer through preparedness for natural hazards and disasters such as floods and extreme heat. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	↑ <i>Volunteering</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i> <i>Hazard studies</i> <i>Emergency preparedness</i>

<sup>2</sup> Schram, Baum, Fisher et al. "Three charts on: the NBN and Australia's Digital Divide" published in The Conversation June 2017

## **Strategy 6**

### **Design and character**

#### **Vision**

High quality design of housing and public space encourages community connections, and enhances neighbourhood character whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

#### **Strategies**

Showcase high quality design that provides for household needs and respects local character.

Respect and appreciate local history and culture and cherish the unique characteristics of Bellingen Shire.

Promote understanding and conservation of Gumbaynggirr heritage and culture, historical buildings, heritage items, natural landscapes & notable people, groups and stories.

## Actions

### 6.1 Character Statements

In line with state planning reforms, consideration of local character will be elevated in plan-making and development assessment. Character is how a place looks and feels, and is influenced by physical, cultural and spiritual features. New development and strategic masterplans will be guided by Character Statements.

Council will prepare a *Local Strategic Planning Statement* (LSPS) to describe character features across the Shire and identify desired future character. Council will also prepare place-specific *Character Statements* for Dorrig, Bellingen and Urunga. These important new planning documents will be informed by community input and will be used to inform planning decisions.

Planning for local character is about allowing a place to evolve whilst maintaining and enhancing special features and values. These features must be defined by local people, using local knowledge and acknowledging diverse perspectives.

### 6.2 Planning controls for high quality design and character

Review planning objectives, controls and processes to strengthen character and design considerations for development. These controls should encourage high quality design particularly in relation to bulk, scale, building siting and footprints. Controls should be flexible enough to enable design responses to constraints (overly prescriptive controls can restrict design and encourage standardisation).

#### a) Landscaping controls

New landscaped area controls will be introduced to provide private green open spaces for a range of housing types and limit overall built-upon area. Landscaped area controls will seek to maintain and enhance the leafy character of our Shire and encourage gardens and backyard biodiversity. Landscape Plans will be required to be submitted with development applications and guidance on how to prepare a Landscape Plan for small proposals will be produced.

#### b) Tree planting

One small tree will be required to be planted on site for each new home built. A *Small Tree Landscaping Guide* will be produced to help people choose the right tree for their gardens.

#### c) Significant Tree Register

Significant trees will be given statutory protection through inclusion of a register of significant trees in Council's DCP.

#### d) Site Analysis Plans

Introduce requirement to submit a Site Analysis Plan for all new dwelling house applications. Site analysis supports buildings that are sensitive to local context, and address challenges through good design.

#### e) Building siting and design

Planning controls across multiple DCP Chapters will be reviewed to ensure well designed and sited dwellings to increase energy and water efficiency, reduce potential impacts to neighbours and protect local character and amenity.

### 6.3 Innovative demonstration projects

On suitable sites zoned residential, Council will encourage and prioritise demonstration projects that embrace best-practice design and showcase housing diversity and sustainability. A demonstration housing project displays leadership, inspires the development industry and can stimulate supply of high-quality housing for the community. Demonstration projects can also test and develop new or emerging concepts and provide a basis for academic research. Most demonstration projects include partnerships between Community Housing Providers or Not-For-Profit Organisations.

### 6.4 Build upon the Shire's creative and design culture

Good housing design is sensitive to its surroundings and considers local conditions and constraints. Good design can occur across a wide range of budgets and for all housing types. Good design is about creating fit-for-purpose and attractive buildings for longevity rather than spectacle. Bellingen Shire has an advantage in producing high-quality outcomes because of its natural and built assets and creatively-inclined community. By capitalising upon these artistic and creative skills, Bellingen Shire can be renowned as an area of design excellence. Council can nurture these qualities and reflect them in the built environment by:

- Celebrating and rewarding local examples of design excellence and highlighting case studies;
- Engaging with the community (e.g. when designing infrastructure) and supporting design conversations;
- Supporting local public art in key public spaces; and
- Promotion of, and training in, urban design and housing design principles and best-practice concepts

In addition, Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council.

### 6.5 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study

New housing must avoid development impacts on areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

To help identify and protect culturally significant land, Council proposes to undertake a Shire-wide Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study involving engagement with the local Aboriginal community as the owners of this cultural heritage. A comprehensive study requires Council and partners to resource and prioritise working relationships with Aboriginal residents, groups and community networks. Council will apply for grant funding to help fund a Shire-wide Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study.

Council supports the State Government's proposed changes to the management and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage via the introduction of the draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and will work with local stakeholders to implement these reforms when they are enacted.

## 6.6 Heritage Listing Review

The *Bellingen Shire Heritage Study* was produced in 1992, and requires updating to ensure places of significance and worthy of conservation are legally recognised and preserved for future generations. Heritage in its many forms is ubiquitous in Bellingen Shire and highly valued by residents. Owners' of heritage items should be supported in conservation efforts consistent with the ICOMOS Burra Charter heritage management principles. The *DCP Chapter 15 Heritage* requires review to make it more user-friendly and to encourage conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage items and places.

## 6.7 Greening Programs

Bellingen Shire's spectacular natural environment is a key contributor to the Shire's character. This character can be protected and enhanced through tree planting and landscaping in residential areas, both on public (street trees, verges and in parks) and private land (in yards and gardens). Greening can be supported and measured through a *Significant Tree Register* and *Tree Canopy Study* which includes canopy targets for different areas.

Information sharing can assist greening for example through mapping of tree assets or significant plantings, production of local habitat and planting guides (to help choose appropriate species) and embellishment of parks and open spaces, including transparent maintenance plans and proactive tree management. Bushfire risk will need to be considered in plant selection and maintenance. Tree planting will be a key focus, but also the planting of flowering shrubs will be encouraged to support pollinators and biodiversity.

## 6.8 Incentive programs, including continuing heritage conservation grant program

Council will support small grant programs that protect and enhance neighbourhood character, such as the annual matched-funding heritage conservation grants, which are partially funded by Council and partially funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. When considering possible future small grant programs or financial incentives/concessions, residential projects must contribute to the achievement of the Housing Vision and strategies, and must be locally and community based.

## 6.9 Local character in greenfield areas

Greenfield areas need to carefully consider character and opportunities for community connections during subdivision design. During the *Homes for Our Future* engagement, residents expressed a desire for new housing areas to prioritise environmental protection, sustainable living and neighbourhood character. To help new neighbourhoods establish character and distinctiveness, greenfield areas should: provide inclusive public spaces; respond to the natural environment and work with features such as topography and vegetation; design for local microclimates; maximise views and vistas; provide generous landscaping suited to the climate and local context and integrate with, and connect to, existing established neighbourhoods.

## OBJECTIVES

The features of places that people cherish, identify with and relate to are recognised and enhanced.

[Linked to Strategy 5](#)

Our towns and places remain distinct from one another and other places, and places evolve and change in ways sympathetic to their valued characteristics.

The supply of well-designed homes that respond to individual needs and unique settings is increased.

[Linked to Strategy 1](#)

Home designs are creative and personalised whilst remaining sensitive to place and local character.

The bulk and scale of infill housing is compatible with neighbourhood character and buildings and hard surfaces are softened with landscaping.

Homes in greenfield areas respect their surrounds and environment and add variety to the streetscape.

Residential streets and public places are green, featuring street trees and gardens and urban heat impacts are reduced.

Heritage buildings and sites are protected, celebrated and, where appropriate, sympathetically well-utilised.

Aboriginal objects, places and landscapes of significance are protected, managed and respected in accordance with the wishes of local Aboriginal people.

The local economy is boosted through protection and appreciation of our distinct and attractive places.

[Linked to Strategy 8](#)

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

*Character Statements*  
Qualitative measures/design audit  
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

*Character Statements*  
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

↑ # DA house approvals  
Qualitative measures/design audit  
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

Qualitative measures/design audit

↑ Landscaping and tree planting on private land, especially forward of building line  
Design audit

Qualitative measures/design audit

↑ Tree canopy cover  
↑ Landscaping

*Heritage Studies*  
Investment in heritage buildings

*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*  
Partnerships and engagement

↑ Tourism expenditure\*

\* Tourism is a significant contributor to the Shire's local economy but needs to be managed to ensure it is balanced and sustainable.



## **Strategy 7**

### **Environmental protection and sustainable living**

#### **Vision**

Our housing reflects the environmental ethos of the community, respecting our precious natural environment and supporting eco-conscious lifestyles and habits.

#### **Strategies**

Protect ecologically sensitive areas from development and emphasis an environmentally-sustainable approach to growth.

Continually improve environmental performance and be a leader in sustainable living.

Mitigate and adapt to climate change, and support community sustainability initiatives.

## Actions

### 7.1 Planning for long-term water security

Council will update its strategic long-term water security and water-related infrastructure plans to provide safe, clean and cost-effective water for current and future residents, taking into account projected growth figures and climate change models. Council is currently reviewing its *Integrated Water Management Strategy*.

Planning for our water future should include consideration of community views and values along with technical reviews, investigations and scenario testing, for example similar to the holistic long-term approach taken by South-East Queensland Water and innovative measures undertaken by Orange City Council. Findings or summaries of updated water modelling, plans and monitoring data will be made publicly available in plain English to increase community knowledge around water planning and usage. Updated water capacity models must inform growth and infrastructure planning and delivery.

### 7.2 Looking after Water

It is the responsibility of Council and all residents and visitors to the Shire to use water as efficiently and mindfully as possible. Council will update its *Water Demand Management Plan* (2012) and implement measures to decrease water usage, including consideration of: reducing leakage/loss in the system; community education; increasing rainwater tank use (promoting use, offering rebates); efficient washing machine rebates; water audits, greywater use, dual reticulation for new subdivisions, water recycling, and/or permanent low-level restrictions. Protecting water quality is a key responsibility and Council will work to minimise stormwater pollution, and manage stormwater run-off in ways suited to local climate and conditions.

### 7.3 Update natural hazard risk plans

Update and implement floodplain risk, bushfire and coastal management plans and mapping to manage risks in growing areas. Update the Drought Management Plan and investigate a heat wave plan.

### 7.4 Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living

Council will ensure planning controls allow and encourage environmentally-sensitive building practices and features. These include (but are not limited to): solar power; passive building design; greywater reuse; composting toilets, waterwise gardens and green walls and roofs. In addition, Council will simplify information and processes wherever possible to make adoption of these features easier for residents and developers. Council will also investigate how to support innovations and reduce costs relating to zero/low carbon housing, community power-sharing/microgrids and solar gardens, water-sensitive design, water recycling, other renewable energy generation, electric vehicles, e-bikes and car-share.

Council will seek to recognise, reward and/or incentivise best practice environmental design features included in homes that go beyond mandated minimums and to reward energy and water efficient households. This could include offering financial incentives, prioritised according to cost-benefit analysis.

### 7.5 Climate-responsive house design

Siting and designing comfortable homes to suit local climates can result in more affordable running costs and better environmental outcomes, compared to standardised house designs that are not modified to local conditions, which may cost less upfront but be more expensive to run (e.g. higher heating and cooling costs) over the lifetime of the home.

Council will promote existing design resources to assist homebuilders, buyers and renovators in what to look for in a comfortable and sustainable home. Council will also produce location-specific factsheets to encourage climate-responsive design, including passive design, choosing the right solar panel/rainwater tank system for your needs, landscaping and sustainable material advice. These guides will provide guidance on a range of home improvement measures for a variety of budgets.

### 7.6 Support biodiversity in our backyards

Residents' value living close to nature and as more homes are built it is important to provide useable gardens and private open spaces, to enhance landscaped areas and support biodiversity in public areas and create urban habitat corridors.

#### a) Finalise and implement Bellingen Shire Biodiversity Strategy

The draft *Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* presents an overarching framework to better prioritise spending on biodiversity and to measure improvements. The *draft Biodiversity Strategy* has 6 focus areas to protect and enhance local biodiversity: native vegetation; rivers; corridors + connectivity; public spaces & habitat species preservation. Housing development should contribute to these biodiversity goals and focus areas.

#### b) Verge/footpath gardens

Verge gardens are located on public land in the footpath area between property boundaries and roads. Council will investigate approaches taken across local governments to understand how to effectively allow and manage simple verge gardens.

#### c) Pet management

Investigate ways to reduce impacts to wildlife caused by cats and dogs, including increased community education and possible enforcement mechanisms.

#### d) Planting guidelines

#### e) Public spaces and greening programs

Council will plan to embellish public spaces, including planting of street trees, managing public creek corridors and bushland and support sustainable infrastructure such as cool paving and water sensitive urban design in key public spaces.

Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council, including promotion of environmentally-sound design and building practices and features.

## 7.7 Reduce construction and domestic waste

The construction industry has significant environmental impacts<sup>3</sup>, including use of resources in harvesting and manufacture of materials, transport, resulting waste generation and disposal and all associated greenhouse gas emissions, yet there are limited planning strategies, or building practices that address this issue that are widely applied. Council will investigate ways to encourage waste minimisation in building (especially in the design stage), working with stakeholders across the industry. Council will also continue to implement measures to reduce domestic (household) waste.

## 7.8 Mainstream sustainable living and reduce consumption impacts

Wide, lasting change in the housing industry will occur when sustainability is understood, accessible and cost-effective for most people, and when the majority of home-buyers demand sustainable homes. Sustainable living practices comprise of so many different things, and people should be encouraged to do what they can, within their means and budgets, and with the guidance and support of governments and communities.

Council will promote sustainable living within its plans and policies and advocate for increased investment in sustainability across the property industry and by other levels of government. Council will provide information to residents (in the form of factsheets and online resources) that encourage sustainable house design, eco-conscious living practices and actions to reduce consumption impacts.

## 7.9 Cooling urban areas

Urban heat is a significant and growing issue in our cities. Built-up areas are hotter than surrounding natural or rural areas. Heatwaves are getting hotter and more frequent and are a significant health hazard. While Bellingen Shire is predominantly rural and not built-up like dense city areas, local microclimates, topography and vegetation (e.g. in the Valley) can exacerbate heat and humidity effects in summer. Therefore strategies to reduce urban heat should be produced and implemented to increase comfort for residents and reduce heat stress on local flora and fauna. Council will consider and promote resources such as the Low Carbon Living CRC's *Guide to Urban Cooling Strategies 2017* to assist in cooling our town areas during our hot summers.

Council will also introduce planning controls such as mandated landscaped area and tree planting controls to reduce impacts associated with urban heat island effects.

### OBJECTIVES

Our biodiversity, water quality and natural landscapes are protected through preventing housing development in areas of high environmental value. (Linked to Strategy 2)

Biodiversity in our residential neighbourhoods is enhanced.

Bellingen Shire offers a wide variety of comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money. (Linked to Strategies 1 and 4)

Homes are designed for local climates, to maximise comfort and save on mechanical cooling and heating. (Linked to Strategy 4)

Residents have energy efficient houses and lifestyles and renewable energy use grows.

We take action to mitigate climate change together and the transition to a low and zero carbon future is managed in a just and equitable way. (Linked to Strategies 4 and 5)

The community have water efficient homes and lifestyles and protect water quality.

Construction and domestic waste is reduced.

Growth is compact, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing car dependence and vehicle emissions. (Linked to Strategy 3)

People have improved access and connections to parks, green space, water and nature, enhancing community health and wellbeing. (Linked to Strategy 5)

Housing is located away from areas of high natural hazard and isolation risks. (Linked to Strategy 2)

Our communities and towns are resilient and made safer through preparedness for natural disasters and hazards such as floods and extreme heat. (Linked to Strategy 5)

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Area of HEV land zoned for environmental purposes only  
Low % vegetation change/loss due to housing/infrastructure  
Water quality data

↑ trees, shrubs and flowers & tree canopy cover maintained or enhanced  
Citizen science counts (e.g. pollinator, bird, frog, koala counts) or City Biodiversity Index measures

↑ sustainable homes (NatHERs 7 star or above/Green Star rated/zero carbon)  
Design quality and efficiency (as built) audits/ NABERS self-assessments

↑ sustainable homes  
Design quality and efficiency (as built) audits/ NABERS self-assessments  
↓ urban heat island effects

↑ sustainable homes  
Design quality and efficiency (as built) audits/ NABERS self-assessments  
↑ solar installations and storage  
↑ other renewables in region

Energy justice and equity  
↓ Greenhouse gas emissions  
↓ % of people in housing stress

↓ water usage per person/household  
↑ water sensitive urban design  
Water security

↑ recycling of building materials  
↓ Waste to landfill per person

↑ walking journeys  
Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar (↓ emissions)

Public health data  
Parks and Public Spaces Strategy

Natural hazard studies & planning controls

Emergency response plans and preparedness  
↑ volunteering

3 <http://yourhome.gov.au/materials/waste-minimisation>

## **Strategy 8**

### **Country towns and farming**

#### **Vision**

The farmland and rural character of the Shire is protected, and offers regenerative and innovative farming opportunities, supporting our country towns and villages.

#### **Strategy**

Support compact growth in Dorrigo and country villages, with a focus on leveraging sustainable and regenerative farming opportunities.



## Actions

### 8.1 Compact growth in rural areas

Growth is supported in rural towns, especially the main rural centre of Dorrig, in order to maintain population and retain the high quality services residents enjoy today – such as the Hospital, schools, community and recreational facilities, supermarkets, banks etc.

Housing growth is encouraged, clustered around existing residential and village areas, ideally within walking distance to services to strengthen our existing communities, economically and socially. A Rural Lands Study will investigate rural communities' needs, including housing and employment challenges.

### 8.2 Country town and village revitalisation

Revitalisation initiatives for Dorrig and rural villages to help attract new residents, investment and development include:

- parks and public spaces investment and beautification
- promotion of local, community-driven events and markets
- support small business attraction, retention and Chamber of Commerce initiatives
- heritage conservation and façade rejuvenation for historic shopfronts
- provision of affordable housing
- attraction of new industries and jobs, especially rural-related (e.g. value-add or food-processing) and in health, education, arts, culture and green jobs (enviro-focused)
- continued investment in roads and footpaths
- promotion of tourism that benefits local people, economy and environment
- recognition of community members and groups doing great things in our rural communities, sharing of stories and experiences.

### 8.3 Community Title Subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs)

Multiple occupancies are also known as rural land sharing or intentional communities. An MO consists of one block of land with multiple people or families living on the land, having collective ownership of the site.

Council will change planning controls to allow existing MOs the option to subdivide in a Community Title arrangement via an amendment to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP). CT subdivision will require infrastructure upgrades, including bushfire safety and access upgrades and these require further place-based investigation.

This action does not seek to allow new MOs. Principles and planning controls relating to MOs will be further investigated as part of a Rural Lands Strategy.

### 8.4 Eco Village Pilot Project

Eco-villages were broadly supported during the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement process. However, there are many challenges to siting, funding and developing eco-villages.

Nevertheless, eco-village housing could provide additional housing choices aligned with the Housing Vision if implemented well.

In the event that a proponent presents Council with a suitably detailed project that will produce exceptional environmental and social outcomes, and the learnings of that project could be transferred into mainstream housing in the future, then Council will provide support for the alterations to planning controls that would be necessary to facilitate the pilot project. Established schemes such as the Living Future Challenge and Certification Scheme may be used to demonstrate merit.

Finding a location for the eco-village should focus on minimising natural hazard risks to people and property and result in clear improved environmental outcomes on the site (e.g. locating the village on an already degraded site rather than developing and clearing land in a healthy natural area). Council will work with any proponent to assist in locating an appropriate site for the project.

Depending upon the outcomes of any Pilot Project, Council will consider the development of future amendments to planning controls that will provide guidance for future potential eco-village projects.

### 8.5 Review residential capacity of coastal villages after sewer services provided

Growth to 2040 is predicted to be met mostly via infill housing. In the longer term, the housing potential of villages such as Raleigh and Repton can be reviewed once sewer services have been extended to the area. These villages have good flood-free access to the Pacific Highway and excellent connections to the region. Any future growth considerations must be subject to extensive community engagement, environmental and infrastructure studies and not impinge on Important Farmland productivity.

### 8.6 Information about moving to rural areas

Simple and engaging quick guides/brochures explaining what to expect when moving to a rural Shire will be produced and made available to the public.

The guide should seek to highlight the attractions of living in rural areas, detail services provided and landholder obligations and also seek to reduce possible land use conflicts by detailing what to expect living on or close to working farms, and to foster greater understanding between people moving from city areas and people from country areas with long farming histories.

## 8.7 Support for local food production and small farmers

Bellinghen Shire's rural economy is supported by mostly family-owned and small-medium operations, with few large corporations (the dairy co-operative Norco is an exception).

Bellinghen Shire residents' value access to locally produced and affordable food. We can support our local farmers in many ways including: buying local; understanding barriers to small farm start-up and profitability; engaging with local producers; sharing success stories and investigating farm-door retail opportunities. Often strict planning controls make things more difficult for smaller producers rather than larger industrial-scale agribusiness, which often can easily absorb additional regulation costs. Compliance action should occur for all operators who do not comply with environmental controls (including strong advocacy to other agencies responsible for compliance).

Planning mechanisms to support local food production and small business will form part of a forthcoming Rural Lands Study, including investigating how to incentivise sustainable operators and regenerative producers.

## 8.8 Rural Lands Study

Along with the Housing and Employment Strategies, a Rural Land Strategy (RLS) forms an important part of the Shire's Growth Management Strategy.

The RLS should investigate supporting rural residents and the rural economy, investigating the many changes and challenges occurring and looking for ways to realise our aspirations and competitive advantages in consultation with farmers and rural residents.

### Objectives

Provide housing diversity and choices for people living in country towns and villages. [\(Linked to Strategy 1\)](#)

Provide opportunities for people who live in rural areas to age in, or close to, their communities. [\(Linked to Strategy 5\)](#)

Attract younger people to rural towns, villages and rural areas to maintain vibrant rural communities with good access to essential services. [\(Linked to Strategy 5\)](#)

Our Important Farmland is protected for future generations. [\(Linked to Strategy 2\)](#)

The community has access to fresh, healthy, and affordable locally-produced food and local food producers and smallholders provide food security.

Our scenic rural landscapes are retained. [\(Linked to Strategy 6\)](#)

Regenerative agriculture opportunities and innovations are supported and expanded.

The natural environment in our rural areas is conserved and regenerated, through weed management; maintenance and enhancement of wildlife corridors, and protection of biodiversity and soil and water quality. [\(Linked to Strategy 7\)](#)

Places of Aboriginal cultural significance are protected through appropriate consultation with traditional owners.

Our rural economy is supported and ongoing viability secured by supporting diversification, value-adding and farming innovation and promoting local products and farms.

Rural areas continue to increase self-reliance. Infrastructure provision and maintenance (especially roads) becomes more efficient and cost effective.

### Performance measures

↑ % diverse housing types  
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes  
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)  
↑ rentals

↑ # inclusive homes (UD)  
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes  
Retention of (or some expansion of) services and facilities in Dorriggo and villages

↑ % diverse housing type  
↑ rentals (including farm leases)  
Census and migration data  
Retention of (or some expansion of) services and facilities in Dorriggo and villages

Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only  
Rural Lands Strategy

Food security plan and programs  
Locally-grown food availability (e.g. farmers markets, community-supported agriculture schemes, local food in shops)

Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only

Rural Lands Study  
↑ organic or chemical free farms  
↑ support (e.g. grant \$, advice or assistance, promotion programs)

LLS Regional Weed Management Plan  
Protection/revegetation of wildlife corridors  
Biodiversity Strategy  
Soil and water quality testing

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study

Rural Lands Strategy  
↑ local spending  
↑ # small farms and producers  
↑ support (e.g. grant \$, advice or assistance, promotion programs)

No new settlements in poorly serviced/isolated areas  
↑ Water efficiency measures & renewable energy  
↓ Waste to landfill  
↑ community groups and programs  
Emergency response preparedness  
↑ volunteering

## Timelines

The Belling Shire Housing Strategy is a 20 year plan and actions will be completed in stages over this time period. Many actions are ongoing and are intended to support planning and decision-making processes. Some actions will run over multiple years/timeframes or be dependent upon funding and resourcing. The following is a guide to the expected staging of the Housing Strategy actions.

### Immediate actions (within the next year)

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (commence)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (commence)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (commence)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (commence)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (commence)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.2	Review Contributions Plan
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (commence)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.2	Define affordable housing
4.3	Affordability objectives (commence)
4.4	DA Management Policy (commence)
6.1	Character Statements (and Local Strategic Planning Statement)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (commence)
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls commence)

Action #	Action Title
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (commence)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan commence)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (commence)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (commence)
8.8	Rural Lands Study (commence)

### Short-term actions (1-3 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (finalise)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (finalise)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (finalise)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (finalise)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (continue)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (finalise)
2.8	Employment Lands Study
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (commence)
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.3	Affordability objectives (finalise)
4.4	DA Management Policy (finalise)
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.1	Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy
5.2	Funding public space infrastructure – review Contributions Plan
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places –planning control changes (commence)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (finalise)
6.6	Heritage listing review (commence)
6.7	Greening programs
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls finalise)

Action #	Action Title
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (finalise)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan finalise)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (continue)
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (finalise)
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.6	Information about moving to rural areas
8.8	Rural Lands Study (finalise)



### Medium-term actions (3-10 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places – planning control changes (finalise)
5.7	Workforce housing
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.5	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study
6.6	Heritage listing review (finalise)
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (finalise)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project

### Long-term actions (10-20 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.5	Review residential capacity of coastal villages after sewer services provided

### Ongoing actions to support decision-making

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets (monitor)
1.4	Encourage smaller homes
1.5	Promote Universal Design
1.6	Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
1.7	Encourage a variety of tenure types
2.4	Key Sites
2.5	Focus on low-rise housing
2.7	Promote retrofitting buildings as infill
3.4	Manage car parking
3.5	Connect greenfields areas to town centres
3.7	Foster a walking culture
3.8	Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs
4.2	Promote affordable housing benefits to the community
4.5	Promote housing diversity
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.7	Advocacy & partnerships
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Create socially sustainable places
5.4	Support ageing in place
5.5	Support Aboriginal connections to Country and Community
5.6	Support mixed tenure housing
5.8	Equitable access to high-speed internet
5.9	Community engagement and participation in strategic planning

Action #	Action Title
6.3	Support innovative demonstration projects
6.4	Build upon Bellingen Shire's creative and design culture
6.7	Undertake greening programs
6.8	Support incentives, including heritage conservation grants
6.9	Shape local character in greenfield areas
7.1	Planning for long term water security
7.2	Looking after Water
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
7.7	Reduce construction and domestic waste
7.8	Mainstream sustainable living and reduce consumption impacts
7.9	Cooling urban areas
8.1	Encourage compact growth in rural areas
8.2	Support country town and village revitalisation
8.7	Support local food production and small farmers

## Summary of Planning Control Review

Many actions within the *Bellingen Shire Local Housing Strategy* relate to reviewing and updating planning controls for development. The scope of the planning control review is summarised below.

Not all the planning controls will change at once and some require further research, refinement and stakeholder engagement. Changes to planning controls in the LEP and DCP will require additional community engagement and public exhibition processes. More information and details on planning control review and potential changes can be found in the *Draft Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy-Action Plan (2019)*.

There are two very important Plans that affect development in Bellingen Shire, the **Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** and the **Development Control Plan (DCP)**. In the NSW planning system there is a hierarchy, where State-wide controls (State Environmental Planning Policies or SEPPS) sit above (and override in the event of any inconsistency) LEP controls. LEP controls sit above DCP controls.

### LEP

The **Bellingen Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010** sets out a framework for how land can be used. LEPs break up land into Land Use Zones (for example residential, rural, industrial, environmental) and specify the objectives of each zone and what kinds of development/land uses are allowed in each zone. LEPs also set out other high-level controls for development, including but not limited to: height limits, minimum lot size for subdivision, heritage listings, biodiversity protection and flood planning.

### DCP

The **Bellingen Shire Development Control Plan (DCP) 2017** provides detailed planning and design guidelines for all types of development across the Shire. A DCP complements the LEP and provides more detailed design criteria to guide development, for example setback from boundary requirements and landscaping requirements (minimum amounts) and car parking controls.

## LEP Review

- **R1 General Residential Zone:** Include objectives related to housing diversity, affordability and sustainability
- Reduce **minimum lot size for subdivision** from 600m<sup>2</sup> to 500m<sup>2</sup> in R1 town areas and review objectives (part 4.1).
- Allow Community Title subdivision of existing **Multiple Occupancies** (Rural Landsharing Communities)

## DCP Review

- Enable and encourage greater **housing diversity** whilst protecting neighbourhood amenity and character
- Provide design and amenity controls for **small lot** housing (<500m<sup>2</sup>)
- Improve **subdivision design**
- Review **landscaped area** controls to limit building footprints, provide adequate green open space on lots and maintain our leafy and spacious neighbourhood character
- Provide a range of lot sizes, house sizes and house types in **greenfield** areas
- Encourage **smaller homes**
- Promote **best-practice infill design**
- Encourage **retro-fits**
- Promote **Universal Design**, make DCP more user-friendly (examples, graphics, case studies)
- Improve feasibility and streamline approval processes for small, well-designed **low-impact homes** that are compatible with neighbourhood character.
- Simplify Locality Density Provisions (use landscaped area/building footprint to **control density** instead)
- **Tree planting** requirements
- **Built form** controls and design guidance – e.g. bulk and scale, footprint, siting
- Require **site analysis plans** to promote sound design
- Protect **heritage**
- **Car parking** controls (min 1/dw) and design requirements – minimise visual impacts
- Encourage **active transport**
- Promote design of homes that **reduce ongoing costs** (e.g. passive design to reduce heating and cooling costs)
- Encourage **mix of dwelling sizes**, including smaller homes that are more **affordable**
- **Significant tree register**
- **Climate-responsive** house design, e.g. **passive design**
- Encourage **environmentally-sensitive** building practices and features
- Support **biodiversity**
- Manage **stormwater run-off** and water quality
- Reduce **urban heat island effect**

## Monitoring and Reporting

Planning strategies need to be adaptable to change and long-term strategies such as this Housing Strategy, which spans 20 years or more, require consistent monitoring and reporting, to ensure outcomes are consistent with what has been predicted and planned and that performance measures are being met.

It is important to be transparent and to let the community know how the strategy is being used and the progression of the proposed actions. Frequent data collection and reporting is vital.

The Strategy should also be referred to/considered and reported against wherever a large planning issue or development proposal is considered.

Significant change may occur over the life of this 20 year strategy. Therefore reviews, both minor and major will be required to ensure the Strategy best serves the community's needs of the time.

### Review Periods

After undergoing considerable community engagement and being adopted by Councillors and the NSW Government, a Housing Strategy should remain relevant over the long-term and be relied upon irrespective of political cycles, offering greater certainty to landowners, residents and the wider community, business and the development industry, investors, advocacy groups, agencies and other levels of government regarding the strategic direction and future aspirations of the Shire.

Refer to the Housing Strategy for timing of scheduled reviews.

### Monitoring Actions

1. A Baseline Data Report will be written, to establish baseline (or base case/current) data on performance measures. Where this data does not yet exist, efforts should be made to access it, or plans made to enable collection of this data into the future. The progress of the Strategy and efficacy of the actions will be reported against using data compared with the baseline.
2. Monitoring of housing approval and construction data will be improved, to enable analysis of changes in housing types (housing diversity) over time.
3. Local housing affordability data should be collected and reported upon.
4. Reviews and audits of how the Housing Strategy is being used internally, across various divisions of Council will also occur and be reported upon to management, to ensure the Strategy is embedded across the organisation and remains relevant.
5. Consideration will be given to establishing a reference group, including some external representation to effectively monitor the implementation of the Housing Strategy and Growth Management Strategy.

### Reporting Actions

1. The first report on progress of the Housing Strategy should be prepared and reported to Council (and made public) one year from adoption of the Strategy.
2. After the first report, reporting on progress of this Strategy should be biennial (every two years) and made accessible to the public.
3. Consideration should be given to providing easy access to housing data to the public, for example via a webpage, or online mapping system.



## Glossary

**Active transport:** Active transport includes non-motorised forms of transport involving physical activity, such as walking and cycling. It also includes public transport for longer distance trips, as public transport trips generally include walking or cycling components as part of the whole journey.

**Affordable housing:** Has many definitions. Affordable is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “*not expensive*” and [about houses] “*able to be bought or rented by people who do not earn a lot of money*”.

Affordable housing can be relative, what is affordable for one household may not be for another depending on income and a variety of circumstances. Affordability also varies by place. The NSW Government Family and Community Services (FACS) defines Affordable Housing as:

*Affordable housing is housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education. As a rule of thumb, housing is usually considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of gross household income.*

*Affordable housing [may also refer] to housing that has been developed with some assistance from the NSW and/or Commonwealth Governments, including through planning incentives. It may include a range of housing types and sizes, including single or multi-bedroom units or houses, as well as studio apartments. It is only available in some locations and eligibility criteria apply.*

Affordable housing is not necessarily always subsidised by governments, although private market housing in many parts of Australia is increasingly unaffordable to many people, of all ages and incomes.

**Amenity:** The pleasantness or attractiveness of a place.

**Attached dwelling:** means a building containing 3 or more dwellings, where:

- (a) each dwelling is attached to another dwelling by a common wall, and
- (b) each of the dwellings is on its own lot of land, and
- (c) none of the dwellings is located above any part of another dwelling.

These developments are typically known as terraces.

**Battle-axe Lot** - A 'battle axe lot' is a subdivision of a lot behind an existing dwelling, where access is by a long handle which typically accommodates a driveway, services and landscaping. This formation appears to be in the shape of a battle axe, hence the name.

**Baugruppen:** Literally translating to “building group”, baugruppen in effect cuts out developers from developments. The idea is that a group of interested purchasers come together and collectively fund their own multi-unit housing project. They are often helped or led through the process by architects, and they get a say in what their resulting homes look like. Generally, these homes have a focus on quality, sustainability and shared community facilities.

<https://www.domain.com.au/news/baugruppen-model-ditches-developers-so-that-apartment-buyers-save-20170626-gwwz8w/>

**Biodiversity:** the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

**Capped/limited profit housing:** A capped profit development is designed to provide high quality housing but reduces costs at various points throughout the build and operation, and attracts small ethical investors who accept a capped amount of profit (usually 15%, below usual developer's minimums of 20-25%) on their investment, thereby reducing incentives to increase profit by skimping on quality. Homes are usually sold by ballot direct to owner-occupiers (with few real estate or marketing costs) and have limits placed on how much they can be sold for, so they do not become speculative/flipped for quick profits.

<https://theconversation.com/affordable-sustainable-high-quality-urban-housing-its-not-an-impossible-dream-57958>

**Co-housing:** Semi-communal housing consisting of a cluster of private homes and a shared community space (e.g. for cooking or laundry facilities).

**Community Land Trust:** A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a form of shared ownership of a property, where the land component of a residential property is owned by community based, not-for-profit legal entity and the actual building is owned (or leased long-term) by an individual household.

**Design:** A design is a plan or specification for the construction of an object or system or for the implementation of an activity or process, or the result of that plan or specification in the form of a prototype, product or process.

The verb to design expresses the process of developing a design. A design usually has to satisfy certain goals and constraints, and may take into account aesthetic, functional, economic, or socio-political considerations, and is expected to interact with a certain environment.

**Detached house:** A house that is not joined to any other house, usually on its own property.

**Development Control Plan (DCP):** Development Control Plans (DCPs) contain specific controls to guide certain types of development, and achieve particular development outcomes within certain areas. A DCP is a

supplementary development guideline that supports Council's primary planning instruments. These are called Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

**Dual occupancy:** Dual occupancy developments occur when two dwellings are built on a single lot. The homes can be attached or detached. A dual occupancy does not include a secondary dwelling (granny flat). If a dual occupancy is subdivided and the homes are attached, the development is called semi-detached dwelling. If a dual occupancy is subdivided and the homes are detached, the dwellings are considered detached houses.

**Duplex:** Another name for an attached dual occupancy – where two homes are attached to each other. If the homes are subdivided and have their own lot of land they are known in NSW planning terms as semi-detached dwellings.

**Eco-village:** There are many complex definitions of eco-village. There is no NSW planning definition for eco-village and it is not recognised as its own land use. The Global Ecovillage Network defines an ecovillage as, *"an intentional or traditional community using local participatory processes to holistically integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments."*

**Energy poverty:** Energy poverty is lack of affordable access to modern energy services. It refers to the situation of large numbers of people in developing countries and some people in developed countries whose well-being is negatively affected by very low consumption of energy.

**Exempt & Complying Development:** Some minor building renovations or works don't need any planning or building approval. This is called exempt development. Exempt development is very low impact development that can be done for certain residential, commercial and industrial properties. A few examples of development that can be exempt development are: decks, garden sheds, carports, fences, repairing a window or painting a house. As long as the proposed works meet all of the development standards (identified in the State Policy for exempt and complying development), approval may not be needed.

Complying development is a combined planning and construction approval for straightforward development that can be determined through a fast-track assessment by a council or an accredited certifier. Complying development applies to homes, businesses and industry and allows for a range of things like the construction of a new dwelling house, alterations and additions to a house, new industrial buildings, demolition of a building, and changes to a business use.

The majority of exempt and complying development types and their development standards are found in the State Policy for exempt and complying development. You can view the policy on the NSW Legislation website

**Greenfield housing:** Greenfield land is undeveloped land in a city or rural area either used for agriculture or landscape design, or left to evolve naturally. These areas of land are usually agricultural or amenity properties being considered for urban development.

**Growth Management Strategy (GMS):** Growth Management is the application of planning tools in a coordinated manner to guide development towards desired patterns of growth. These policies and tools are set out and communicated in a Growth Management Strategy.

**Employment Strategy:** Part of a GMS, an Employment Lands Strategy considers current and emerging trends and plans for job creation and provides planning tools to meet the employment challenges of an area.

**Housing Strategy:** Part of a GMS, a Housing Strategy plans for the current and future housing needs of an area.

**Rural Lands Strategy:** Part of a GMS, a Rural Lands Strategy identifies and addresses current and emerging rural land issues, balancing complex economic, demographic, social and environmental challenges.

**Housing Stress:** Housing stress, when households have to pay too large a proportion of their income in housing costs (and thereby reduce spending on other essentials such as food and health), is the result when housing costs rise too far above household incomes. Usually, a person or household is considered to be in housing stress when they are spending greater than 30% of their weekly gross income on housing-related costs.

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/3040-indicator>

**Important Farmland:** Important Farmland is land that contains a combination of resources that is highly suitable for agricultural (food and fibre) production. IF is considered state-significant and is protected under NSW planning policy and legislation.

**Infill housing:** Infill housing is the insertion of additional homes into an already-approved subdivision or neighbourhood. They can be provided as additional homes built on the same lot, by dividing existing homes into multiple units, or by creating new residential lots by further subdivision or lot line adjustments.

**Infrastructure:** The physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

**Laneway housing:** A laneway house are typically built into pre-existing lots, usually in the backyard and opening onto the back lane.

**Local Environmental Plan (LEP):** A local environmental plan (LEP) is a legal document that provides controls and guidelines for development in an area. It determines what can be built, where it can be built, and what activities can occur on land. LEPs contain both a written instrument and maps.

**Locality Density Provisions:** Are planning density controls within Bellingen Shire's Development Control Plan. These provisions indicate the number of homes that can be built on a particular site, depending on how large the site is and where it is located. For example where a site is mapped as being within Locality Density 4, one dwelling can theoretically be built for each 150m<sup>2</sup> of site area, provided all other planning controls can be met. These provisions also provide landscaping requirements – e.g. 40m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped area is required for each dwelling in Locality 4.

**Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS):** Set out the 20-year vision for land-use in the local area, the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future.

The statements will implement actions in the regional and district plans, and the council's own priorities in the community strategic plan it prepares under local government legislation.

The statements will shape how the development controls in the local environmental plan (LEP) evolve over time to meet the community's needs, with the LEP the main tool to deliver the council and community's plan.

**Manor house:** A small walk-up flat building, no bigger than two storeys high and having no more than 4 separate units.

**Mixed Tenure housing:** Means mixing subsidised housing (social or affordable rental) with market housing on the same site or within the same development.

**Multi-dwelling housing:** means 3 or more dwellings (whether attached or detached) on one lot of land, each with access at ground level, but does not include a residential flat building. For example multi-dwelling housing could include townhouses, terraces or villas.

**Multiple Occupancy:** Multiple Occupancies (otherwise known as MO's, or Rural Landsharing Communities) are developments that allow for three or more dwellings on a single parcel of land and the sharing of common facilities. Subdivision of the land, to allow for the creation of a dwelling on each lot, is not permitted.

**New-generation boarding house:** A boarding house provides a form of low cost rental accommodation for a wide range of tenants including singles, retirees, students and young couples. A new generation boarding house has rooms that are self-contained, so rooms contain their own bathrooms and/or kitchenettes.

**Passive design:** Design that takes advantage of the climate to maintain a comfortable temperature range in the home. Passive design reduces or eliminates the need for auxiliary heating or cooling, which accounts for about 40% (or much more in some climates) of energy use in the average Australian home.

Passive solar design means designing homes to heat up and cool down with the natural workings of the sun. For example, planting deciduous trees or vines to shade house windows in summer and keep the home cool but let in warm winter sun to heat the home in cooler seasons. There are many building design techniques (suited to different climates) that embrace passive design.

**Pilot project:** A pilot study, pilot project, pilot test, or pilot experiment is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, duration, cost, adverse events, and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. A pilot study is often used to test the design of the full-scale experiment which then can be adjusted. It is a potentially valuable insight and, should anything be missing in the pilot study, it can be added to the full-scale (and more expensive) experiment to improve the chances of a clear outcome.

**Regenerative farming:** Regenerative Agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. By capturing carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, Regenerative Agriculture aims to reverse global climate change.

**Residential flat building/flats/apartment building:** Means a building with three (3) or more dwellings where some dwellings sit on top of others.

**Resilience:** Resilience is the ability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change. Resilient communities minimise any disaster's disruption to everyday life and their local economies.

**Rural residential:** Rural residential development refers to land in a rural setting, used and developed for dwellings that are not primarily associated with agriculture. Some agriculture may take place on the land however it will be ancillary to the use for a dwelling. It is likely to be carried on for 'lifestyle' reasons and is unlikely to provide a significant source of household income. Rural residential land is typically also used for non-agricultural home occupations or for large gardens. These lots are larger than typical residential lots, but are usually too small for agricultural use. Because of its primarily residential function, rural residential development requires access to most of the normal services and infrastructure provided in urban settlements. Typically it also generates urban residential amenity expectations.

**Secondary dwelling/granny flat:** secondary dwelling means a self-contained dwelling that: (a) is established in conjunction with another dwelling (the principal dwelling), and (b) is on the same lot of land as the principal dwelling, and (c) is located

within, or is attached to, or is separate from, the principal dwelling. There are sized restrictions on secondary dwellings and they cannot be subdivided from the principal dwelling.

**Semi-detached dwelling:** means a dwelling that is on its own lot of land and is attached to only one other dwelling.

**Social justice:** Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as "the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society". Social justice is about treating all people fairly.

**Subdivision:** the act of dividing land into pieces that are easier to sell or otherwise develop or use. A subdivision does not need to be sold, in whole or in part, for its resulting pieces to be considered separate parcels of land.

**Community Title subdivision** Community title is a form of land subdivision that enables shared property to be created within conventional Torrens title subdivisions. It is essentially a horizontal form of strata title.

**Torrens Title subdivision** A Torrens Title property is one in which the purchaser owns both the house and the land on which it is built.

**Strata subdivision** Strata title is a form of ownership devised for multi-level apartment blocks and horizontal subdivisions with shared areas. The 'strata' part of the term refers to apartments being on different levels, or "strata".

**Sustainability:** Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social—also known informally as profits, planet, and people. It can also be defined as the quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time.

**Terrace house:** A terraced house or a terrace house is one of a row of similar houses joined together by their side walls. They typically face the street or a laneway, with each having direct access to the street/lane. Where terraces are subdivided and each has their own lot, they are known in NSW planning terms as attached dwellings.

**Tiny house:** There are many definitions of tiny house, but tiny house is not a separately defined land use in NSW planning law, meaning there is no accepted planning definition. Tiny houses are typically small (definitions measure them anywhere between 7m<sup>2</sup> to 100m<sup>2</sup>) and suited to minimalist lifestyles. Some NSW Councils define a tiny house as being under 50m<sup>2</sup> in area. In planning terms tiny houses can be fixed in one place and be considered a secondary dwelling (granny flat, a small separate home, or part of a multi-dwelling arrangement). Tiny homes can also be mobile/moveable, built upon wheels and be considered a registered vehicle/home similar to a caravan. Lake Macquarie Council, Byron Bay Council and Tweed Shire Council have useful fact sheets on tiny homes.

**Townhouses:** A type of multi-dwelling housing, where multiple homes are built on the same site. Townhouses are homes that usually are attached and share at least one common wall with another townhouse. Similar to terraces except often townhouses don't always face the street, and may be accessed via internal roads or a long driveway.

**Universal Design:** Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design.

**Villas:** Similar to townhouses, villas are a type of multi-dwelling housing. Commonly townhouses are two storeys high, whilst villas are limited to one storey and can be attached or detached.

**Water Sensitive Urban Design:** WSUD is an alternative to the traditional conveyance approach to stormwater management. WSUD is a philosophy which aims to mitigate environmental impacts particularly on water quantity, water quality and receiving waterways, conventionally associated with urbanisation.



## Image Credits

As part of the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement project, Council held a photograph competition. Residents were asked to take photographs of *what they love about their neighbourhoods*. 60 entries and photographs were received.

Some of these photographs have been used in this document. Credits for these photographs are as follows:

Page 5:

Dawn Lewis - Gens Kookaburra

Drew Hopper – Lush Oasis Never Never

Pingala Walsh – Streetscape Church St

Dorothy Carter – City Kid meets Country

Jacqui Forest – View from Urunga Boardwalk

Ruth Holmes - Greener Pastures

Taff Cooper-Williams – Nesting Rosella

Katrina Collins – Drive Dorriggo Tourism



# **Attachment 2 – Infill Capacity Study – Background Report for Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040**

*Delivering Housing Diversity for Our Community*

## **How many additional houses can we accommodate in our towns?**

**An estimate of infill development potential by the year 2040**

**Bellingen Shire**

**Infill Capacity Study – Housing Supply Potential to 2040**

**May – June 2019**



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## INFILL HOUSING SERIES

#1 Infill Capacity Study – How many additional houses can we accommodate in our towns?

#2 Infill Design Study – How do we ensure good quality housing and protect local character?

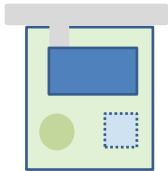
### A note on data

This document is a draft for public comment. It should not be used by anyone as a basis for investment or other private decision-making purposes about land purchase or land use. The data provided in this publication is of a general nature and should not be construed as specific advice or relied upon in lieu of appropriate professional advice. This study contains data and estimates used for modelling purposes only, to inform a Shire-Wide Housing Strategy. Data cannot be used to assume site-specific development potential, and figures referred to in this publication cannot be taken as guaranteed development potential. If you want to discuss the potential of your block contact a planning professional or speak to Council.

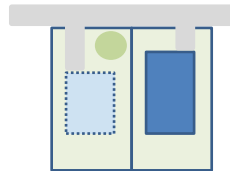
## What is infill housing?

Infill means filling in gaps. Infill housing means building more houses in existing towns and neighbourhoods.

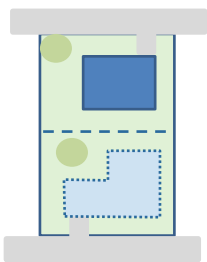
Here are some examples of infill housing:



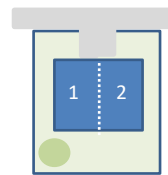
Building a granny flat in your backyard



Building a house (or houses) on a vacant lot in an existing neighbourhood



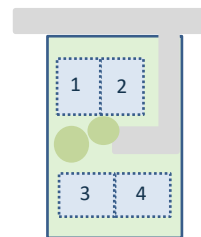
Building a second home on your property and subdividing the property to create two properties



Splitting one large house into two separate homes (creating a duplex/dual occupancy)



Shop top housing, building units above shops or offices (elevation view)

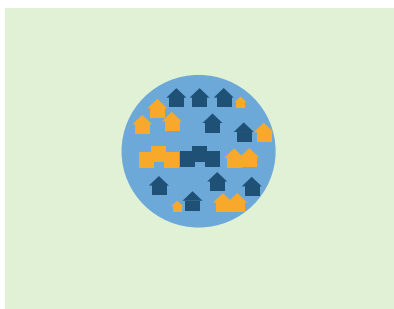


Demolishing an old home on a large block and building a number of villas

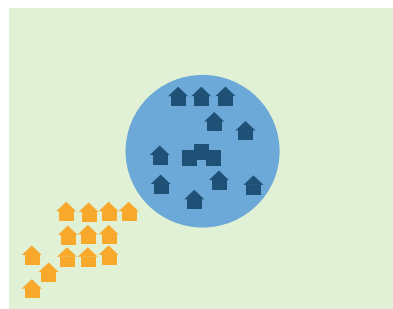
### The difference between *infill* and *greenfield* housing

Infill housing is an alternative to greenfield housing. Infill housing is accommodating more homes and people in existing built-up areas.

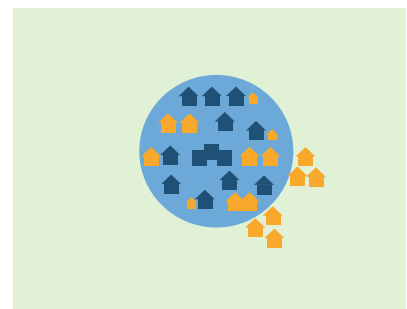
Greenfield housing is subdividing undeveloped areas (usually former farmland or natural areas) and building new housing estates. Greenfield development involves expanding existing suburbs outwards or sometimes creating entirely new suburbs. Greenfield housing can also be called *new release* housing and greenfield estates are often called *urban release areas*.



**TOWN A  
INFILL**



**TOWN B  
GREENFIELD**



**TOWN C  
A MIX**

## Why do we want more infill housing?

### Infill can provide more housing choice and diversity

- Provides houses of all shapes and sizes to suit a wide range of households and a wide range of needs.
- Provide for families to accommodate more family members; allows seniors to downsize; provides young people moving out of home a local housing option; provides key workers affordable homes close to work (e.g. teachers, police officers, nurses).
- Small-scale infill (low-rise) less likely to have a cookie cutter appearance and is more likely to be designed to suit specific site conditions (e.g. microclimate, privacy).
- More likely to be attractive to renters (close to services, low maintenance homes).

### Infill can deliver environmental benefits

- Reduced vegetation clearing and less housing creep into environmentally sensitive or food producing areas.
- less vehicle emissions because shops and services are nearby, encouraging walking.
- generally smaller building footprints, households generally more energy and water efficient.

### Infill can support existing communities

- Concentrates infrastructure and service spending in existing areas.
- Through upgrading of infrastructure in the neighbourhood – e.g. new playgrounds or other park and sports field embellishments, new footpaths, new trees and landscaping, new lighting, upgraded laneways, and upgraded sewer and water facilities.
- Increasing local spending, supporting local producers and businesses.
- Critical mass for services and groups – more school students, more members for local sporting teams and volunteers for community groups, more local labour.
- Providing a variety of housing choices for residents whose circumstances/housing needs may change over time.
- Through raising property values - new housing in walkable areas close to towns usually very desirable. Whilst positive for existing homeowners, there is a need to ensure a wide range of homes, including more affordable homes, are provided to retain and encourage community diversity and an equitable local housing market.

### Infill can support healthy lifestyles and community wellbeing

- Encourages more walking and cycling to nearby destinations.
- Homes close to community services and health facilities.
- Community networks and social infrastructure well-established.
- Encourages social interactions in streets, neighbourhoods and town centres.
- Reduces commuting time where residents have local work.

### Infill can be efficient and cost-effective

- Greenfield development can be expensive as medium-large developers, Council and ratepayers must fund building of *new* infrastructure (new roads, sewer and water, electricity etc.) and pay for ongoing maintenance of these new assets. The further from town the new housing, the higher the costs to connect to utilities, build roads, bridges etc.
- Infill can be built by individual landowners and small developers, taking advantage of existing available infrastructure (some upgrading may be required).
- Increased use of local amenities, cost of providing these amenities/services shared by more people, lowering cost per user, freeing up budget for additional services.
- Reduced private transport costs.

## What you told us

As the first step to preparing a new Growth Management Strategy for Bellinghen Shire, Council asked the community how they wanted to grow.

The *Homes for Our Future Discussion Paper* provided choices for growth with a list of the benefits and trade-offs of each scenario. Infill (growing in existing towns) was the most popular growth scenario.

Council spoke to hundreds of people during the *Homes for Our Future* engagement period and collected 250 submissions. Support for growing in existing areas (infill) was the 4<sup>th</sup> most mentioned theme within the submissions.

The most popular themes from the engagement were:

- *provide more housing choices;*
- *make housing more affordable;*
- *support community connections.*

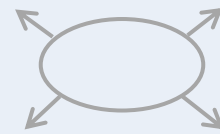
Other common themes indicating community support for infill included:

- *encourage walking and cycling*
- *provide smaller homes*
- *encourage sharing*
- *oppose generic cookie cutter housing and urban sprawl*
- *protect natural areas*
- *allow for more flexibility in planning controls*
- *allow for ageing in place and use resources more efficiently*

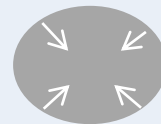
Concerns about infill were also raised in submissions, focused mostly on loss of mature trees and landscaping; concrete jungles/urban heat islands, loss of parking and rise in congestion; risk of poor design and impacts on character and loss of space.

Refer to the *Homes for Our Future Engagement Report* for more information.

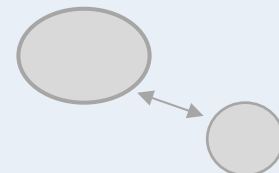
### HOW SHOULD WE GROW?



OUTWARDS



IN EXISTING TOWNS

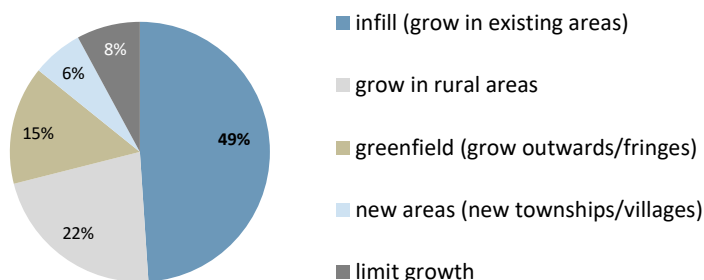


IN NEW AREAS



STRICTLY LIMIT

### PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO





## Your Quotes

"Limits should be placed on growing outwards. Focus on infilling existing towns. This protects farmlands and makes efficient use of infrastructure. Also reduces emissions, with less need for vehicles. [This] promotes health as people walk to destinations."

"Most people actually love living near other people so they can congregate, share recreation areas and town facilities. None of us enjoy driving our children miles and miles to a football field or dance lessons."

"The more people within the town boundaries, well supported by good infrastructure amenity, the more business enterprise and creative endeavour is encouraged."

"Infill makes good sense because already have services in place – assessment of infill development should be easier more lenient than development in new areas because everything already in place, easier to develop in infill areas in terms of services. If it's easier people may do more infill"

"Improve employment options within Shire. I drive to Coffs so I can earn enough \$ to stay here."

"Larger houses could be converted to duplex with minimal increase in footprint. Landscaping and biodiversity should be maintained through adequate built footprint: deep soil ratios and minimum sized gardens for decent sized trees."

"With infill, how to ensure urban tree cover % stays same (or goes up)?"

## How much infill housing could we have?

Infill modelling has forecast that **1,015** additional homes could be built in Bellingén Shire's town areas over the next 20 years (to 2040).<sup>1</sup>

The infill potential of each town is shown in the table below:

Town	Infill - Additional dwellings (estimated) <sup>2</sup>
Dorrigo	245
Bellingén	343
Urunga	371
Mylestom*	22
Repton*	10
Raleigh*	24

\* not currently connected to sewer, restricting infill potential.

Some areas will develop faster than others, whilst other areas may see very little change. Not all dwellings will be developed at once and infill dwellings will be built only where landowners choose and where sufficient infrastructure capacity exists or can be provided cost-effectively. The model reflects one possible growth scenario, and higher or lower rates of growth are possible. The key purpose of this study is to present a growth scenario to the community for comment to inform the development of a Housing Strategy.

### Why estimate infill potential?

These figures are estimates provided for the purposes of developing a Housing Strategy, with community input. A key aim of the Housing Strategy is to ensure high-quality housing outcomes for the Bellingén community. Understanding how much infill development could be built helps us to proactively plan for future growth.

Bellingén Shire needs more housing and the community have expressed support for well-located and well-designed infill development. The incremental nature of infill housing means Council has time to plan for and build adequate support infrastructure and forecast future service demands. Proactive planning can ensure good infill housing design that is compatible with existing streetscapes and neighbourhood character.

These figures will inform housing targets/limits within the draft Housing Strategy as well as assist in identifying priority areas for infrastructure maintenance and delivery. The housing potential described within this report is intended to support continued conversations with the community about how they want to see Bellingén Shire grow and evolve over the next 20-30 years.

### Infill housing constraints

The first stage of the infill capacity modelling does not comprehensively account for infrastructure availability and some housing potential will be constrained by these factors. Houses need to connect to water, sewer and to have safe access to a public road. Sometimes connections can be difficult and costly, or laneways may need upgrades, which can make infill housing harder and sometimes too expensive to build. In the coastal villages infill housing will not be possible until a sewer connection is built.

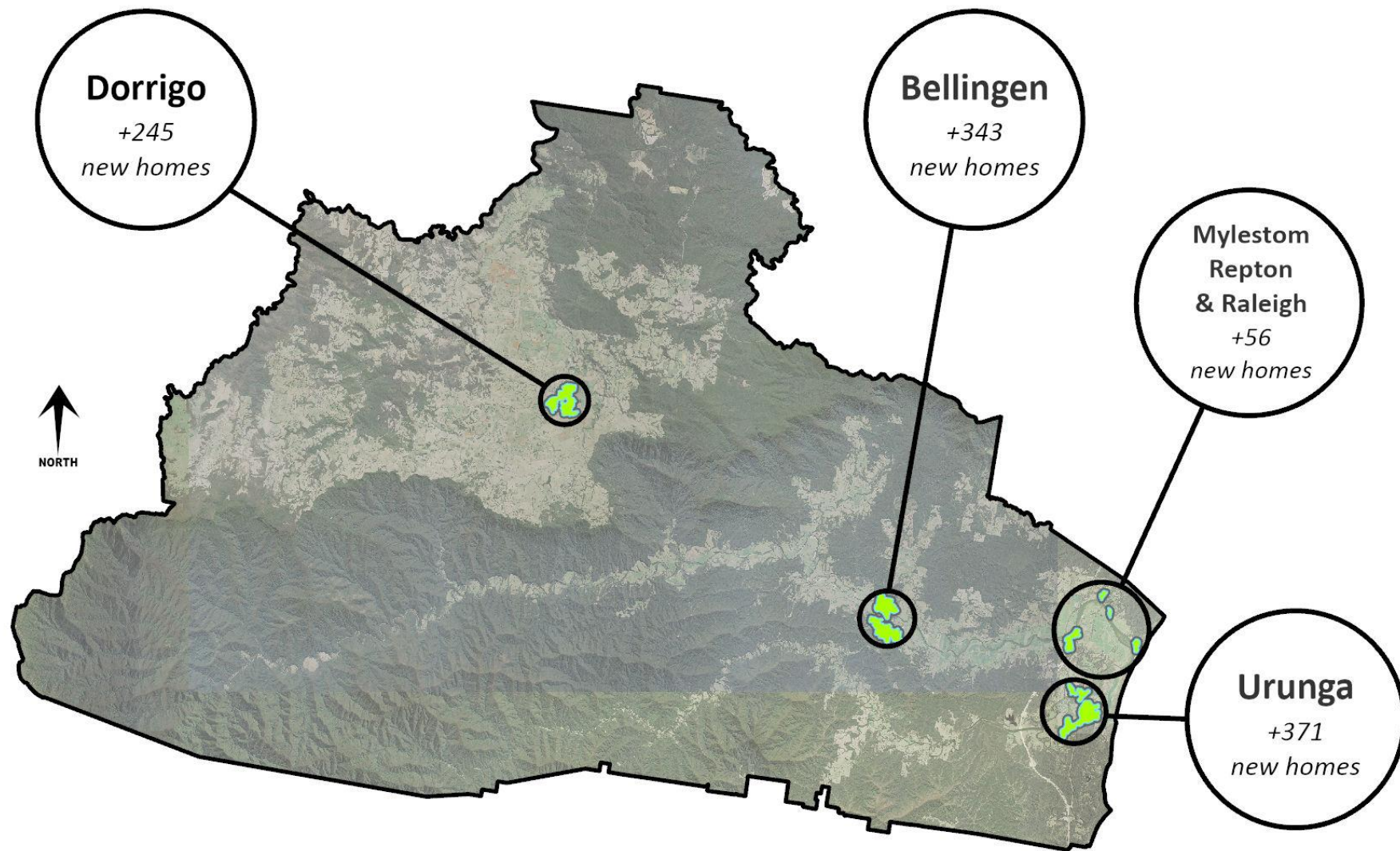
Infill housing will generally only be built where it is economically feasible and profitable. In a few cases people may build infill housing for reasons other than to make a profit, for example building a granny flat or dual occupancy to house family members. Some planning controls may also need to change to facilitate more infill development and this can take time.

These are some of the difficulties in providing more housing supply in our towns and therefore it may be some time before you see additional houses spring up in your neighbourhood. Some of these challenges may also mean less housing is possible than that predicted within this study.

<sup>1</sup> Town areas are defined as areas zoned **R1 General Residential**, as this is the most suitable zone for infill development. The town area boundaries exclude greenfield (undeveloped) areas zoned R1.

<sup>2</sup> These estimates are based on a middle/medium growth scenario. These figures are derived from Bellingén Council's infill capacity model which makes a number of assumptions. For more information see Methodology - Appendix A.

## Estimated Infill Housing to 2040



This map shows estimated number of new homes in R1 General Residential zones or existing town areas. These estimates do not include new homes in greenfield areas outside current town boundaries or rural- or rural-residential housing growth.

## Infill Housing Types – Providing Housing Choices and Diversity

People have different housing needs, and these needs can change over a lifetime (sometimes multiple times). The best way to provide housing for a broad range of people is to provide a variety of different homes to suit different budgets.

Bellingen Shire has a lot of 3 bedroom homes on relatively large blocks of land, mostly developed before 1980. Recently built homes are generally 4 bedrooms. Bellingen Shire has relatively little 1 and 2 bedroom homes, but the population make-up is changing. In the 1980s, couples with children were the largest household type, now it is couples without children, and single-person households have significantly increased. House prices across the Shire have increased quite dramatically in recent times and many households are seeking smaller, more affordable homes.

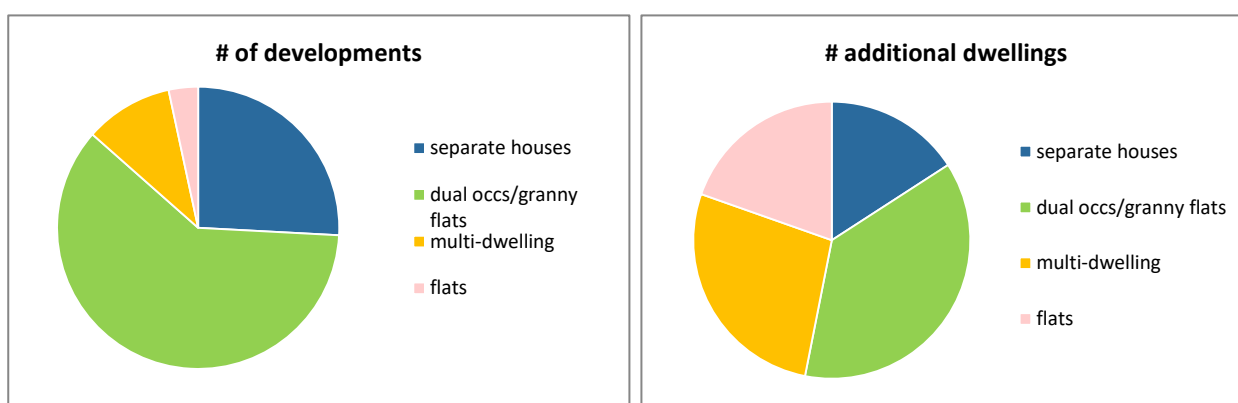
Infill housing can deliver housing variety and increase choices for the community. However, care must be taken because infill housing is not a silver bullet – infill housing can also deliver housing that is all the same size and similar in style. There needs to be strategic oversight and appropriate controls and incentives to encourage the type of housing and quality design that is needed.

The Infill Capacity Model has predicted that Bellingen Shire's town areas could accommodate an extra 1015 dwellings over the next twenty years. Dwellings means homes, but not necessarily just houses. Whilst house growth is expected to be the most popular form of infill development, growth in other forms of dwellings – e.g. townhouses, villas, attached dwellings/terraces and small flat buildings is also predicted. The following shows a breakdown of housing diversity potential to 2040.

### INFILL CAPACITY STUDY – HOUSING DIVERSITY POTENTIAL

#### NOTES

<b>SEPARATE HOUSES</b>	+ 161 dwellings	Separate houses are single dwellings on one property (usually 1-2 storeys).
<b>GRANNY FLATS, DUPLEXES, DUAL OCCUPANCIES</b>	+ 378 dwellings	Granny flats are small, secondary homes on a property. Dual occupancies are two homes on one property, and can be attached (duplex) or detached.
<b>MULTI-DWELLING HOUSING</b>	63 developments providing +277 dwellings	Multi dwelling housing means 3 or more dwellings (whether attached or detached), each with access at ground level. Multi-dwelling housing includes villas, townhouses and terrace developments.
<b>RESIDENTIAL FLAT BUILDINGS</b>	21 developments providing +199 dwellings	Residential flat buildings are unit blocks, with dwellings on top of each other. In Bellingen Shire RFBs are limited in height to 10m. Small modern walk-up flat buildings are called Manor Houses, and these are limited to a maximum of 4 dwellings and 2 storeys.



As the graphs above show, most redevelopment of properties for infill will result in granny flat or dual occupancy developments. Dual occupancies and granny flats are generally low-density housing forms and usually low-impact (depending on size and bulk). Whilst more medium density type housing forms (townhouses, villas, small flat buildings) provide fewer developments, they deliver a higher proportion of additional dwellings, because each development provides multiple homes (on average a multi-dwelling development is expected to deliver 4 dwellings on one site, whilst a flat building expects delivery of 8 or 9 homes on a [relatively large] site).

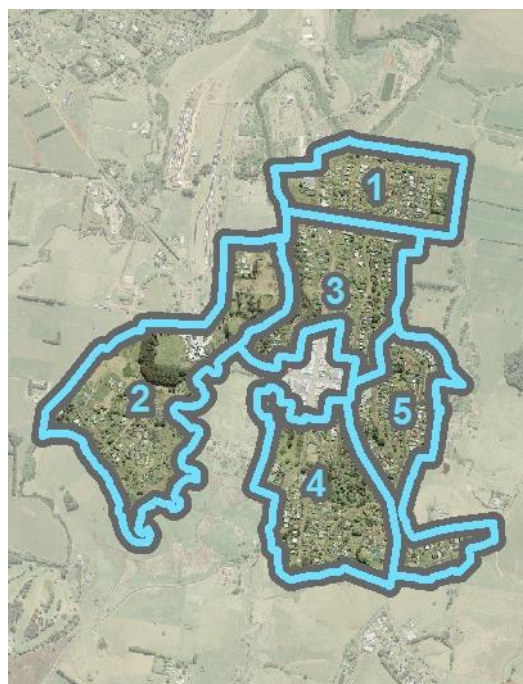


## Infill housing potential by neighbourhood

### Dorrigo

Dorrigo's residential areas are well-suited to infill development. Most houses in Dorriggo are within walking distance of the well-served town centre and a number of parks. Properties are large (typically 1000m<sup>2</sup> or over) and deep and many have rear access via laneways. Whilst laneways are very common, they vary in width and condition. Properties typically run east-west, an excellent orientation for designing comfortable and healthy homes with good opportunities for solar access.

There are a mix of housing styles, ages and materials in Dorriggo, ranging from small weatherboard cottages, to more modern brick and fibro homes. Most homes are modest in size relative to property size, with large front yards featuring lawns and small gardens. Other common features are no or low front fences and inconspicuous driveways and on-site car parking. Dorriggo has an open, relaxed feel and country town character, and many areas enjoy idyllic rural views.



For the infill study, the residential areas of Dorriggo have been split into 5 blocks/neighbourhoods as shown above.



(87 dwellings)



ES

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rate houses are single dwellings on one property (usually 1-2 storeys). Granny flats are small, secondary dwellings on a property. Dual occupancies are two homes on the property, and can be attached (duplex) or detached.

Multi-dwelling includes villas, townhouses and terrace developments at 1-2 storeys.

#### ADDITIONAL POPULATION PROJECTION

+ 357 people

Population change attributed to infill housing only – excludes population growth as result of greenfield and other housing growth. This projection uses 2016 data for average household size and dwelling vacancy rates for Dorriggo. Actual population change could vary depending on these and other factors.

#### INFILL HOUSING GROWTH TARGET 2040

Subject to community consultation

It is proposed to include a housing growth target for Dorriggo within a new Bellingen Shire Housing and Growth Management Strategy.



## BLOCK D1

### Characteristics

This Block is located in the north of Dorrigo township bounded by rural land to the north and east, Bangalow Street to the south and the Bielsdown River to the west. The Dorrigo Town Centre (main intersection) is approximately a 1km walk from the north-east corner of Dorrigo Street. There are no footpaths and few streets have kerb and gutter. Many roadways are narrow, with wide grassy verges adding to the country town character of the block. There are no parks in this block.

Properties are large, with long (deep) lots mostly running east west with rear lane access. Many blocks measure roughly 1000m<sup>2</sup>. Homes generally occupy only a small part of the block with large front and rear yards. Many older homes have vehicle access from the rear lanes. Many homes do not have front fences (or very low fences) giving the area an open feel. Homes are a mix of older weatherboard cottages and fibro or brick homes. Many homes in the area, especially in the elevated areas, enjoy expansive views of the rural landscape.

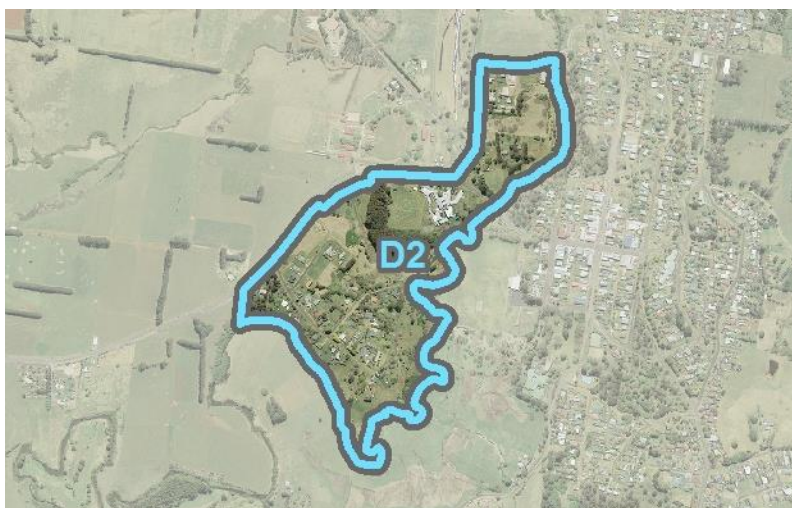
There are 3 heritage listed houses in the west of the precinct, including one of Dorrigo's oldest homes and one heritage listed cultural planting' consisting of numerous oak trees within the newly subdivided area of Ash/Bangalow Street. The Old Dorrigo Butter Factory (demolished) is listed as archaeological heritage. Council has limited flood information, but the block is surrounded by watercourses and whilst much land is elevated, some of the lower-lying parts could be affected by flooding. The block is not classified as bushfire prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block D1	Additional housing potential
High growth	44
Medium growth	<b>37</b>
Low growth	30

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 – Average.





## BLOCK D2

### Characteristics

Block D2 is located west of the Bielsdown River and is bounded by Ash Street to the north and rural land to the south and west. Dorrigo High School is located on the south side of Waterfall Way. There is one park in the block, Ray Cork Park and a narrow public reserve running from the end of Cypress and Bean Streets, with a footpath that links to Cudgery Street and the town centre. Across the river lies Dorrigo Recreation Grounds. There are no other formalised pedestrian/cycle links into town from this southern area. North of Waterfall Way is a large modern, medical centre and planned seniors living units (+~40 dwellings) and an industrial-zoned area. A footpath on the northern side of Waterfall Way runs from the showground across the bridge to Cudgery Street. There is one heritage listed house in the block and the plantings around the High School are listed.

The southern area contains a newer part of Dorrigo with more recent subdivisions and home building. Lots sizes are a mix of town-sized blocks with modern homes (e.g. 600-750m<sup>2</sup> along Gum St) and larger blocks backing onto the river and in the east, which do not follow a regular subdivision pattern. Much of the area contains generous grassy front verges and plentiful open space around the older homes and blocks. Newer homes are likely to be of brick construction and feature double garages.

The area is surrounded by the meandering river and parts are relatively low-lying and likely to be flood-prone, considered a significant constraint to housing development in much of this area, especially the lower-lying east. There is some potential in the higher areas around Gum Street.

### Infill Capacity

Block D2	Additional housing potential
High growth	77
Medium growth	<b>64</b>
Low growth	51

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average. A large area is low-lying and flood-affected, severely limiting housing potential. In addition, this area does not have ideal pedestrian connections into town. The relatively high numbers of additional dwellings in this precinct are due to the planned independent seniors living complex next to the medical centre. These planned villas/units mask the otherwise low infill potential in this area.





## BLOCK D3

### Characteristics

Block D3 is located just north of the Dorriggo Town Centre, bounded by the Bielsdown River to the west, rural land to the east and Bangalow Street to the north. The streets are not laid out in a neat grid like in Block 1 to the north, and the block shapes and sizes not as uniform; however most block are large and deep running east west with rear laneway access. These laneways appear wider and more open than those to the north.

The town centre is close, walking distance from all properties. A narrow footpath runs down Hickory, Cudgery and Beech Streets. The old Dorriggo Bowling Club is located on a large property on Hickory Street and could be a key site for redevelopment, next to a park and the town centre. There are two parks in the block, Wheatley Park on Kurrajong Street and Bielsdown Native Park running along the river. The Don Dorriggo and Guy Fawkes Museum is located on Cudgery Street, opposite the CWA building.

Like much of Dorriggo, the country town character is evident in low front fences and very large front yards and grassy verges, with houses setback a considerable distance from the road. Most properties contain houses with small footprints and large yards/plentiful open space. There is not a consistent or common style of home evident in this block, but the area is low density with a vast majority single, detached homes. Homes in elevated positions enjoy countryside views.

There are 5 heritage listings within the block, 3 houses and 2 cultural plantings. Much of the block appears to sit above flood affected areas, however with limitations in Dorriggo flood data means this needs to be confirmed.

### Infill Capacity

Block D3	Additional housing potential
High growth	72
Medium growth	<b>60</b>
Low growth	48

The infill potential of this block is rated 1 – Good.





## BLOCK D4

### Characteristics

Block D4 is located south of the Town Centre and is bounded by Karabin St (Waterfall Way) to the east, Dorriggo Recreation Fields and an undeveloped greenfield residential area (along Whiskey Creek Road) to the west and rural land to the south. The precinct includes the residential area south of the town centre along Myrtle and Bielsdown Streets. The area is walking distance to the town centre (within 1km radius), although much of the block is steeper than other areas of Dorriggo. This affords many properties excellent countryside views. There is a wide footpath along Karabin Street. The street layout is not a grid (it contains no-through roads and cul-de-sacs) and the main roads follow the topography.

Dorriggo Primary School is located in the north-west corner of the block and Mt St John's Catholic Primary School is located in the south-east at a high point in the township. There is a large park within the block, Dorriggo Heritage Gardens, containing Dorriggo Public Pool and tennis courts. Dorriggo Uniting Church is located on Myrtle Street and the Police and Ambulance Stations on Bielsdown Street. There are 4 homes listed as heritage items and 3 cultural plantings. The block is mostly elevated and not flood affected and only a small area in the southeast is classified as bushfire-prone.

Like much of Dorriggo, lot sizes are large and house footprints are relatively small, providing large yards and lawns. House setbacks from the front property boundaries are not as uniform as in other areas of Dorriggo, but front yards and verges are generous. There are some large properties and vacant allotments that could present good infill opportunities.

### Infill Capacity

Block D4	Additional housing potential
High growth	50
Medium growth	<b>42</b>
Low growth	34

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average.







## BLOCK D5

### Characteristics

Block D5 is located in east Dorrig, bounded by Cudgery Street and Waratah Lane in the north, the tree-lined Karabin Street to the west, rural land to the south and vacant residentially-zoned (greenfield) land to the east. One long laneway links Beech and Kurrajong Streets, with a small park at the southern end. This precinct contains Dorrig Hospital and St Stephens Anglican Church which both contain heritage listings for 'cultural plantings'. Additional heritage listings include street trees along Karabin Street, cultural planting on the corner of Karabin and Beech Streets and a house on Kurrajong Street.

Properties are walking distance to the town centre (most lie within 500m, but the south-eastern-most point is approx. 1.2km walk away from the centre of town). Like much of Dorrig, the area is characterised by large front setbacks and a feel of wide open streets. In the north, the blocks run east-west and are large and long. Blocks in the south are relatively large, and are shallower with a north-south aspect. The southern area of Old Coramba Road and Cofton Close contain newer homes, with large front setbacks and often double garages. Land opposite homes on Old Coramba Road is zoned for residential development but retains a rural land use and is not yet subdivided. There are no footpaths in this area besides along Karabin Street and part of Beech Street.

There is limited flooding information available for Dorrig and the majority of the properties within the block are elevated, however flood-affectation may need further investigation should development be proposed. Only a small area in the south is classified as bushfire-prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block D5	Additional housing potential
High growth	50
Medium growth	<b>42</b>
Low growth	34

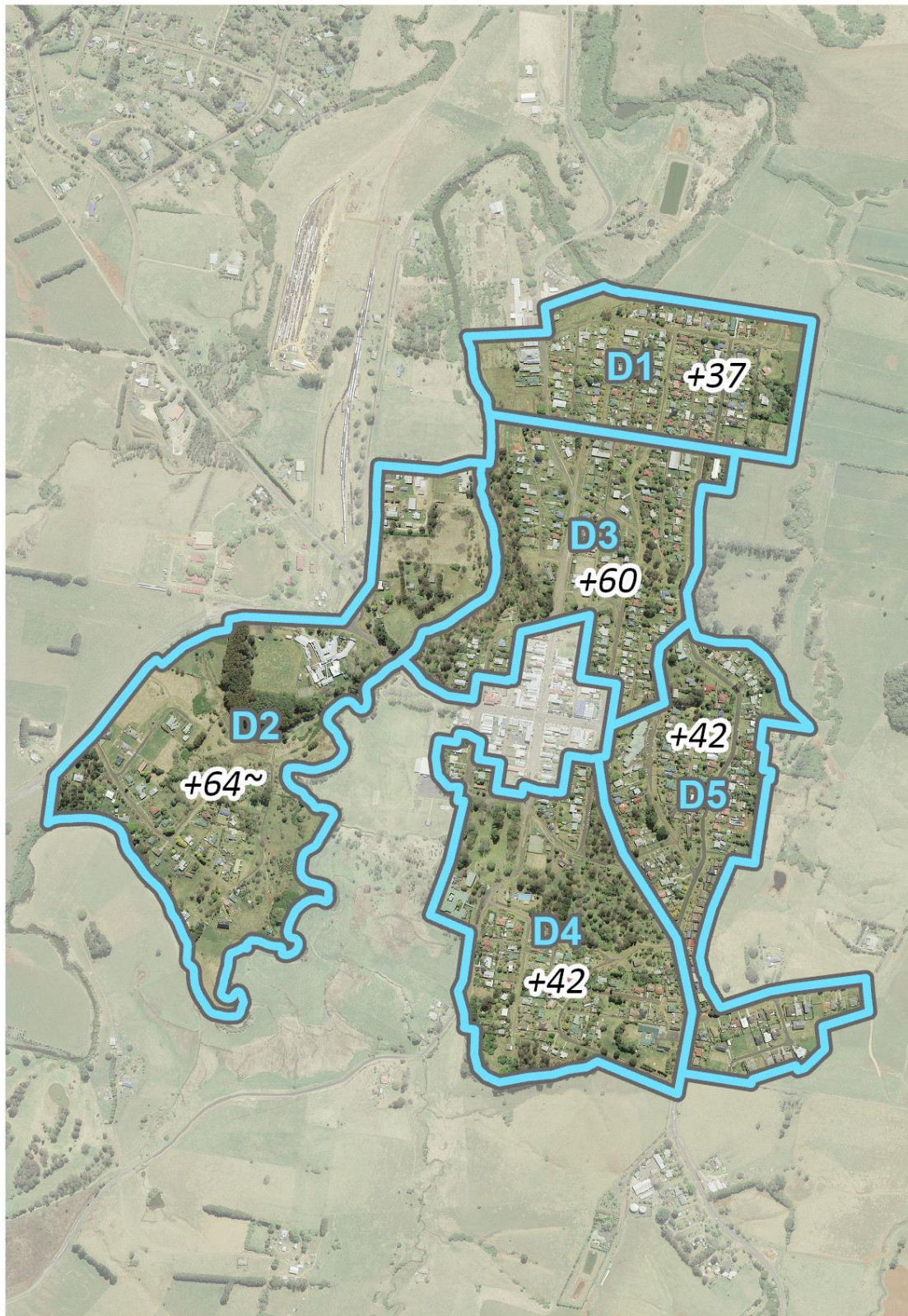
The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average.





## DORRIGO - ESTIMATED INFILL HOUSING TO 2040

Estimated number of additional homes that could be built in areas zoned R1 General Residential\*



\* these estimates do not include new greenfield housing (homes in newly subdivided areas outside the current town boundaries)

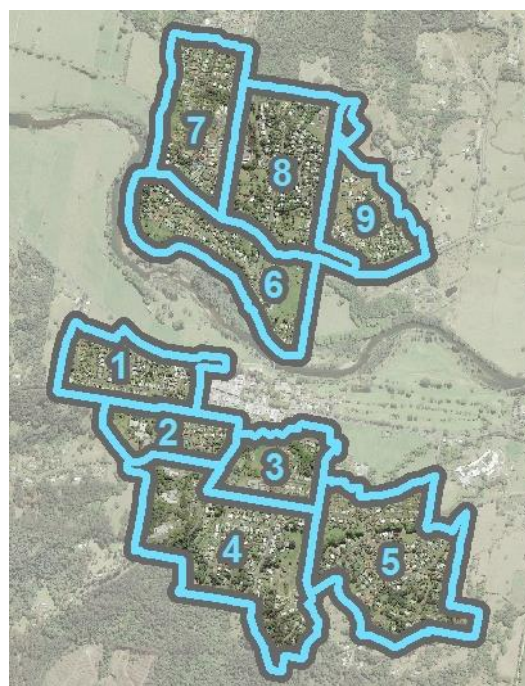
~ BLOCK D2 The relatively high numbers of additional dwellings in this precinct are due to the planned independent seniors living complex next to the medical centre. These planned villas/units mask otherwise low infill potential in this area.



## Bellingen

Bellingen is the main service centre in the Shire and residents are attracted to its busy, heritage-listed main street, offering shops, entertainment and many opportunities for social interactions. Bellingen is a relatively compact town, surrounded by rural land and forests and split in two by the river. Most properties on the north and south sides of the river are within walking distance of the town centre, although the valley topography means some areas are quite steep. Whilst gardens (of all sizes) are a feature of the town, the south side of Bellingen has better access to parks and open space, although the northern side is generally leafier (higher % of tree canopy cover).

There is no one common style of home in Bellingen. An eclectic mix of older period homes, small cottages, older multi-dwelling housing and 80s-90s brick veneer homes as well as modern lightweight buildings co-exist with heritage-listed homes. Infill has occurred in Bellingen in an incremental manner over the years and many large properties provide opportunities for extra housing within town boundaries, sensitive to existing character. Like Dorrig and Urunga, most fencing is low (or non-existent) and hardstand areas (driveways, concrete) are kept to a minimum, although front setbacks are often not as large. Older parts of Bellingen contain laneways and grid roads, whilst newer areas feature cul-de-sacs and winding roads.



For the infill study, the residential areas of Bellingen have been split into 9 blocks/neighborhoods as shown above.

### INFILL CAPACITY STUDY SUMMARY – BELLINGEN 2040

NOTES		
<b>TOTAL LAND AREA</b>	213 hectares	This area represents land zoned R1 General Residential in Bellingen, and excludes greenfield (undeveloped) areas and the town centre (area zoned B2).
<b>ADDITIONAL HOUSING POTENTIAL</b>	+343 new dwellings	These are the new houses delivered as <i>infill development</i> within the Bellingen Town Area as shown in the map above. This is based on a middle/medium growth scenario.
<b>HOUSING DIVERSITY POTENTIAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ 40 separate houses</li> <li>+ 169 granny flats, duplex and dual occupancy</li> <li>+ 22 multi-dwelling developments (76 dwellings)</li> <li>+ 4 residential flat buildings (58 dwellings)</li> </ul>	<p>Separate houses are single dwellings on one property (usually 1-2 storeys). Granny flats are small, secondary homes on a property. Dual occupancies are two homes on one property, and can be attached (duplex) or detached.</p> <p>Multi-dwelling includes villas, townhouses and terrace developments at 1-2 storeys.</p> <p>Residential flat buildings are unit blocks 2-3 storeys and (besides Manor Houses) are generally possible only on large sites.</p>
<b>ADDITIONAL POPULATION PROJECTION</b>	+ 660 people	Population change attributed to infill housing only – excludes population growth as result of greenfield and other housing growth. Projection uses 2016 data for average household size and dwelling vacancy rates for Bellingen. Actual change could vary depending on these and other factors.
<b>INFILL HOUSING GROWTH TARGET 2040</b>	Subject to community consultation	It is proposed to include a housing growth target for Bellingen within a new Belling Shire Housing and Growth Management Strategy.



## BLOCK B1

### Characteristics

Located in SW Bellingen, the majority of the block is bounded by Oak St to the east, rural land to the north and west and William St to the south. A small area on Short Street Lane is also included in this block. Block B1 is close walking distance to the town centre, but is lacking footpaths (a good footpath is provided along much of Coronation St). This block has two parks, Piggott Park and Hewitt Park. There are three laneways, with some housing facing the laneways, including medium density villas along Robert Street Lane. Short Street Lane contains some housing, a Backpackers Hostel and back-of-house commercial development. St Margaret's Anglican Church is located on a large property in the north-east corner.

The block has many heritage items (18 listings) and east of Woodbury Lane is a Heritage Conservation Area. The heritage listings include 9 houses, 2 streetscapes (19 properties), 5 cultural plantings, one church and one fence. The block is not classified as flood-prone, apart from a small low-lying area next to Waterfall Way. Only a small area is bushfire-prone (SW corner).

Properties are generally large and some infill housing has already been provided, mostly older single-storey villas and dual occupancies. Despite a mix of dwellings in terms of age and size, there are many beautiful older dwellings that add character to the streetscape. Another character feature is the noticeable absence of garages and driveways - many older properties do not include driveways or garages facing the street (car parking is at the rear or on-street). Where driveways are provided they usually have a grass strip down the middle or are quite narrow and recessive in the streetscape. Most streets have kerb and gutter, but some are not fully sealed, providing grassy verges. Like most of Bellingen, gardens (especially in the front yard) are a notable feature of this block.

### Infill Capacity

Block D1	Additional housing potential
High growth	58
Medium growth	<b>48</b>
Low growth	38

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average. Heritage provides design constraints and may limit yields but good infill development can co-exist with heritage items and contribute to the ongoing story of the neighbourhood, especially where homes can be built in the large rear yards of properties, therefore having minimal impact on the established streetscape.







## BLOCK B2

### Characteristics

Block B2 is located in SW Bellingen, bounded by large lot residential land to the west, William Street to the north, Church Street to the east and Bowra Street to the south. This neighbourhood borders the town centre, but limited footpaths. This block contains no parks, but Bellingen Public School is located on the corner of William and Lovell Streets and Bellingen Park (Market Park) is located just to the east across Church Street. Due to proximity to the town centre and markets, this area can get quite busy with visitors parking on market days or special events. There are two laneways in the block, William Street Lane and Bowra Street Lane. Most parts of the block are flat to gently sloping.

The block has 4 heritage listings, cultural plantings at the school, street trees along Bowra Street and Oak Street and a house on Church Street. In addition, William Street properties form part of the Bellingen Town Centre Conservation Area. A watercourse runs through the south-eastern corner of the block and some properties are flood affected. The block is not mapped as bushfire prone.

The streets on the block are arranged as a grid, with most lots measuring about to 800m<sup>2</sup>. A variety of street trees are notable features of the neighbourhood (jacarandas, firewheel trees, tibouchinas, callistemon) although pruning and tree maintenance appears haphazard. There are some commercial/service type uses in this neighbourhood (for example Bellingen Youth Hub, medical centres, works depots and warehouses) and a couple of examples of infill housing. There are many older homes in this neighbourhood, some being character homes. Older homes with hipped rooves and verandahs are common. Picket fences are also a common feature of this area.

### Infill Capacity

Block B2	Additional housing potential
High growth	14
Medium growth	<b>12</b>
Low growth	10

The infill potential of this block is rated 1 – Below Average. There are some infill opportunities, however this block is relatively small and therefore is not expected to deliver a significant volume of new infill dwellings.





## BLOCK B3

### Characteristics

Block B3 is bound by Creek Lane and Mary Street Lane to the north, Connell Park and Prince Street to the east, Watson and Crown Street to the south and Church Street to the west. This block is in walking distance to the town centre and contains the large Bellingin Park, home to sports fields and the popular monthly markets. St Mary's Primary School is located in this block next to the Catholic Church. The former Bellorana Aged Care Facility is located on Watson Street and presents an opportunity for redevelopment. The lower parts of the block to the north are flat, but the block slopes up to the south, with Ford and Prince Streets running north-south to the elevated Crown and Watson Streets. There is a narrow lane connecting Prince and Ford Streets. This block is leafy and contains many mature trees.

There are many heritage items in the block, including the St Mary Immaculate Mother of God Catholic Church and Hall; cultural plantings at Bellingin Park, Cemetery Creek and the former depot, the Park St Streetscape Group and 4 listed houses. The Bellingin Conservation Area extends into this block, covering properties on Mary Street, Ford Street and Bellingin Park. Cemetery Creek runs through this block to Connell Park and flooding is an issue nearby. Properties with dual frontage to Church and Rawson Streets are hindered for development due to drainage issues with a depression running along the rear of these properties (along Rawson Street).

Properties along Mary Street are smaller than most in the township, with most being under 600m<sup>2</sup> in area. Other properties in the area measure between approx. 720m<sup>2</sup> and 800m<sup>2</sup>. There is a mix of period homes in the area, including federation style cottages and bungalows as well as some more modern brick and fibro homes.

### Infill Capacity

Block B3	Additional housing potential
High growth	35
Medium growth	<b>29</b>
Low growth	23

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average. This block is significantly constrained by flooding. The redevelopment of the Bellorana site provides infill opportunities.







## BLOCK B4

### Characteristics

Block B4 is a large area in south Bellingham, bound by large lot residential development in the west to the rear of Endeavour Drive properties in the east. The block takes in the south side of Bowra and Watson Streets in the north and heavily vegetated rural-zoned land to the south. Properties in the southern portion of this block are bushfire prone. Bellingham Hospital and an aged care facility are located in the west of the block. As with most of the residential areas of Bellingham, the town centre is within walking distance, although this precinct is hilly and some properties (especially in the upper, southern reaches) are steep. There are two parks (with limited/no amenities), O'Sullivan's on Watson Street and open space on Bowra Street. There are four laneways in this block, providing rear access for many properties. There are many large properties (measuring >1400m<sup>2</sup>) in this block, presenting some infill/subdivision opportunities; however many of these lots are steep, and vegetated, presenting access and development constraints.

There are a number of heritage listings within the precinct, including the archaeological listing (former Bellingham Cemetery) over the now-closed Bellingham Bowls Club, the original hospital building, five houses, a cultural planting at O'Sullivan's Park and the Northcote Streetscape group. There exists an eclectic mix of homes in this block, older period homes, infill from the 80s and 90s (generally brick or fibro dwellings) and more recent, modern homes. The newer homes are generally custom-built, but share common design features (for example lightweight materials, deep, elevated verandahs, clerestory windows).

The precinct is not constrained by the 1:100 (1%) flood level, although several properties behind Bowra and Watson Streets are affected by the PMF flood level (Probable Maximum Flood).

### Infill Capacity

Block B4	Additional housing potential
High growth	107
Medium growth	<b>89</b>
Low growth	71

The infill potential of this block is rated 1 - Good. This block covers a large area and whilst it contains some constrained areas in the southern reaches, it also contains a number of large sites that could be redeveloped and could include different housing types.





## BLOCK B5

### Characteristics

Block B5 is bound by O'Connell Park and Bellinghen High School in the north, undeveloped greenfield land to the east, and large-lot-residential and rural land to the south. This block is located in an elevated part of town, affording some views over the valley. Whilst there are many relatively level lots, some properties in the southern portion of the block are quite steep.

This area developed between the late 80s and 2000s and is one of the newer areas of Bellinghen township. In the older parts of Bellinghen (and Dorrig/Urunga), streets are laid out in a grid, often with laneways. Newer subdivisions contain windy (usually narrower) roads with cul-de-sacs. This street layout is generally less walkable but the compact nature of Bellinghen means the properties within this block remain within walking distance of the town centre. This area has few footpaths. There is one small park (with no amenities) off George Hewitt Close, and the Connell Creek corridor running through the precinct is public land with a footpath providing a link to town.

The character of homes in this area differs from elsewhere in south Bellinghen as it does not contain the older historic homes prevalent elsewhere. There are no heritage items. Homes in this block are mostly elongated (stretching from side boundary to side boundary) and made of brick. Homes are mostly single-storey, although two-storey homes are relatively common. Despite lot sizes generally being shallower and smaller than traditional lots (generally 600-750m<sup>2</sup>), most properties have generous front and rear yards. Front yards are often densely planted. Properties in the upper reaches of this block, along Tibouchina Close and Endeavour Drive are larger (>1400m<sup>2</sup>); however, subdivision of these large lots into battle-axe allotments has occurred recently. Driveways and garages are more prominent in this block, as older parts of Bellinghen provide less parking (e.g. single garages only) or 'hide' vehicle access in rear lanes.

### Infill Capacity

Block B5	Additional housing potential
High growth	50*
Medium growth	<b>50</b>
Low growth	40

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average. \*There are infrastructure limitations in the sewer network servicing this area which limit infill capacity. The cost to upgrade the network to take any additional infill development beyond that specified above is unlikely to be justified by the limited increased development it may allow.







## BLOCK B6

### Characteristics

Block B6 is located on the north side of the Bellingin River, bound by Wheatley Street in the north, the Showground to the west and the river/waterfront land to the east and south. Flood risk is a significant constraint to infill development across much of the block, except in the slightly elevated north-west portion. The block is walking distance to the town centre, crossing Lavenders Bridge, and a small neighbourhood centre is located opposite, at the intersection of Wheatley and Lyon Streets.

There are three heritage listings in the block, a house on Hammond Street, cultural plantings in Cedar Park and the trees and reserve at Bellingin Showground. Public open space includes the heavily vegetated Cedar Park, and the riverfront accessed via James Eather Way. The showground is a large green space managed by a trust. The showground is an important events and markets space and also provides camping. The showground is a fenced and managed space and public access/passive recreation is restricted.

There are a mix of homes in the block, the older homes in Hammond and Dowle Streets, are closer to the road and have smaller front setbacks than the more modern homes in the block, which have generous front lawns or gardens. There is a mix of weatherboard and brick homes. Front fences, when present, are generally low and decorative. Houses in the lower areas of the block are often raised to account for flood risks.

### Infill Capacity

Block B6	Additional housing potential
High growth	16
Medium growth	<b>13</b>
Low growth	10

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average. Much of this block is affected by flooding risk.





## BLOCK B7

### Characteristics

Block B7 is located in north-west Bellingin, bound by Wheatley Street in the south, Gleniffer Road and rural land to the west, large-lot residential housing on to the north and properties behind Lyon Street and Tamarind Drive to the east. The block is within walking distance to North Bellingin shops (500m) and Bellingin town centre is a 2km (approx.) walk from the top of Sunset Ridge Drive. The block slopes to the north with the northern reaches of the block elevated and some offering great views of the valley. Some properties are sloping and steep. There is a very narrow footpath running down part of Sunset Ridge Drive, connecting to a footpath on Elliot Close. Roads in this area are narrow.

There is one park, a forest walk, connecting Sunset Ridge Drive and Tamarind Drive. Koalas have been known to occupy this park. There is no public area for active recreation or play. The character of the area is very leafy, with most homes sitting behind mature trees and vegetation. There are some sections of the block, mostly in the west, which have more front lawns and manicured gardens and less mature trees. There are no heritage listings within this block; likely due to the fact this area developed post 1980. There is a mix of single-storey and double storey homes in this area. Two-storey homes can take advantage of views and also breezes. There has been a little battle-axe subdivision.

The area is not affected by the 1:100 (1%) flood level (apart from the lower portions of large lots along sunset ridge drive backing out onto Gleniffer Road). A small number of properties are mapped as affected by the PMF (probable maximum flood). Properties along the eastern edge of the precinct, in Sky Place are mapped as bushfire prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block B7	Additional housing potential
High growth	49
Medium growth	<b>41</b>
Low growth	33

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average.







## BLOCK B8

### Characteristics

Block B8 is located in North Bellinggen, north of Wheatley Street and south of Figwood Drive and Bellinggen Cemetery. The block extends to the rear of properties along Jagera Drive. The block contains the small row of shops servicing North Bellinggen and a small industrial area and park/wetland off Tamarind Drive. The block contains one other park – Robert Wolfe Park, which is not level nor well-kept. The area is hilly and many properties are steep/have steep driveways. The block is within walking distance to North Bellinggen shops and within 2km of the Bellinggen Town Centre (however this walk is uphill on the way back). There is no footpath along the main road of Lyon Street, which has a very narrow verge in many places, pushing pedestrians onto the roadway to walk.

The character of the area is very leafy and forested, with many properties containing mature trees and extensive vegetation. There are a number of cul-de-sacs in the area. Lot sizes are similar to those within the rest of North Bellinggen (mostly between 600-800m<sup>2</sup>), although many properties are steep. The area contains an eclectic mix of old and new homes. Elevated verandahs and two-storey construction from lightweight materials are common architectural features, although masonry construction is still quite common in some streets.

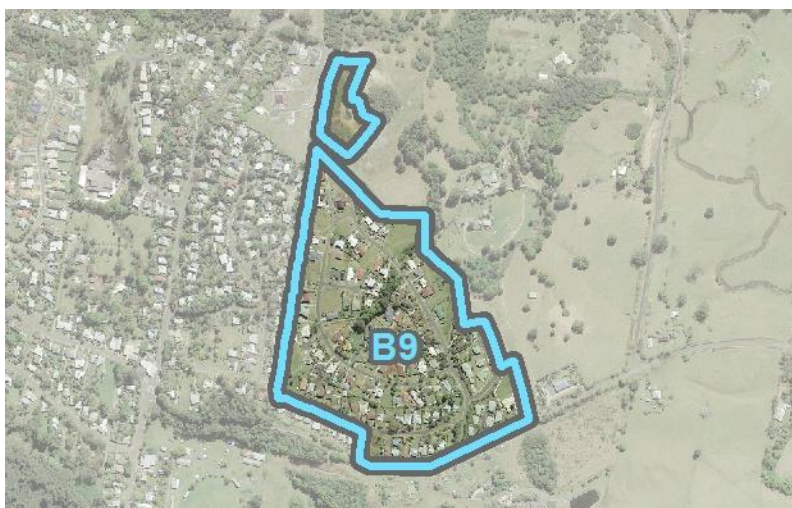
There are few heritage items in the area, Windy Hill house and plantings and remnant rainforest on Wheatley Street are listed. Some properties on in the lower south-west are affected by flooding and properties nearby the cemetery are classified as bushfire prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block B8	Additional housing potential
High growth	42
Medium growth	<b>35</b>
Low growth	28

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 – Average. There is a mix of constrained lots which have limited infill potential and larger, less-constrained lots in this area.





## BLOCK B9


### Characteristics

Block B9 is located in north-east Bellingham. The area extends from Jagera Drive in the west to McCristal Drive and Mt Tabor Close in the east. East of this area is the North Bellingham Urban Release Area, zoned for greenfield housing. To the south are small rural properties on North Bank Road, the Bellingham Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Bellingham River. This block includes the recently subdivided Iron Bark Place (off Figwood Drive). The block is within walking distance to North Bellingham shops and the Bellingham Town Centre. The area has three Parks – Jubilee Park, a grassy area on McCristal Drive and open space connecting Kimber Close and McNally Drive. These parks have limited amenities, although a small play area has been added at McNally Drive.

The area is characterised by large front lawns and generous front setbacks. The roads are narrow and mostly contain roll-kerbing. In some areas, the grassy front verges are used for parking, whilst in others; people are landscaping their front yards. Like other “newer” areas of Bellingham (areas developed since the 80s), brick homes are relatively common. The area is not as steep as the land to the west, and there is less mature vegetation. This neighbourhood has a more open and suburban character. There are very few front fences, reinforcing this open feel. The area contains a mix of single and double storey homes. Most lots measure approximately 700m<sup>2</sup>. There are a few examples of dual occupancy development, but the majority of housing is single detached dwellings.

There is a single heritage listing in the block, being Jubilee Park. The block is not bushfire prone. A number of properties along the north side of McCristal Drive are flood affected as a watercourse runs along the back of the block in this area.

### Infill Capacity

Block B9	Additional	
High growth	31	
Medium growth	<b>26</b>	
Low growth	21	

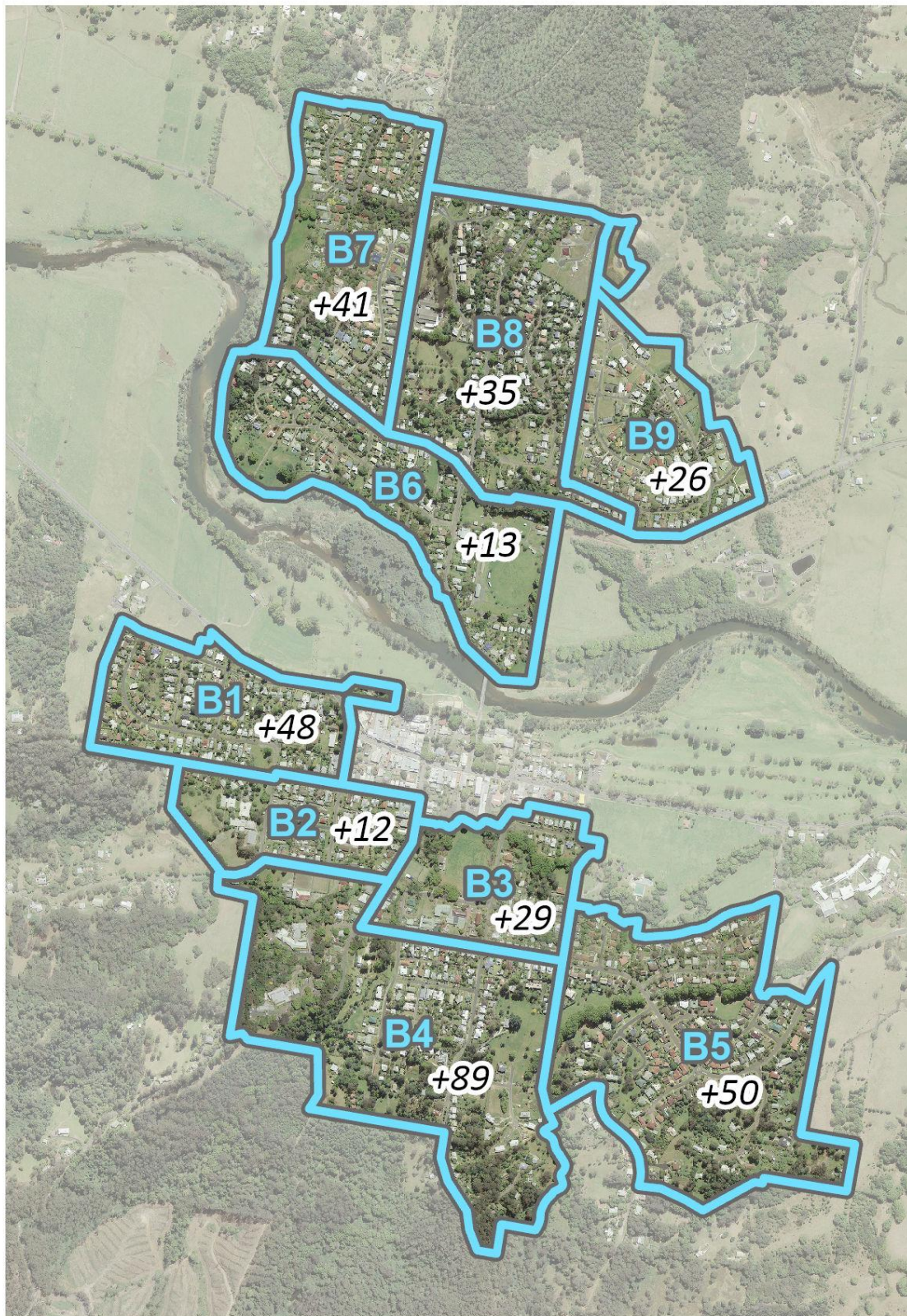
The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average.





## BELLINGEN - ESTIMATED INFILL HOUSING TO 2040

Estimated number of additional homes that could be built in areas zoned R1 General Residential\*



\* these estimates do not include new greenfield housing (homes in newly subdivided areas outside the current town boundaries)



## Urunga

Urunga has a population similar to Bellingen, but is the most spread-out of the townships, extending both north and south of the Kalang River, east and west of the train line and former highway (Giinagay Way). As a result, the edges of the town are not walking distance to the town centre. Despite this, lot sizes close to town are generally large, providing good infill opportunities.

Urunga also has a greater variety of housing types than other areas of the Shire, with a number of villas, townhouses and flats (2-3 storey walk-up buildings) close to town. Detached homes are a mix of brick veneer, fibro and some weatherboard construction. There is no typical style of home, although modern homes tend to be larger than the older homes and cottages in the area. Like most other town areas in the Shire, front yards and lawns are generous in size and front fences low (or non-existent), giving the suburbs a friendly and open feel.

The older parts of Urunga contain laneways, with many properties having rear access to their properties from lanes. These lanes (depending on condition) offer infill opportunities.



For the infill study, the residential areas of Urunga have been split into 5 blocks/neighbourhoods as shown above.

### INFILL CAPACITY STUDY SUMMARY – URUNGA 2040

NOTES		
<b>TOTAL LAND AREA</b>	188 hectares	This area represents land zoned R1 General Residential in Urunga, and excludes greenfield (undeveloped) areas and the town centre (area zoned B2).
<b>ADDITIONAL HOUSING POTENTIAL</b>	+ 371 new dwellings	These are the new houses delivered as <i>infill development</i> within the Urunga Town Area as shown in the map above. This is based on a middle/medium growth scenario.
<b>HOUSING DIVERSITY POTENTIAL</b>	+ 46 separate houses + 70 granny flats, duplex and dual occupancy + 26 multi-dwelling developments (114 dwellings) + 17 residential flat buildings (141 dwellings)	Separate houses are single dwellings on one property (usually 1-2 storeys). Granny flats are small, secondary homes on a property. Dual occupancies are two homes on one property, and can be attached (duplex) or detached. Multi-dwelling includes villas, townhouses and terrace developments at 1-2 storeys. Residential flat buildings are unit blocks 2-3 storeys and (besides Manor Houses) are generally possible only on large sites.
<b>ADDITIONAL POPULATION PROJECTION</b>	+ 759 people	Population change attributed to infill housing only – excludes population growth as result of greenfield and other housing growth. This population projection uses 2016 data for average household size and dwelling vacancy rates for Urunga. Actual population change could vary depending on these and other factors.
<b>INFILL HOUSING GROWTH TARGET 2040</b>	Subject to community consultation	It is proposed to include a housing growth target for Urunga within a new Bellingen Shire Housing and Growth Management Strategy.





## BLOCK U1

### Characteristics

Block U1 is located in northern Urunga, on Newry Island, west of Giinagay Way. The northern-most part of Newry Island (properties along Marshall Place, Island Place and Newry Island Drive to No.75) is zoned R1 General Residential. Properties in this area measure approximately 800-1000m<sup>2</sup>. Homes in this area have a consistent front setback, and are predominately of brick construction. Properties in this area are accessed via a timber bridge. Properties in the southern part of Newry Island are zoned R5 Large-lot Residential and are not included in this study.

This block also includes a small number of properties on Marina Crescent, not located on Newry Island. These properties are located between Giinagay Way and the Kalang River, just south of a small industrial area and the service station.

This block is located over 2.5km from the Urunga Town Centre, and is not considered within walking distance. The former Highway (Giinagay Way), Kalang River Bridge and Railway are significant pedestrian and cyclist obstacles. Properties in this area are within walking distance to a service station, which provides limited items.

There are two parks/reserves in this area. One grassed reserve is located just over the bridge. Another smaller reserve is located on the riverfront at the end of Marina Crescent.

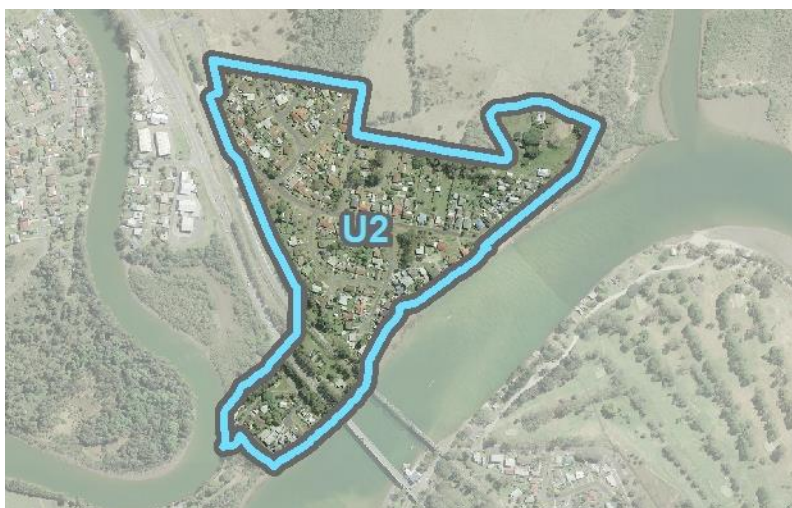
All properties within this block are affected by flooding (1:100 (1%) flood level).

### Infill Capacity

Block U1	Additional housing potential
High growth	0
Medium growth	0
Low growth	0

This block was excluded from the infill capacity study due to flooding constraints.





## BLOCK U2

### Characteristics

Block U2 is located in north Urunga, with the majority of properties located on the eastern side of Giinagay Way and the railway line. This area borders the Kalang River to the south, and rural land to the north. This block extends to a small number of properties west of Giinagay Way – on Dolphin Court and Old Punt Way. There are two parks in this locality - Maramba Park on Yellow Rock Road, adjacent to the railway line contains a small playground and a small sloped, reserve with a number of trees between Vernon Place and Vernon Crescent. The area is not considered walking distance to the town centre – it is located over 2km away and the main road, railway line and river are significant cyclist and pedestrian barriers.

Homes in this area are predominantly single-story brick homes with a consistent setback from the road. Most properties contain generous front and rear yards with plentiful lawn areas. The area has few front fences (if they are present they are low) and maintains an open feel. Most homes appear to be of a similar age – although there are a number of larger, contemporary homes and redevelopments in the western portion of this block.

There are two heritage listings in this block – two houses on Yellow Rock Road. A number of properties are affected by the 1:100 (1%) flood level and further properties affected by the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) level. Properties in the north are also exposed to estuary inundation risks associated with sea level rise. Several properties in the north are also classified as bushfire-prone.

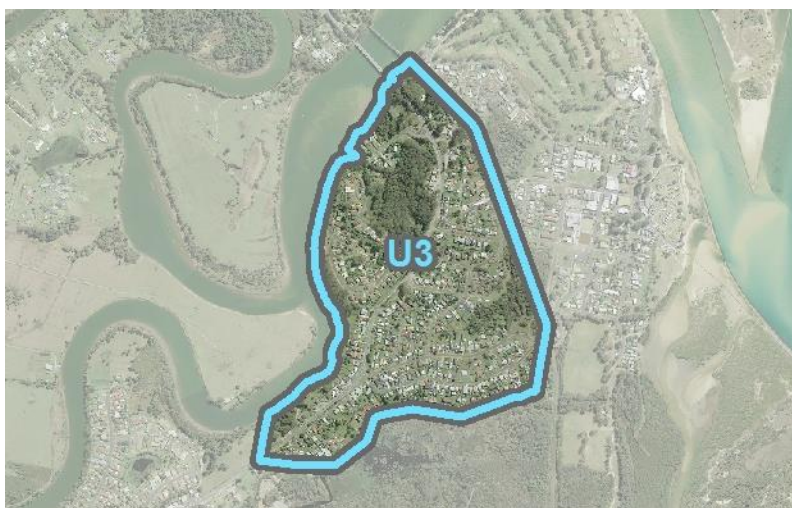
### Infill Capacity

Block U2	Additional housing potential
High growth	40
Medium growth	<b>33</b>
Low growth	26

The infill potential of this block is rated 2 – Average.







## BLOCK U3

### Characteristics

Block U3 is a large precinct located west of the railway extending from the Kalang Bridge and river in the north to the intersection of Hillside Drive and Giinagay Way in the south-west. To the south of this residential area is environmentally sensitive land – wetlands protected by local and state planning laws.

Although much of the area is flat and located within walking distance to the Urunga Town Centre, the main road and especially the railway line are barriers. To access the town centre on foot or by bicycle, one needs to cross over the rail-line at Pilot Street or Fitzroy - Comlaroi Street or via Bellingen Street (under the bridge). Parts of the block with easy access to these areas are considered walking distance from town, whilst the extremities are not. Parks and reserves in the area include a small park behind the Visitor Centre, the riverfront Urunga Lions Park and thickly vegetated riverfront land. The Urunga Wetlands boardwalk is located just south of the precinct.

Parts of the precinct are flood affected (at or below the 1:100 (1%) flood level) – in the north around Crescent Close (also at risk of estuary inundation), and in the east between Lourdes Avenue and the Railway. Other properties on the edges of the block are affected by the Probable Maximum Flood Level (PMFL). Along the southern edge of the block, properties are mapped as bushfire prone. Heritage listings include remnant forest bound by Giinagay Way and Bellingen and Crescents Streets; and the Carmel Convent Group buildings and grounds.

Lots sizes vary across this large area, although most properties measure between 600- 1400m<sup>2</sup>. Many of the longer and larger lots (which are generally flat or gently sloping) present good infill opportunities. There are a cluster of properties with lot sizes <600m<sup>2</sup> in the south-east. Whilst single houses with large yards are by far the most common house type in the area, there are some villas and townhouses. This area has also seen recent multi-dwelling approvals. This precinct has 3 laneways and properties facing these have generally good infill potential.

### Infill Capacity

Block U3	Additional housing potential
High growth	167
Medium growth	<b>139</b>
Low growth	111

The infill potential of this block is rated 1 – Good.





## BLOCK U4

### Characteristics

Block U4 extends from the golf course in the north to the sports fields in the south, west to the railway line and east to the waterfront. This block borders the Urunga Town Centre and is close to shops, services and many recreation opportunities. The area is mostly flat, although an area south-east of town sits atop a small hill. Many of the lower-lying properties in the north and around the town centre are affected by flooding (1:100 or 1%; many additional properties are affected by the Probable Maximum Flood/PMF). Some properties near the golf course and on southern Morgo Street are exposed to estuary inundation risks due to sea level rise. There are a number of heritage items, including the war memorial and plantings, former Pilot house and fence, the museum and former museum (archaeological relic), the school grounds and remnant native swamp forest.

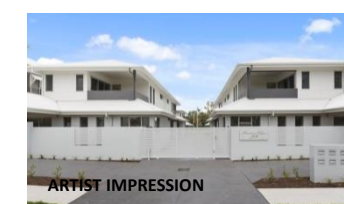
There are a mix of lot sizes and housing types in the area. There are four laneways in the block, with some properties accessing their properties from these laneways – for example a number of properties front the northern section of Coopers Lane. There are a number of large lots (>1400m<sup>2</sup>) particularly on corners that offer redevelopment opportunities.

Urunga has seen infill development in the past and has the highest percentage of medium-density developments in the Shire. This area contains many two storey walk-up unit blocks, as well as townhouses and single dwellings. Many homes have smaller front yards/smaller front setbacks than other areas of Urunga and housing therefore appears more compact. Many older properties have large rear yards. Older properties have no or low fencing, typical of elsewhere in the Shire, however newer developments appear to often include high/solid fencing.

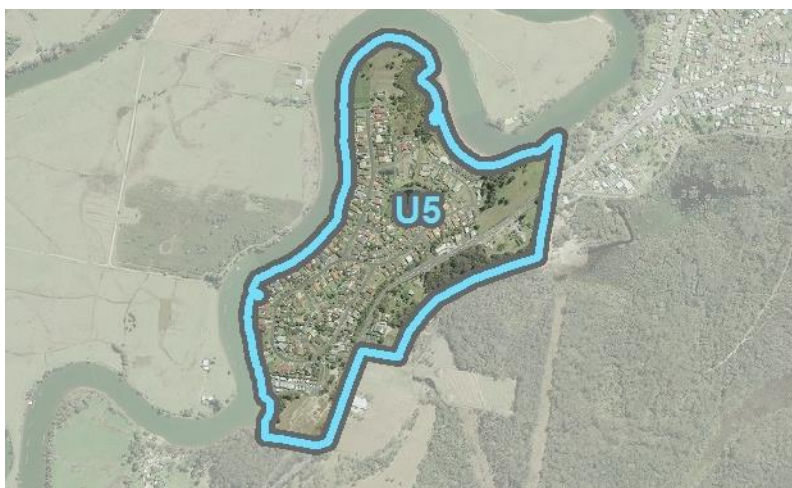
### Infill Capacity

Block U4	Additional housing potential
High growth	121
Medium growth	<b>101</b>
Low growth	81

The infill potential of this block is rated 1 – Good.







## BLOCK U5

### Characteristics

Block U5 is located in south Urunga, and consists of the riverfront residential area known as Bellinger Keys, as well as properties along Giinagay Way. Vacant land to the west of Giinagay Way is greenfield land known as the South Urunga Urban Release Area, which has the potential to deliver greater than 250 new housing lots (greenfield land is not included in this study). This block is over 2km from the Urunga Town Centre and is not considered walking distance as the old Highway and railway line are obstacles. The new South Urunga subdivision may present opportunities to create a bike link into town. The parks/reserves in the area include a very small grassed riverfront area on Rosedale Drive, containing no amenities and a wetland encircled by homes, accessible from Lake Court, Myall Court and Melaleuca Place but also containing no amenities. The Gundamain Residential Caravan Park is located at the southern edge of this block and along the former highway; the Honey Place is a tourist attraction with a small café.

There are a number of large properties on the outskirts of this block that present redevelopment opportunities, although some are constrained by vegetation, bushfire risk and flooding. The majority of new homes in this block will result from development of currently vacant sites. Properties close to the river are affected by flood and potential estuary inundation, although some small-scale infill opportunities (granny flats or dual occupancies) may be possible in the unconstrained areas of Bellinger Keys.

Homes in this area are detached modern dwellings, with large front and rear yards and large lawns, mostly constructed from brick. There are a number of short cul-de-sacs in the area and most homes include a double garage.

### Infill Capacity

Block U5	Additional housing potential
High growth	119
Medium growth	<b>99</b>
Low growth	79

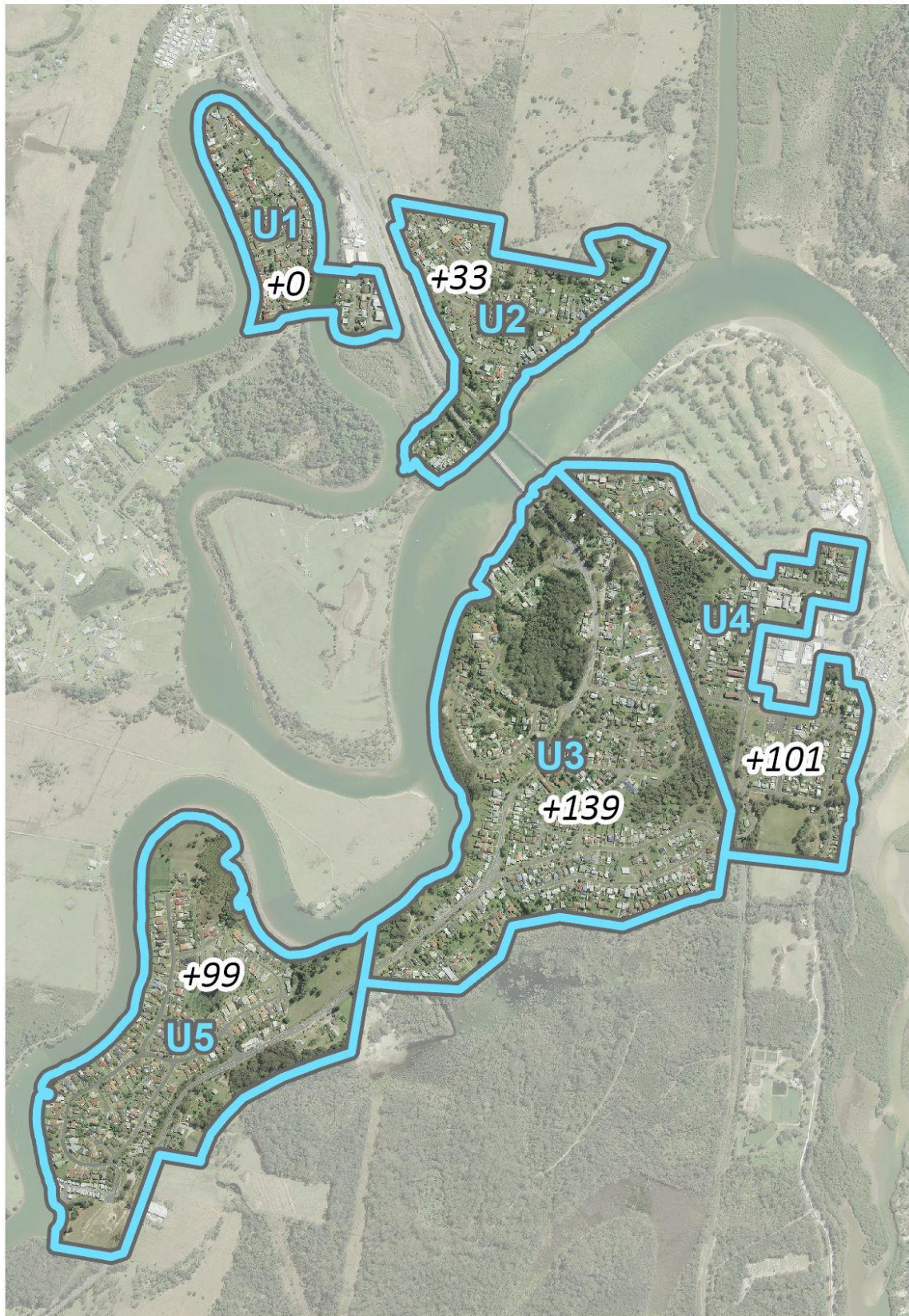
The infill potential of this block is rated 2 – Average. There are a number of good vacant development sites along Giinagay Way which could deliver housing diversity. This block is not walking distance to town and the residential area of Bellinger Keys offers relatively few infill opportunities.





## URUNGA - ESTIMATED INFILL HOUSING TO 2040

Estimated number of additional homes that could be built in R1 General Residential Zone\*



\* these estimates do not include new greenfield housing (homes in newly subdivided areas outside the current town boundaries)



## Mylestom, Repton, Raleigh

Mylestom is a coastal village with a relaxed atmosphere. High vacancy rates (approx. 26%) highlight the area's tourist/holiday home appeal. Traditionally, the area was known for small fibro beach homes. Redevelopment of these older homes and expansion of the small village northwards has provided a greater mix and variety of dwellings, including brick veneer homes, and larger, two (and a couple of three) storey homes. Common features include verandahs/balconies and decks and no or low front fences. Many lots in Mylestom are much smaller than elsewhere in the Shire (<450m<sup>2</sup>).

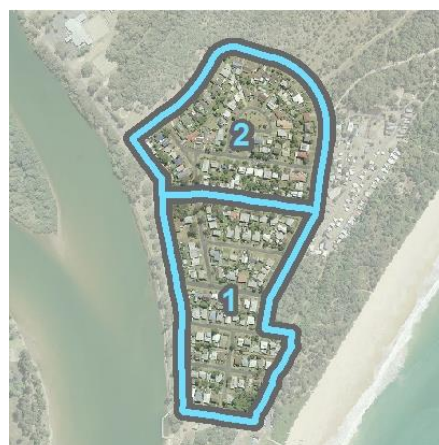
Repton is a very leafy village north of Mylestom and borders the Bongil Bongil National Park. Repton has good access to the Pacific Highway. Raleigh also has close access to the Pacific Highway and is located east of Bellingen, along the Bellinger River. Raleigh is a rural area, but contains a small hamlet of homes on suburban and rural-residential sized blocks.

The coastal villages are not currently connected to sewer, limiting their infill opportunities. A project to connect the villages to sewer may open up infill opportunities as summarised below.

The village area of Fernmount (area zoned R1 General Residential) has not been included in the study because there are currently no plans to connect the village to sewer.

### INFILL CAPACITY STUDY SUMMARY – COASTAL VILLAGES 2040

<b>TOTAL LAND AREA</b>	75 hectares
<b>ADDITIONAL HOUSING POTENTIAL</b>	+ 56 new dwellings
<b>HOUSING DIVERSITY POTENTIAL</b>	+ 26 separate houses + 30 granny flats, duplex and dual occupancy
<b>ADDITIONAL POPULATION PROJECTION</b>	+ 128 people (ASSUME AVG. HOUSEHOLD SIZE 2.3, VACANCY RATES UNKNOWN)
<b>INFILL HOUSING GROWTH TARGET 2040</b>	Subject to community consultation



MYLESTOM BLOCKS (R1 ZONE)



REPTON BLOCKS (R1 ZONE)



RALEIGH BLOCK (R1 ZONE)



## BLOCK M1

### Characteristics

Block M1 takes in the northern section of Mylestom village, north of Boronia Avenue. Mylestom is located between the ocean and the Bellingher River and is surrounded by environmentally sensitive land/coastal vegetation. This block is walking distance to Mylestom General Store and café and the Bowling Club. Mylestom offers good access to recreational activities and the nearest primary school is in Repton (approx. 2.5km).

The northern section of Mylestom contains larger properties than in the southern portion, because this area was subdivided later. Lot sizes north of Azalea Avenue measure between approx. 600-700m<sup>2</sup>, whilst lots south of Azalea Avenue and along Boronia and River Streets typically are less than 600m<sup>2</sup> in area.

This area has a mix of one and two storey homes (and one 3-storey house). Front verandas and decks are a common feature. A common house type is a two storey square home with a flat roof and veranda on the first floor, often with a garage or undercroft below. Whilst the shape of these homes is recognisable, all the homes vary in appearance, colour, materials and articulation. This block also contains a number of smaller cottages. Some redevelopment of the older homes is occurring slowly.

Mylestom is not connected to sewer, but the State Government has announced a grant to help connect the coastal villages to sewer. A sewer connection to Mylestom could enable infill development.

The northern-most section of this block is bushfire-prone. Mylestom village is not affected by the 1:100 (1%) level flood, however is mapped as affected by the Probable Maximum Flood. There are no heritage listings in this area.

### Infill Capacity

Block M1	Additional housing potential
High growth	14
Medium growth	<b>12</b>
Low growth	10

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average. Mylestom is a small village with smaller than Shire-average lot sizes. Much of Mylestom has already been built out.







## BLOCK M2

### Characteristics

This block makes up the southern side of Mylestom village, taking in properties south of Boronia Avenue. This block contains a general store and café and the Mylestom Hall. To the south is Alma Doepel Reserve with a playground, amenities block and beach access. Mylestom offers good access to recreational activities and the nearest primary school is in Repton (approx. 2.5km). Waterfront properties command beautiful views over the river.

This area contains small property sizes relative to most of the Shire – generally approximately 420m<sup>2</sup>, with some blocks having properties less than 400m<sup>2</sup> in size (e.g. along Winter and Johnson Avenues). These blocks are reflective of when the small coastal dwellings/modest beach homes close together and this character is recognisable today. Whilst the area does provide a mix of one and two storey homes (and a couple of three storey homes), of varying styles and materials, some smaller, older fibro and weatherboard homes remain.

Some redevelopment of the older homes is occurring. Modern dwellings are larger and generally feature coastal design through lightweight materials, flat or skillion rooves, and use of verandas and decks. The Bellingen Shire Development Control Plan contains character controls for this precinct in Mylestom.

Mylestom is not connected to sewer, but the State Government has announced a grant to help connect the coastal villages to sewer. A sewer connection to Mylestom could enable infill development.

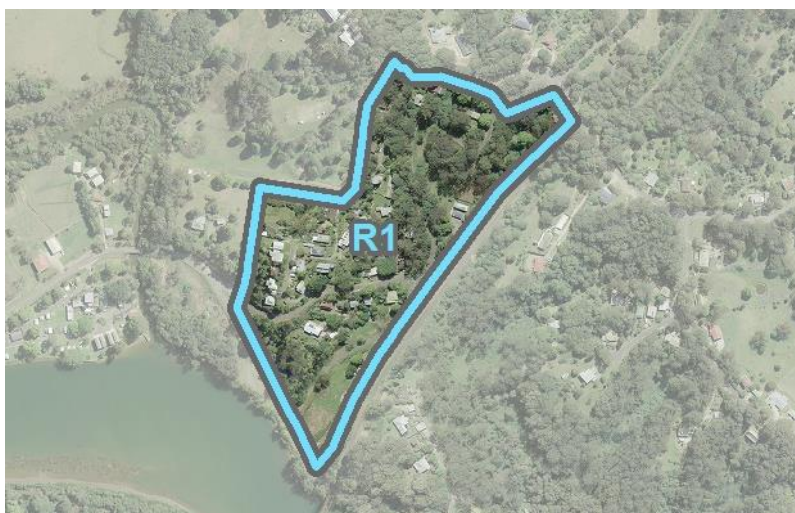
Mylestom village is not affected by the 1:100 level flood (1% AEP), however is mapped as affected by the Probable Maximum Flood. There are no heritage listings in this area and this area is not mapped as bushfire-prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block M2	Additional housing potential
High growth	12
Medium growth	<b>10</b>
Low growth	8

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average. Mylestom is a small village with smaller than Shire-average lot sizes. Much of Mylestom has already been built out.





## BLOCK R1

### Characteristics

This block is located in the small village of Repton, east of the Pacific Highway and north of the Bellinger River. This block extends from Perry's Road in the north to Mylestom Drive in the south. The block is bound by the railway line to the east and large lot properties to the west. Most of Repton is made up of Large-Lot Residential properties (R5 zoning), but two areas are zoned R1 General Residential. Repton was settled in the 1800s and used to be served by a pub, railway station, general store and post office. Repton today has a school (to the south) and is 10-15 minutes' drive from Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. This part of Repton has flood-free access to the Pacific Highway via Perry's Road.

Properties in this area are a mix of sizes, some less than 600m<sup>2</sup> (two properties are less than 400m<sup>2</sup>), and others measuring over 1400m<sup>2</sup>. The area is hilly and steep, and many properties are pole homes or split level. Some of the homes in the elevated parts of the block have excellent views. The area is very leafy and forested, and parts of the block are recognised koala habitat. The suburb of Repton borders the Bongil Bongil National Park. Most homes are surrounded by mature trees and vegetation. The lower area along Mylestom Drive is flood affected, but most of the block sits above flood levels. The block is classified as bushfire prone land.

Properties in Repton are not currently connected to sewer; however, the State Government has announced a grant to help connect the coastal villages to sewer. The first stage of this project will connect the riverfront areas to sewer and not properties within this block.

### Infill Capacity

Block R1	Additional housing potential
High growth	7
Medium growth	6
Low growth	5

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 – Below Average.







## BLOCK R2

### Characteristics

This block is located in south Repton and is made up of a small number of properties along Mylestom Drive and River Street. Repton Primary School is located within this block. Cultural plantings at the school are heritage listed. Most of Repton is made up of Large-Lot Residential properties (R5 zoning), but two areas are zoned R1 General Residential. Repton is 10-15 minutes' drive from Bellingen and Coffs Harbour.

Homes in this area have a generous front setback, mostly obscured from the road by vegetation. Properties along River Street are elevated above the road and most are accessed via a separate unformed road running parallel. Lot sizes are typically large, measuring approximately 900m<sup>2</sup>. Homes are a mixture of styles and ages. There are many mature trees within the precinct.

The lower-lying portions of this block are flood affected, sitting at or below the 1:100 (1%) flood level, whilst a number of other properties are affected by the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF). Mylestom Drive is also flood affected (1:100/1%) so access and egress into this precinct becomes cut off during floods. The northern and southern extremities of the block are exposed to estuary inundation risk due to sea level rise. Properties are not classified as bushfire prone.

Properties in Repton are not currently connected to sewer; however, the State Government has announced a grant to help connect the coastal villages to sewer. The first stage of this project will connect the riverfront areas to sewer.

### Infill Capacity

Block R2	Additional housing potential
High growth	5
Medium growth	4
Low growth	3

The infill potential of this block is rated 3 - Below Average.





## BLOCK RA1

### Characteristics

This block consists of the R1 (General Residential) zoned land within the small rural village of Raleigh. The block is located just off the Pacific Highway and is a 10-15 minute drive to Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. The block is bound by the Bellinger River to the west, Gurney St/Keevers Drive to the north, rural land to the east and large lot residential properties and environmentally sensitive land to the south.

Residential development runs along Giinagay Way through the block, with most lots being larger than 1400m<sup>2</sup>. A number of smaller lots with single homes sit along the riverfront. A large property on the eastern side of Giinagay Way is zoned for residential development and presents some opportunities for subdivision, but is currently being used for rural purposes, is significantly flood affected and is not yet connected to sewer. There are a mix of older and modern homes in this block. There are no heritage listings in the block. This area contains some non-residential development along the old highway, but the area is not served by a grocery or general store and there are no parks or public reserves. Raleigh Public School is located to the north, next to the Norco Dairy Factory.

Properties in Raleigh are not currently connected to sewer; however, the State Government has announced a grant to help connect the coastal villages to sewer. The first stages of this sewer project seek to connect the northern area of this block (north of the Pacific Highway intersection).

Raleigh is situated on a floodplain and whilst parts of this block sit above the 1:100 flood level, flooding does present a constraint on some properties. Small areas on the east and west extremities of the block are exposed to estuary inundation risks due to sea level rise. The block contains potential koala habitat and is surrounded by areas of significant vegetation. The southern part of the block is bushfire-prone.

### Infill Capacity

Block RA1	Additional housing potential
High growth	29
Medium growth	<b>24</b>
Low growth	19

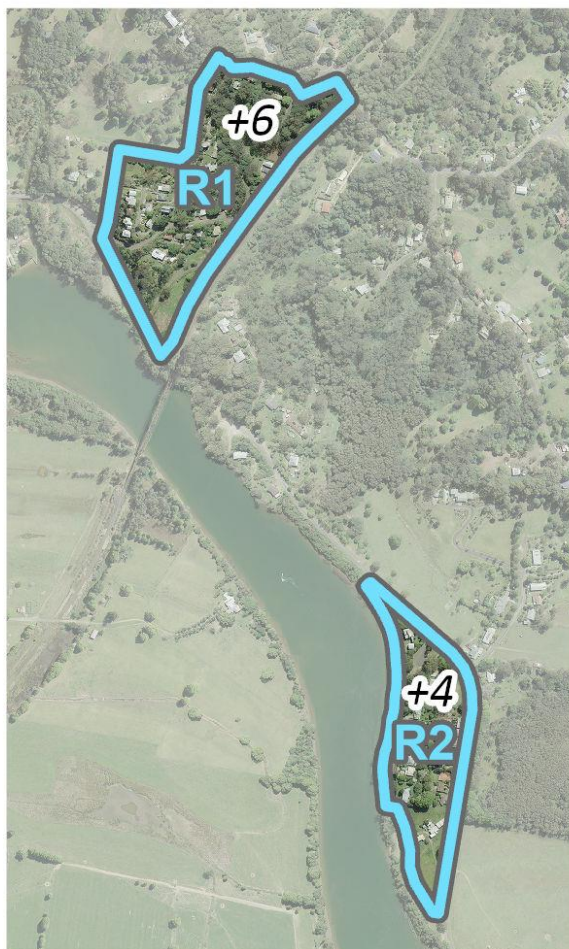
The infill potential of this block is rated 2 - Average.





## MYLESTOM, REPTON, RALEIGH - ESTIMATED INFILL HOUSING TO 2040

Estimated number of additional homes that could be built in R1 General Residential Zone\*



\* these estimates do not include new greenfield housing (homes in newly subdivided areas outside the current town boundaries)

## Recommendations: Infill Development in Bellingin Shire

### Infill capacity and history

Bellingin Shire has significant capacity for infill development to help meet future housing needs. The infill capacity model built by Bellingin Shire Council calculates almost 180 hectares of land is available within our towns to accommodate additional houses. The capacity model predicts 1015 infill homes could be delivered on this land by 2040 (under a medium/middle growth scenario). With good planning and implementation, this growth can be delivered to meet community housing needs in a manner sensitive to existing neighbourhoods.

Previous growth in Bellingin Shire has occurred mostly via the release of new residential land on the fringes of existing towns. For example much of North Bellingin, South-East Bellingin (housing around Crown Street), Bellinger Keys in Urunga and parts of south Dorriggo grew in this way from the 70s/80s population boom through to the early 2000s. Historically, some infill development has occurred in our towns, evident in Urunga's walk up flats and the villas, townhouses and subdivided dual occupancies in the larger towns of Bellingin and Urunga. This past infill development has occurred incrementally and without compromising the unique character of our Shire.

### Recommended growth approach

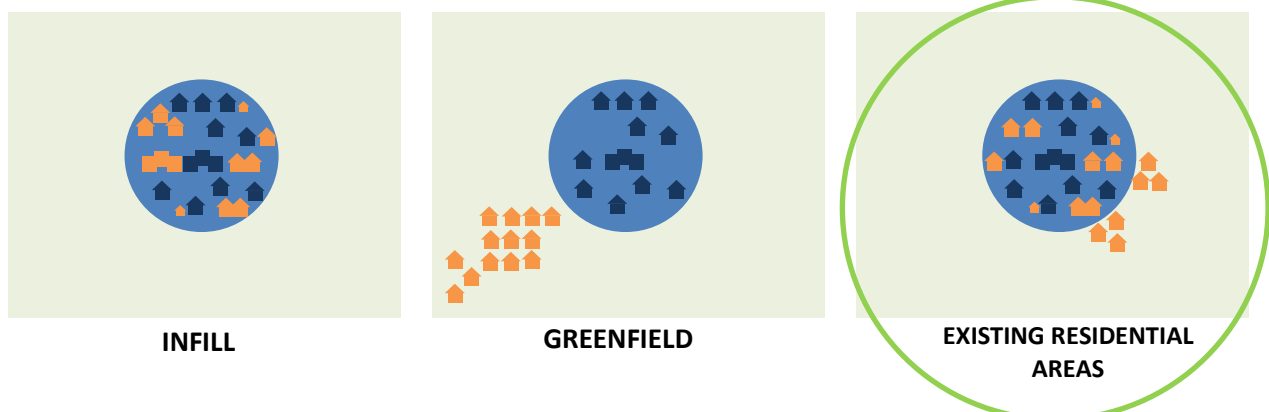
It is recommended that Bellingin Shire encourage infill development within its town areas.

Coupled with greenfield housing growth from already-zoned areas (e.g. the North Bellingin Urban Release Area, South Urunga and East Dorriggo) infill housing growth can provide for the likely housing needs of the population to 2040, without needing to rezone additional land on the outskirts of town (or outside existing town areas) for additional housing.

Encouraging growth in already-built up and residential-zoned areas means rural land and environmentally sensitive land on the outskirts of our towns will be protected from additional housing developments. This is consistent with the directions of the North Coast Regional Plan and accompanying Settlement Planning Guidelines.

### Recommended housing growth approach

To 2040, concentrate on infill development. Limit greenfield housing release to areas already zoned for residential development. Land should not be rezoned from rural to urban to meet housing needs to 2040, except in very limited circumstances, for small proposals located within close proximity to an existing town centre and where significant social benefits and minimal environmental impacts can be proven.



### Additional Recommendations:

#### 1. Community Engagement

This infill capacity study should form part of the community engagement for the Draft Bellingin Shire Housing Strategy. The study can be used to target residents of our town areas to gather feedback on

the predicted levels of growth in each area as well as priorities for infill development. The study can also be used in conversations about neighbourhood character and desired future character.

## **2. Housing Growth Targets**

This infill study can be used along with other studies and community feedback to establish housing growth targets for our Shire and town areas. These targets would sit within a Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy. Housing targets can provide signals to the development industry, stimulate new housing supply, and allow for efficient and proactive planning for infrastructure and service needs and upgrades and support grant and funding applications.

Monitoring of housing development relative to targets can also help illustrate the effectiveness (or otherwise) of different policy levers and directions and can be used to limit development beyond target levels (as housing delivery approaches target growth, housing needs, strategies and policies should undergo major reviews). Planning strategies and controls need to be kept up to date with changes in order to stay relevant and best provide for community needs and aspirations.

The North Coast Regional Plan contains projected dwellings to 2036 that can be construed as targets, however these figures (+459 new dwellings to 2036) simply reflect continuation of recent low growth development trends which have contributed to issues such as housing unaffordability for local residents and possible predicted population decline. It is recommended that Council and the community as part of the Draft Housing Strategy provide a local perspective and aspire to an agreed level of growth that will deliver social, environmental and economic outcomes for all residents.

## **3. Infill Housing – Good Design Guidelines and Controls**

We need to plan infill housing well to manage any future potential cumulative impacts and allay community concerns. Council should continue to investigate and implement ways to ensure housing development meets the changing needs of our community whilst remaining sensitive to local character. This includes modelling of possible infill development outcomes, development of best practice design guidelines and examples and changing planning controls to ensure good outcomes.

Council should ensure promotion of design processes and quality design outcomes are included in Local Strategic Planning Statements and supported by place-based Character Statements. In particular the community have told us they value green space and landscaped area, retention of trees and planting of more trees, sustainable house design and on-site parking. Bellingen Shire has a strong existing creative and design culture that should continue to be reflected in the built environment, retaining and enhancing what is different and special about our places. Facilitating well-designed infill development may also mean process changes, staff training, provision of incentives and offering additional design advice services or education campaigns.

## **4. Infrastructure Planning**

Housing growth must be supported by infrastructure – roads, parks, water and sewer connections and capacity as well as a range of services from waste collection to community services. Infrastructure network and service plans should be drafted for infill focus areas to ensure predicted growth is supported by adequate infrastructure.

Infrastructure plans can inform conversations with the community about levels of service, funding mechanisms and innovations. Understanding future growth patterns and targeted growth areas can help direct efficient spending of limited infrastructure funds.

## **5. Infill Focus Areas**

This infill capacity study illustrates that some areas have more opportunities to provide infill housing than others. These areas should be designated ‘infill focus areas’ in a Draft Housing Strategy. This could provide a signal to spur additional housing development in these areas, to better meet the housing needs of the community. These areas may see more change than others but could also become the focus for development incentives, desired future character statements/planning design guidance and infrastructure and sustainability improvements.



The areas of highest infill potential according to this infill capacity study are as follows:

- Block D3 in Dorriggo
- Block B4 in Bellingen
- Block U3 in Urunga
- Block U4 in Urunga

These areas have been mapped – see page 42. Additional and more-detailed modelling should be undertaken for these areas, for example taking into account infrastructure availability (ease of water and sewer connections) to further understand and address infill development barriers and inform infrastructure planning and service upgrades/provision.

## 6. Key Sites

Key sites are sites with considerable infill potential, and generally the potential to deliver greater housing diversity, for example townhouses, flats or small villa development. These sites are generally well-located close to shops, services and open space and with design guidance could offer a number of quality homes, supporting community wellbeing. Key sites recognised in planning policies could be accompanied by a set of design principles and there is the possibility of including incentives should these principles be observed. Key sites may offer good yields and present development partnership opportunities.

### ○ List of Potential Key Sites

#### **Dorriggo**

- 85 Hickory Street Dorriggo, Lot 2 DP 628931 – Former Bowling Club

#### **Bellingen**

- 6 Bowra Street Bellingen, Lot 570 DP 755557 – Former Bowling Club
- 15 Watson Street Bellingen, Lot 1 DP 863743 – Former Aged Care Units Bellorana

#### **Urunga**

- 4121 Giinagay Way Urunga, Lot A DP 104582 – Vacant Lot, western side of Giinagay Way, north of Bellinger Keys
- 4 Riverwood Place Urunga, Lot 130 DP 755552 – Gundamain Caravan Park and Manufactured Home Estate – retain home estate as affordable housing and potential to redevelop vacant land fronting Giinagay Way
- 4160 Giinagay Way, Lot 2 DP 530493 – large lot with single house. Property has frontage to Giinagay Way and Hillside Drive

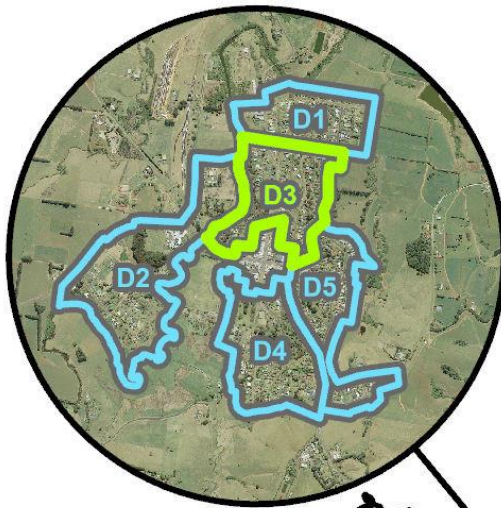
#### **Town Centre Sites**

Potential shop-top housing

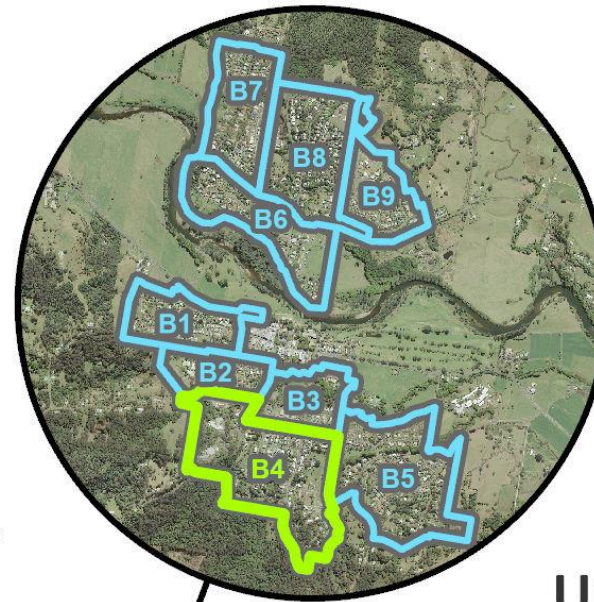
- 77-79 Hickory Street Dorriggo, Lot 4 Sec 10 DP 758357, Lot 1 DP 1039586 – Dorriggo adjacent to Coronation / Pioneer Log Park
- 21-23 Morgo Street Urunga, Lot 1 Sec 2 DP 759026, Lot 9 Sec 2 DP 759026 & Lot 10 Sec 2 DP 759026, Vacant land south of the Ocean View Hotel.



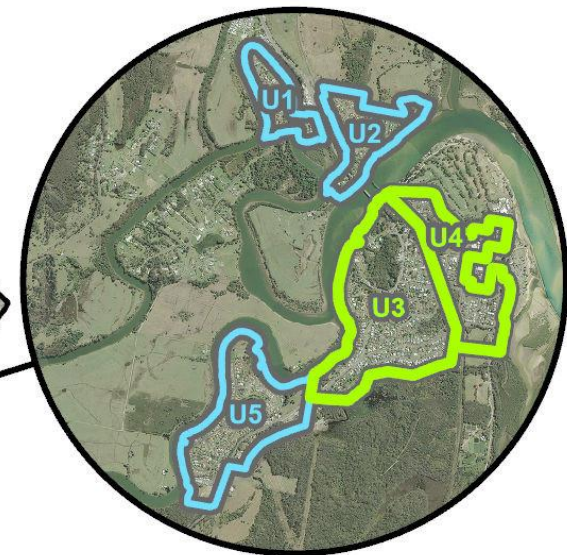
## Dorrigo



## Bellingen



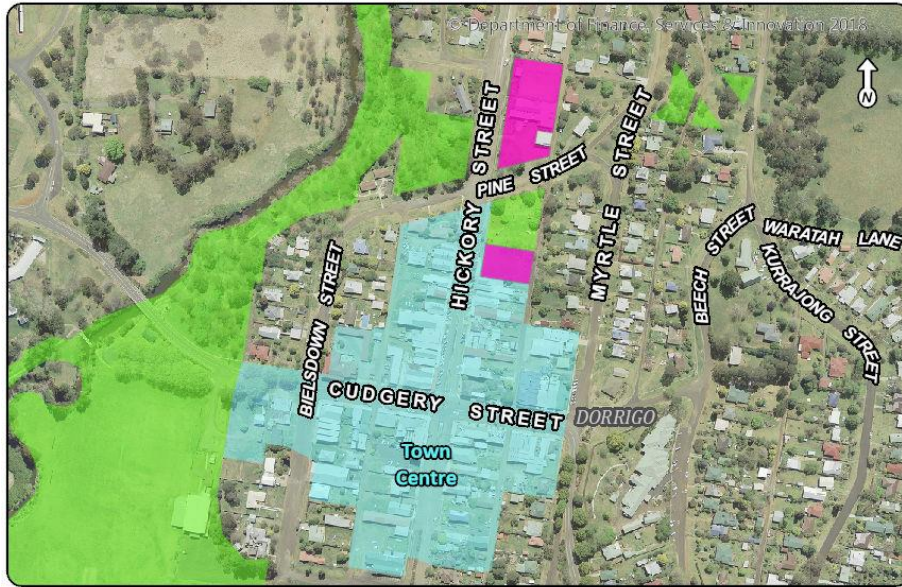
## Urunga



 Infill Focus Areas



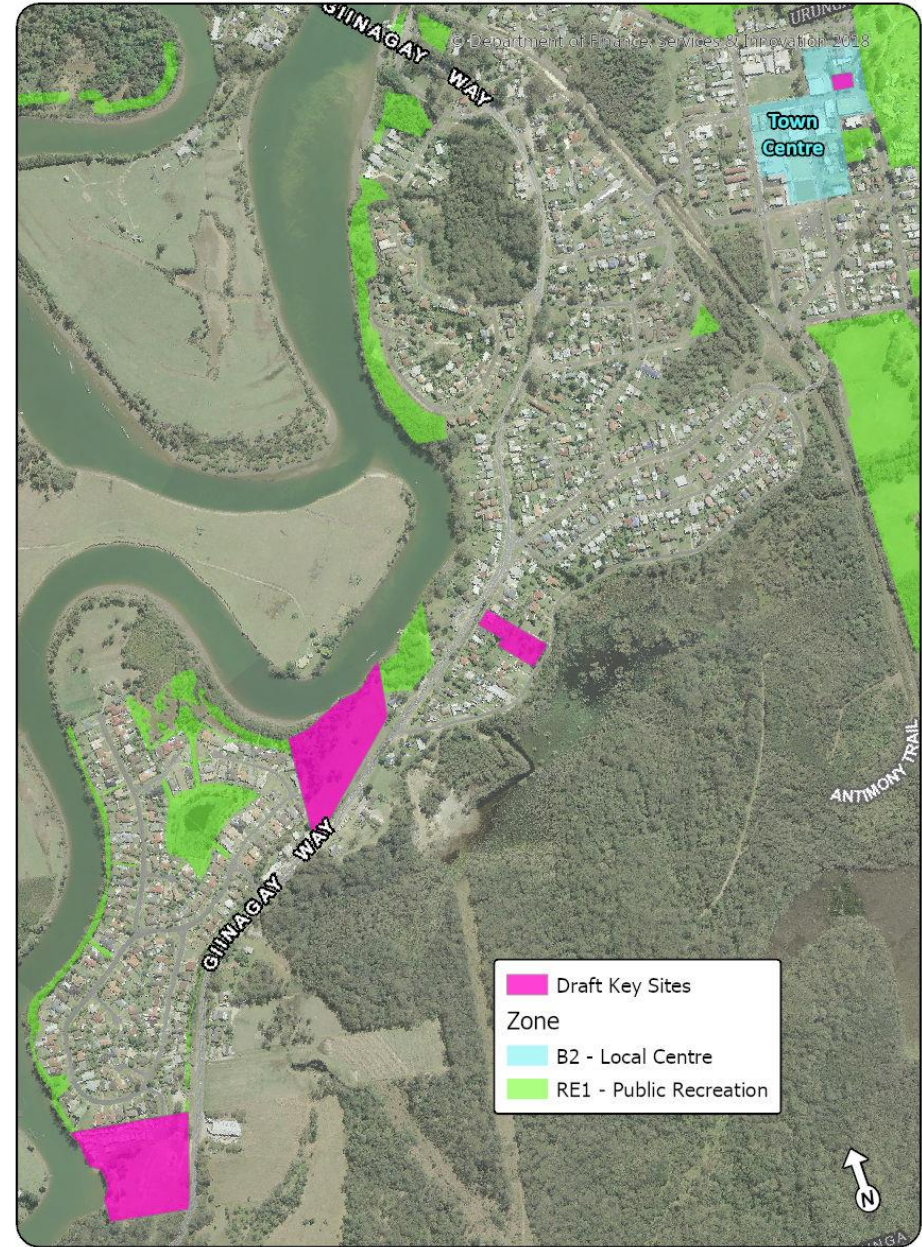
## Dorrigo



## Bellingen



## Urunga





## Infill testing methodology

### How did we work out the additional housing potential in our neighbourhoods?

#### Infill Housing Model - Summary

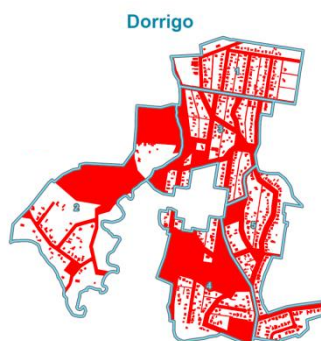
**Step 1:** Separate towns into different areas/blocks



**Step 2:** Exclude non-developable area:  
e.g. roads, flood-prone areas, schools,  
existing development



**Step 3:** Identify potentially developable  
land in each block (properties that could  
accommodate infill dwelling/s)



**Step 4:** For each block, referencing  
potentially available land and lot sizes  
input assumptions into model  
(estimate proportion of likely infill  
development to 2040 for each block)



**Step 5:** Model calculates/forecasts  
number of additional dwellings for  
each block.

Block X	
% of properties	Infill Development Type
80%	None/Stay the same
5%	Granny flats
10%	Dual occupancies
5%	Multi-dwelling housing



#### Detailed Methodology

Estimating future housing supply potential generally focuses on greenfield land only, estimating how many houses could fill an area of undeveloped land. Estimating how many additional houses to expect in already developed areas and established neighbourhoods in town is much harder and less frequently attempted. This is because properties in existing neighbourhoods are generally a mix of sizes (rather than the standard assumed size across greenfield housing estates), have different constraints to development and can be re-developed in numerous different ways, re-subdivided in some cases or (as in most cases) not be re-developed at all.

The multitude of different landowners in existing neighbourhoods makes predicting future development much harder than for greenfield areas, which typically have one or few landowners/developers focused on achieving a planned outcome. Infill development happens much more incrementally but still requires good planning, to

ensure that the housing built meets community needs, is supported by adequate infrastructure and services, maintains local character and manages any cumulative impacts.

Bellingen Shire Council has built a model to better understand what to expect in terms of redevelopment potential in our town areas, recognising the community want to see more high-quality infill housing. Reducing barriers to infill housing, developing sound planning controls and planning for support infrastructure and services are all easier tasks, after understanding where infill housing can, and is likely to, occur and how much new housing we can expect or should plan for. These results are not set-in-stone and rely on changes in the local housing market (a transition from recent very low housing supply growth), demographic changes in some areas, some changes to planning controls and possibly changes to financing/feasibility barriers. Growth as described may take longer to be realised or total growth may be lower than predicted. Conversely if infill development takes off and planning controls do not set upper limits or strategy is not reviewed as planned, growth could occur in excess of these results/housing targets.

This model has been developed using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping technology and Microsoft Excel.

The first stage of infill capacity modelling looked at assessing what land was available for infill development. The second stage modelled potential growth scenarios for land with development potential.

The growth model relies on a number of assumptions detailed further below. Whilst the data obtained from the model is neighbourhood-specific and fine-grain, it is important to remember that the model provides estimates only and cannot be taken as development advice as it does not account for site-specific opportunities or constraints.

## **METHODOLOGY – BELLINGEN SHIRE INFILL CAPACITY MODEL**

### **STAGE 1 – IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY DEVELOPABLE LAND**

#### **Objective:**

*This mapping and spatial analysis process will identify:*

- 1. The total land area of our towns that is zoned R1 General Residential (greenfield/urban release areas are excluded)*
- 2. What land is excluded by identified constraints (excluded land is not developable for housing, and includes roads, schools, hospitals and aged care facilities, parks, flood-prone land and lots smaller than 400m<sup>2</sup>)*
- 3. How much land is already developed; and*
- 4. How much potentially developable area there is left and how many properties contain potentially developable land*
- 5. What size the potentially developable properties are*

*These calculations will then be used, along with other GIS datasets and aerial photography, to inform assumptions and model growth scenarios and development outcomes.*

#### **Method:**

- 1. Separate Town Areas into Neighbourhood Blocks and Properties. Break R1 General Residential zoned areas of Dorrigo, Bellingen, Urunga, Mylestom, Repton and Raleigh into blocks grouped by common geography. Exclude town centres (zoned B2 Local Centre/B1 Neighbourhood Centre), R5 Large Lot Residential Zone and any greenfield housing areas (R1 zoned areas not subdivided or developed yet).*
- 2. Create Properties layer, showing adjoining land parcels in the same ownership as one entity (one property). This is to reflect cases where a dwelling is located over two land parcels (held in the same ownership) or where multiple small land parcels located side by side under the same ownership make up one property.*



3. Calculate area potentially available for further development by excluding non-developable land (Total Development Land)

Exclude:

- i. roads,
- ii. land not zoned R1,
- iii. parks,
- iv. properties containing hospitals/schools/aged care facilities
- v. properties with strata-title units and community title common property
- vi. flood prone land (1:100) (do not exclude entire property based on flood affectation, only exclude the portion of land that is flood-affected)

NOTES: FLOOD AFFECTED LAND IN DORRIGO: There is no extent mapping of flood affected land for Dorriggo, this means flood prone land cannot be excluded in Dorriggo. Results for blocks potentially flood affected will be notated with this proviso and caution needs to be applied to interpreting these results – as it may appear that more land is available for infill than actually exists due to potential flooding.

Other constraints such as heritage, bushfire and slope can constrain (but not always preclude) infill development across all areas of the Shire. Areas with significant constraints (including low-lying and potentially flood-affected land at Dorriggo) will be separately notated so growth scenario assumptions take these non-excluded constraints into account.

4. By block, group properties into the following lot sizes (m<sup>2</sup>):

- i. Small >400 and <600
- ii. Medium >600 and < 1400
- iii. Large >1400

To account for spatial shape irregularities (as data being used are not the registered land area) a buffer needs to be applied to ensure properties are placed in the correct group. The grouping of lot sizes with buffer are (m<sup>2</sup>):

- i. Small >396 and < 606
- ii. Medium >606 and <1414
- iii. Large >1414

4a. Exclude Lot areas measuring <400m<sup>2</sup>. For the purposes of the infill capacity modelling these blocks will be excluded as they are generally considered too small in the current Bellingen Shire context to accommodate additional dwellings. (Some larger lots may be affected by flooding or other exclusions and after excluding flood affected area the resulting unaffected area may be too small to allow for additional infill development).

5. Calculate Existing Developed Land (in m<sup>2</sup>). Calculate roof area of dwellings only, and exclude outbuildings (i.e. any roof area measuring < 60m<sup>2</sup>). All buildings with a roof area < 60m<sup>2</sup> are assumed to be outbuildings only and not dwellings. Outbuildings are not considered an impediment to infill redevelopment – i.e. they are easily demolished.

5a. Exclude roof areas for non-residential development (land not zoned R1, aged care facilities, hospitals, schools, churches, shops etc)

6. Calculate Potential Developable Land - The Potential Developable Land area is calculated by the following equation:

$$\text{Total\_Development\_Land (minus) Existing\_Developed\_Land}$$

The potentially developable area calculation is a measure of land available for development, but other constraints such as heritage or vehicle access or factors such as economic feasibility could mean development may not physically occur so the model must be used as an approximation for planning purposes only.

## STAGE 2 – PREDICT INFILL HOUSING GROWTH TO 2040

1. Collate GIS Property Data into Excel Spreadsheet, group into each town area and block.

2. Understanding that each potentially developable property could redevelop in a number of different ways (or most likely not redevelop/change at all) set up columns and equations to reflect future development possibilities (see assumptions on dwelling types below).

The following dwelling types/development outcomes were identified with assumptions about the likelihood of these development types occurring in a certain locality forming the basis of the modelling. The height limit of 10m Shire-wide was assumed to remain. It was assumed that high land values preclude amalgamation of lots. Properties with development potential as highlighted in the infill mapping process were assessed for their potential to accommodate additional development which was fed into the model.

NO CHANGE = +0	+ 0 DWELLINGS
SECONDARY DWELLING	+ 1 DWELLINGS
DUAL OCCUPANCY	+ 1 DWELLING
(S) SMALL MULTI-DWELLING = 4	+ 3 DWELLINGS
(M) MEDIUM MULTI-DWELLING = 8 DW	+ 7 DWELLINGS
(L) LARGE MULTI-DWELLING	+ 11 DWELLINGS
(S) SMALL FLATS = 6 DW	+ 5 DWELLINGS
(M) MEDIUM FLATS = 10 DW	+ 9 DWELLINGS
(L) LARGE FLATS = 16 DW	+ 15 DWELLINGS

It was assumed that each property contained 1 existing dwelling, consistent with Lake Macquarie Council's Infill Potential Study precedent. Therefore development of a dual occupancy on a property results in one additional dwelling being counted (in addition to the existing which is assumed retained). For multi-dwelling or flat development the existing dwelling is not counted as it is assumed it is replaced (a multi-dwelling redevelopment of 4 dwellings is counted as a net gain of 3 dwellings as the existing dwelling is replaced but is not considered net gain). As housing markets change, regular modelling and review of assumptions is necessary as well as tracking of housing growth as it happens.

3. Undertake block-by-block (neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood) analysis to estimate what percentage of properties in each block are likely to redevelop to provide some form of infill housing and estimate what types of infill housing most likely in different areas. Assumptions have been made at a neighbourhood/block level, and include assessment of some individual larger properties that appear to have significant infill potential (likely development scenarios have been predicted for these, or existing development approvals have been used). Growth assumptions are based on the following factors:

- Likelihood/market demand for different housing types due to 2040 (high-level demographic & feasibility assessment)
- Size of lots/properties and existing development patterns
- Road layouts and housing configuration on lot (e.g. laneway access or room for an access handle were seen as offering additional housing potential)
- Age of properties
- Vacant lots
- Land constraints such as slope, access, vegetation, heritage, bushfire
- Development Application and subdivision approvals and recent (last 10 years) development activity
- Council Staff knowledge of local areas and common/suitable development types
- Aerial photography and Street View

In these assumptions, the majority of properties in each neighbourhood are assumed to not redevelop and experience no change in number of dwellings – although the amount of no change varies with each neighbourhood. Overall, on average it is assumed 75% of properties will experience no change and 25% will undergo some change (which may be the development of a granny flat for example). Some current planning controls were factored in to the assumptions – for example 18% of potentially developable land was subtracted to account for setback requirements. However density localities and other DCP controls were not modelled.

After inputting estimated redevelopment types and proportions, the model calculates the number of additional dwellings expected. The model run was considered the middle/medium growth scenario. A high growth scenario was then extrapolated to result in +20% of predicted additional dwellings whilst a low growth scenario reflected -20% of predicted dwelling growth.

## Homes for Our Future Discussion Paper Extract - Choices for Growth

### DIRECTIONS/OPTIONS FOR GROWTH

**It can be hard to talk about growth**, as it affects people and places differently and there can be winners and losers and positive and negative impacts. Sometimes growth can happen too quickly, and sometimes growth doesn't happen at all (and population decreases). All growth scenarios (including low or no growth scenarios) come with positive aspects and a complex set of consequences to consider. All neighbourhoods change over time and planning for the future using business-as-usual approach does not mean things in the Shire will stay the same or environmental impacts will be avoided. As a community we want to be prepared for change and to be having conversations about how best to influence this change in a positive, affirming manner.

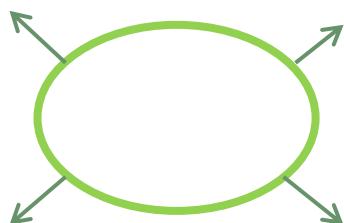
#### **What do you want the Shire to look like 20 - 30 years' time?**

What is really important that we must try to keep? What can we change for the better? What will we need in the future? What will our children and their children need? How can we ensure managing change happens fairly?

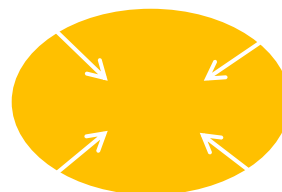
It is often easy to say what we don't want (which is important), but strategy is most effective when it is working towards achieving something we do want – shaping change and working towards goals rather than trying to prevent change or reactively manage issues. We don't need to accept rampant growth with negative environmental impacts – but we do need to be realistic in what is achievable, embrace some changes and understand what trends are occurring and how best we can address these trends and challenges proactively and creatively.

In order for Council to work with stakeholders and the community to draft a good Growth Management Strategy, we want to know how the community wants to grow. The following pages discuss various ways we could choose to grow and the benefits, trade-offs and environmental impacts of each of these options. Your preferred options can vary by area (a different approach on the plateau to the seaboard for example) or you may think combining options would be a good idea – let us know what you think!

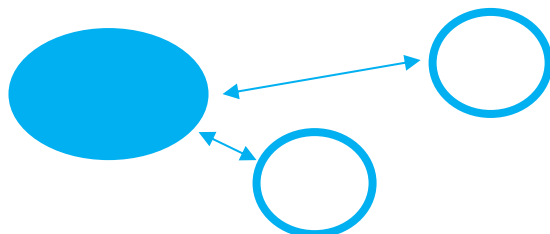
### CHOICES FOR GROWTH - SUMMARY



**DIRECTION 1: GROW OUTWARDS**



**DIRECTION 2: GROW IN EXISTING TOWNS**



**DIRECTION 3: GROW IN NEW AREAS**



**DIRECTION 4: STRICTLY LIMIT GROWTH**

## Direction 1 – GROW OUTWARDS



### What would this look like?

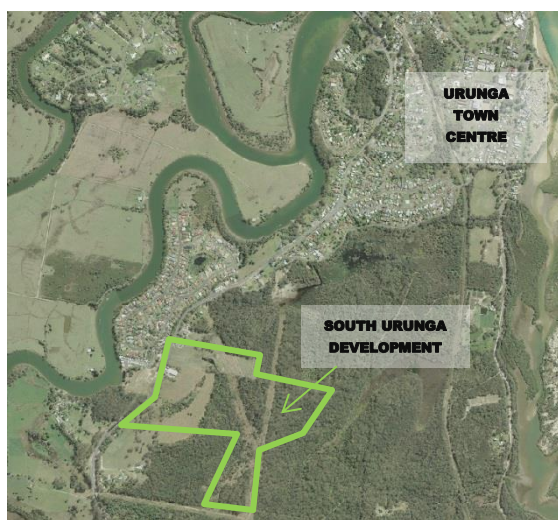
Growing outwards is expanding upon our existing towns by providing new houses on former rural or vegetated land on the fringes of existing built-up areas. This is a type of Greenfield Development. This option would be consistent with past suburban growth patterns in the Shire - all the main towns have expanded along their fringes during growth periods. There is residentially zoned land already available on the fringes of Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga (as recommended by the 2007 Growth Management Strategy) so more housing on the fringes will likely occur over the short-medium term. In the medium-longer term, we would like to know how far outwards you think our towns could and should grow.

### Benefits & Opportunities

- Popular with families with young children, first homebuyers and people who want a new, modern home
- Can be more affordable as houses provided on cheaper fringe land (formerly rural)
- Larger residential estates often provide new infrastructure e.g. playgrounds, footpaths
- Many homes can be built relatively quickly
- Not many neighbours to oppose development – more certainty for developers, quicker approval and construction processes (complying development pathway often an option)
- Can provide critical mass for environmental innovation, new infrastructure and services – e.g. purple pipe grey water recycling, upgraded community facilities
- If contained to fringes of existing towns with good links (especially pedestrian and bicycle links), can provide benefits similar to infill development – walkability, more people visiting local businesses

### Trade-offs & Challenges

- More tree removal & land clearing required than infill – impacts on biodiversity
- Higher likelihood than infill of impacting Aboriginal heritage (objects and places)
- Environmental land constraints could prevent further expansion (unless acceptance of greater environmental impacts).
- Land constraints (e.g. steep land) could impact viability
- Trend in newer master planned suburbs to provide homogenous (or very similar) housing products, limiting housing choice
- Costs of providing (and future maintenance of) new infrastructure could be higher than servicing infill development
- Fragmented land ownership and land banking making development difficult to realise
- Likely to be more reliant on private car transport (unless located within walking/cycling distance of town centres).
- Impact upon farmland and scenic rural landscapes from spreading suburban development
- Greenfield development with environmentally conscious features or technology are more costly upfront, therefore developers may pass on costs and such areas less affordable than conventional subdivisions.

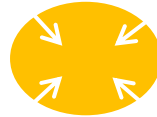


### EXAMPLE OF GROWING OUTWARDS

Aerial photo of Urunga and surrounds including approximate area of proposed South Urunga Greenfield development (highlighted).



## Direction 2 – GROW IN EXISTING TOWNS



### What would this look like?

Concentrating growth in existing centres means building more houses in existing built up areas, as opportunities arise. This could involve building upon vacant lots, adding an extra home in a backyard (e.g. a granny flat), building new homes facing laneways, splitting large homes into two or more homes and in some cases redeveloping properties into low-rise (2-3 storey) townhouses or flats. This is called infill development. This option means more houses close to existing shops, services and jobs. Infill development can take many different forms, and can be different in different areas.

### Benefits & Opportunities

- Provides housing choices –different housing types and housing sizes
- Appeals to younger people. Suited to starting new households e.g. moving out of home. Also provides downsizing options for older people
- Attractive for renting
- Extra housing can be provided by landowners, do not necessarily need developers or consortiums to make extra housing
- Rural lands (food producing) and scenic rural landscapes protected as housing will not spread into these areas
- Supports walking and cycling. Reduces car trips to local destinations
- Benefits to local businesses – more people to use local services and buy local goods
- Provide catalyst for new and improved services and infrastructure in town - e.g. medical facilities, schools, parks, community facilities, playgrounds, car parks
- Can be controlled to be in keeping with the existing scale of homes in neighbourhoods.
- Efficient infrastructure spending – rather than extending new services into new areas
- Less land clearing required than for other options, environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat protected
- Less isolation risks due to natural hazards
- Smaller housing types provided by infill (e.g. granny flats, townhouses, units) can be more affordable – however it depends what type of housing, how large and what specification they are built to and marketing.

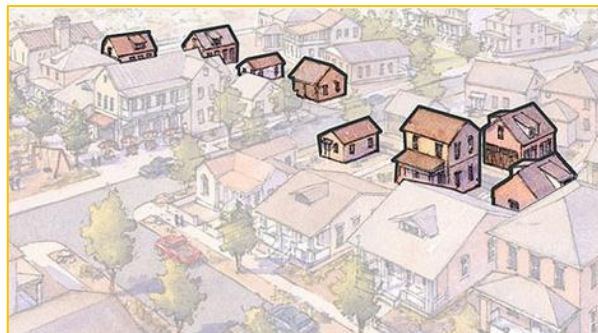
### Trade-offs & Challenges

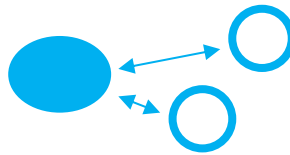
- Can be controversial – sometimes neighbours do not want extra development next to them
- Neighbourhoods become busier and noisier as more people move in
- People are living closer together (however, new greenfield housing estates are also providing smaller lots and homes closer together)
- Some loss of privacy and some loss of sunshine, views potentially impacted
- Smaller backyards, some loss of urban vegetation
- More people parking on streets and more traffic
- Need design knowledge, skills and controls - Poor quality designs can give infill developments a bad reputation (i.e. cause overshadowing, excess noise)
- Infrastructure may require upgrading (e.g. sewer, water extensions)
- Constrained by existing development – need bespoke design response to challenges
- Often slower approval and construction processes
- Development that is not climate sensitive and increases hard surfaces can create heat island effect and stormwater issues
- Risks of gentrification, unaffordable housing, in high demand/high value areas if luxury housing provided and more affordable homes/smaller housing types not provided

Graphic showing example of low-rise infill development could look like – suited to regional towns. More housing in towns does not necessarily mean high-rise buildings.

Source:

<https://anniekoh.tumblr.com/post/50101952799/infill>





## Direction 3 – GROW IN NEW AREAS

### What would this look like?

Growing in new places would mean establishing new suburbs or development areas outside of existing townships. Unlike Direction 1 – Expand Outwards, new growth areas need not be located directly adjoining the main towns. This could involve rezoning rural or environmental areas to residential or rural-residential and changing the character of these areas to provide for more housing. This would be a type of greenfield development. New infrastructure would need to be constructed to service any new residential areas.

Policies allowing for substantial additional housing growth or subdivision in our rural areas could also fall within this option as currently residential growth in rural areas is restricted. This type of policy change would allow for opportunistic housing growth as opposed to coordinated residential land release (greenfield).

### Benefits & Opportunities

- Provides additional housing supply to assist affordability
- Homes could be provided cheaper than other areas (on cheaper former rural land)
- New homes popular with families with young children, first homebuyers and people who want modern housing
- No or few existing neighbours to object
- Residents of new areas would benefit from new infrastructure, new roads, parks, footpaths etc.
- Could provide new cafes, shops etc to support new residents
- Can provide critical mass for environmental innovation, new infrastructure and services
- New development estates could attract new residents to the area, stimulate population growth with flow-on benefits to local economy
- Could provide opportunities for people to pass land and homes onto children – allowing more housing as form of farm succession planning
- Growth in rural areas could provide opportunities for new farmers – small lot farmers
- Landowners benefit from higher land values due to uplift in development potential in new growth areas

### Trade-offs & Challenges

- Most tree removal and land clearing of all options to provide for homes and bushfire protection - impacts on biodiversity
- Impacts on farmland, increase probability of conflicts between new residents and farmers, less local food produced
- Could raise surrounding rural land values and lead to speculative buying and selling and ad-hoc development outside of towns
- Risks associated with extra residents in areas isolated by floods, bushfire-prone land
- High costs to provide new/extend/maintain infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer) to service new area
- More reliance on private car use. More commuting to jobs, traffic congestion.
- Escape expenditure to Coffs Harbour or Nambucca if these are closer centres – less support for local businesses.
- Larger shops (e.g. convenience anchors like a supermarket) could negatively impact existing town centres by drawing people, liveliness and spending away from existing activity hubs.
- High likelihood of impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage, as many areas previously undeveloped for housing
- New greenfield areas would require rezoning of land, technical and planning studies and long approval processes – not likely to supply housing in the short term
- No way to capture windfall gains to landowners for rezoning of areas to pay for public improvements.
- Trend in newer master planned suburbs to provide homogenous (or very similar) housing products, limiting housing choice
- Environmental land constraints could prevent further expansion (unless acceptance of greater environmental impacts)

Examples of recent new growth areas on the North Coast include:

- Kingscliff, Kings Forest & Pottsville, Tweed
- West Byron, Byron Bay
- Cumbalum, Ballina
- Sapphire Beach, Sandy Beach, Boambee East & Rural-residential at Bonville, Coffs Harbour
- Thrumster & Ascot Park Port Macquarie

## Direction 4 – STRICTLY LIMIT GROWTH



### What would this look like?

This option would mean beyond already approved growth plans (e.g. South Urunga), new housing development would not be actively encouraged. Housing supply would continue to slow. Population in the short-medium term could grow slowly or decline slightly and over the longer term could decline. Bellingen has strong history of environmental activism and no growth/population decline may align with some interpretations of deep environmental protection viewpoints. In considering this history of environmental activism however it is important to note that the influx of environmentally-conscious residents in the 70s and 80s also coincided with the largest population growth the Shire has experienced in recent times. This option is not preferred by Council at this time. That said there may be alternative funding systems/methods of providing for community needs that could be considered and incorporated into Council's strategic planning that are aligned with a more low-growth/stabilised population view. There may also be policy learning's from a future focusing on greater environmental protection (considered the primary motivation for people who want less growth) that could be incorporated into a Draft GMS.

### Benefits & Opportunities

- Reduced development pressure, less impact on natural environment given limited expansion into natural or undeveloped areas
- Opportunities for increased self-sufficiency
- Potentially stronger community ties due to greater communal responsibility for services and infrastructure
- Lower-consumption based economy, potentially lower resource use (depending on the habits of the population) having environmental benefits
- Less reliance on government (as government may be unable to fund extra services in a population decrease scenario)
- Lower house prices in medium-longer term if population decreases (less competition for homes)
- Retention of local character in short term (but community and character will change over medium-long term)

### Trade-offs & Challenges

- Lack of housing choices remains
- Could increase unaffordability and inequality if housing prices stay high in high demand areas
- Very difficult to limit growth if market factors intervene and development and affordability pressures compound – e.g. Byron Bay attempts to limit growth led to higher house prices and subsequent affordability pressures led to greenfield housing plans (West Byron)
- Likely to require very restrictive planning controls – provide limits to what people can do with their land and properties
- Difficult position to implement – more restrictive planning controls and limits require more emphasis on enforcement - difficult in context of contracting government services

- Very low to no population growth and population decrease becomes a much more likely probability
- Could reduce investor confidence and limited new investment.
- May need to pay more for services and infrastructure maintenance, renewal, improvement
- May need to accept lower levels of services
- May need to travel further for services and jobs – environmental impacts due to greater car reliance and emissions from transport
- Less people to buy from local businesses
- Reduced levels of service, infrastructure maintenance could have safety implications.
- Services will not grow and may contract depending on population trends (e.g. police, hospitals, banks, schools, community facilities, sporting teams)
- Loss of associated jobs if services contract or businesses close, could lead to higher unemployment, brain drain to areas of greater job opportunities
- Lower population and low growth, less justification to receive competitive grant funding
- Standards of living could change (safety, health, education)
- Older housing stock could fall into disrepair
- People could choose to move to less restrictive areas – loss of community ties
- This option not consistent with existing Council or State Government policy
- Will not result in local government financial sustainability – reduced level of government service provision, possible amalgamation pressure
- Unchartered territory, not mainstream approach in Australian economy where growth is rewarded with infrastructure investment, will need to explore other funding models for services (may not be tested)

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# **Attachment 3 – Infill Design Study – Background Report for Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020- 2040**

*Delivering Housing Diversity for Our Community*

**How do we ensure good quality housing and  
protect local character?**

**Design Principles for infill development in Bellingen Shire**



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What is good design? .....	4
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## INFILL HOUSING SERIES

#1 Infill Capacity Study – How many additional houses can we accommodate in our towns?

#2 Infill Design Study – How do we ensure good quality housing and protect local character?

### A note on data

This document is a draft for public comment. It should not be used by anyone as a basis for investment or other private decision-making purposes about land purchase, land use or development proposals. The data provided in this publication is of a general nature and should not be construed as specific advice or relied upon in lieu of appropriate professional advice. This study contains hypothetical development designs intended for discussion purposes only, to inform a Shire-Wide Housing Strategy. Data or designs cannot be used to assume site-specific development potential, and figures referred to in this publication cannot be taken as guaranteed development potential. If you want to discuss the potential of your block contact a planning professional or speak to Council.



## What is good design?

**Good design** provides comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money. Good design makes better places by respecting and enhancing features that make these places special and authentic. Poor design can undermine what makes places unique and valued by producing generic or defective buildings or through overdevelopment.

**Design** is a creative act. Design is both a process (problem-solving, coming up with ideas to address challenges and opportunities, the process of creating something) and an outcome (e.g. a well-designed building).

**A well-designed home** provides comfort for its occupants year-round and also considers its setting, cleverly providing a level of privacy for residents and neighbours and not overwhelming the streetscape with bulk or monotony. Good home design is not all about looks; it is about providing functional spaces in a home built to last and adding to a sense of place. Well-designed and well-built homes are more likely to age well and hold their value over time.

**Many people** do not know what to look for to determine whether a home maximises comfort and lifestyle benefits. Others simply accept design flaws to reduce costs. Sometimes good design elements like adequate light and ventilation are taken for granted and more value or emphasis is placed on the number of bathrooms or trendy style of kitchen benchtop. Some people argue that commenting on design is only about how something looks and is therefore "subjective". This is not the case as there is nothing subjective about making sure a house is designed to receive good ventilation and light and will not get mouldy!

**Protecting character** does not mean excluding new development. Good design can help to make new housing fit in with the overall look and feel of an area. Often, a lot of opposition to new development can be traced back to poor design. In many cases an improved design can address legitimate concerns about development.


**All places evolve** over time and Bellingen Shire has homes of all different ages and a variety of architectural styles, an eclectic mix of historic and modern. Good design is not about replicating existing development, but about taking cues from the surrounding environment and producing homes that are similar in scale and bulk to surrounding homes and that complement the area. Clever design can lessen impacts of new development in established neighbourhoods or near heritage buildings. Well-designed places have the potential to link new and old, are more efficient, healthier, and support social cohesion. Also better design will support sustainability goals and prepare us better for climate change impacts.

### Tips for good design in Bellingen Shire:

- Reduce building bulk and make buildings the same or similar scale to neighbouring buildings. Development that is excessive in terms of bulk and scale leave little area for landscaping and privacy.
- Use space efficiently and do not make spaces bigger than they need to be, or include rooms that will not be used much.
- Include sufficient landscaped area. Homes that take up too much space on the block and sacrifice landscaped or open space areas will appear out of character.
- Design landscaping to soften the look of buildings, and include a variety of plants and trees that add interest and green the neighbourhood
- Reduce the amount of hardstand area (e.g. concrete) for development and use materials that are durable and suited to the surrounding landscape.
- Connect the inside of homes with the outdoors and design for the local climate.

*Source: Better Placed — an integrated design policy for the built environment in NSW*

## What can Council do to ensure good design?



### **Produce a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) that will allow community members to contribute to and understand the future direction of land use in their area.**

The recent planning reforms by the NSW State Government have elevated the importance of respecting local character. All Councils are required to adopt Local Strategic Planning Statements by 2020. These will describe the special character features of an area to be preserved and how new development can add to local character. This means more than ever before, developments will need to focus on design processes and design measures to manage change.


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### **Produce place-based Character Statements to help guide the design and assessment of new development.**

Protecting desirable aspects of neighbourhood character is important, but describing and agreeing on what needs protecting and how can be quite difficult. Character Statements will help with interpreting how local character can best be protected and enhanced. Every neighbourhood is different, so design responses for each proposal should consider the relevant Character Statement and cater to individual circumstances.

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### **Simplify planning controls and include clear objectives for each control to make them easier to understand and apply. Include graphics, pictures, factsheets and example designs to make planning controls easier to understand for everyone.**

Planning controls are important, especially for homes on smaller lots. Planning controls make sure homes provide sunlight, air flow, privacy, green space and maximise occupant comfort whilst minimising impacts on neighbours. Having a large number of complex planning controls can unintentionally stifle good design, discourage innovation and encourage sameness.


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### **Promote conservation and use or adaptive reuse of heritage items and buildings.**

It is evident in the streetscapes, town centres and rural properties of Bellingen Shire that generations of landowners and residents have preserved and maintained heritage properties. This level of care for our historical buildings and places has become a real asset and unique drawcard. Many of the heritage listed houses in Bellingen and Dorrigo are sited on large blocks with substantial rear gardens and rear lane access. These sites can present opportunities for ongoing conservation of the existing home as well as some infill development (e.g. new homes in the rear yard) provided the designs of new homes are sympathetic to their surrounds and sensitive, heritage context.

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### **Nurture the Shire's creative and design-focused culture; provide links to good design resources; provide early design advice for proposals; espouse the benefits of good design and celebrate good examples.**

The design process is vital to achieving a quality built environment that respects the Shire's unique features. Council will support good design. Many people claim the process of designing buildings well is too expensive, adds construction costs and is not what homebuyers want. However the only costs counted are the up-front initial costs. Most of a buildings lifetime costs relate to maintenance (operating costs). Good design can reduce ongoing costs substantially.

## What you told us

During the *Homes for Our Future* Engagement Council spoke too many people who identified aspirations to grow in socially and environmentally affirming ways. A series of choices about how we could grow were presented and a **strong preference for infill housing** (growing in existing areas) was evident. Comments about infill stressed the need for good design and a variety of housing types, and highlighted concerns about loss of trees and parking.

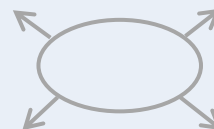
Many people highlighted the need to grow and live in ways that minimise impacts on the natural environment and support better resource management. The main area of concern related to improving the design and performance of buildings to use resources (e.g. water, energy, and space) better. Some current building trends were seen as environmentally insensitive (inefficient house design, and limited backyard and green space). In the comments collected, people criticised the homogenising effect of some new suburban development across cities and towns in NSW. Opposition to “cookie cutter” housing and urban sprawl was strong.

Many comments supported greater encouragement of solar power, battery storage, rainwater tanks, electric vehicles, composting toilets, greywater systems, recycled renewable/sustainable materials and stormwater capture and treatment (water sensitive urban design). Living simply in modest homes, reducing consumption, planning for climate change and planting more trees were common subthemes.

Most people agreed that protecting local character is a high priority when managing future impacts of growth. Protecting character is about adding to a **sense of place**. This means designing new development that is sensitive to the physical attributes of the Shire and also through understanding and respecting the social values of our places. The character of the Shire was often expressed as natural beauty and geographical features, the country town and rural feel and landscapes, an eco-conscious population, heritage and historical links and the unique features of the built environment.

Supporting community connections was the third most popular subtheme mentioned overall. This shows how strongly people value being part of their local community, and the benefits they reap from living in a place with strong social networks. Future housing needs to acknowledge these social values, and designing for social sustainability and community wellbeing is vital to maintain the Shire’s community-mindedness and encourage social cohesion.

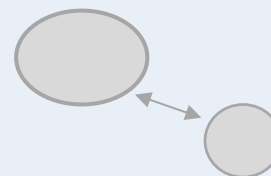
### HOW SHOULD WE GROW?



OUTWARDS



IN EXISTING TOWNS



IN NEW AREAS



STRICTLY LIMIT

## Your quotes

**A Vision for the future:** Our Shire is creative, inclusive, self-reliant, entrepreneurial and local. We have an innovative, sustainable approach to development, food production and we care for country. Shire residents help each other. Money circulates within the local economy as much as possible. We strive to live lightly and do more with less.

**Larger houses could be converted** to duplex with minimal increase in footprint. Landscaping and biodiversity should be maintained through adequate built footprint: deep soil ratios and minimum sized gardens for decent sized trees.

**Need different housing types** to suit different ages including town houses, and medium density housing with sustainable facilities such as solar power and ability for a community garden.

**As backyards** get smaller, playgrounds need to get bigger.

**Bellingen Shire has many unique** geographical and cultural qualities. Affordable housing is lacking, and urban development is often "suburban" in terms of design and characteristics. By this I mean, much development seems to be a brick and tile house on a small lot overlooking other properties and fence lines, with the lots not necessarily optimised for best environmental outcome, rather for maximising the commercial gain of the developer.

**Adopt a softer approach** to car parking within Conservation Areas and heritage items to ensure that it does not have a cumulative adverse impact on the streetscapes and settings. Solutions of car sharing, cycling walking, better public/community transport models will ultimately develop.

**Bellingen can grow** as long as the growth is sustainable. Most current housing models are unsustainable in at least one if not all important resources of water, energy, biodiversity and soil conservation. Future growth would have to be rather different to current models.

**And let's not forget:** Only 200 years ago the land which we call our Shire now, was nearly one big rainforest. The very long Aboriginal history should be seen more, felt more, taught more, remembered more and respected more.

**Prioritise sustainable water management.** Water is our most precious resource. Ensure water efficiency, re-use and recycling must be practiced. Protect river headwaters and wetlands.

**With infill,** how to ensure urban tree cover % stays same (or goes up)?

**[We] Need to look at options** that create diversity – one of the key features of the character of Bellingen, Hippies / farmers / young families / elderly / surf culture / alternative all co-existing. I moved from Sydney 15 years ago – my eldest child said the main difference at school was the tolerance of each other and this flows to the whole feel of the community. Therefore we need to avoid monoculture and this means providing options other than those driven only by market forces

**Bellingen Shire is** distinguished by its natural beauty and its inventory of traditional and attractive built forms. In discussions with other residents on the way forward for a Shire that believes it needs to grow, I have distilled one common concern: what is it going to look like?... Beauty is the Bellingen way. Let's not spoil that.



## Design principles

Design principles are a list of aspirations that guide development design and decision-making. They are educational and practical. The purpose of Design Principles is to ensure development considers and respects what makes our places distinctive.

Design principles can be used by Council and other government agencies (and the Land and Environment Court) to shape planning priorities, inform planning controls and when making development decisions, i.e. assisting merit-based development assessment. Design Principles can be used by the property and development industry to inform development decisions and guide design, inspire delivery of high quality buildings and recognise and reward best-practice development.

These design principles reflect the community's priorities as presented in the *Homes for Our Future Engagement Report* and have regard to the *NSW Government Architects Urban Design for Regional Areas* guide.

<b>Provide diversity in housing to provide residents with greater housing choice</b>	<i>New infill homes should look to fill the gaps in Bellingen Shire's housing market. For example, Bellingen Shire has a shortage of one and two bedroom homes, medium density housing types (e.g. villas, townhouses, small walk-up flats) and homes that are accessible for people with a disability. Detached homes with three bedrooms or more will remain popular and should be compact and space-efficient in design. Developments that propose multiple dwellings on a site should seek to contribute to housing mix, and include more two (or one) bedroom homes.</i>
<b>Provide high-quality, well-designed housing that is affordable to construct and live in</b>	<i>The majority of home designs should be modest in size and pitched to the more affordable end of the market, without compromising on design quality or occupant comfort. Affordability is relative, but in this context affordable means practical, space-efficient and built to last. Homes should be designed to reduce ongoing maintenance costs, including energy and water bills.</i>
<b>Respect neighbourhood character and support community connections</b>	<i>Infill house designs should consider the rural town context of Bellingen Shire, and be compatible with existing neighbourhood character. Housing design needs to respond to the setting, recognising geographic differences (e.g. a house design for Dorrigo will be different to a house in Urunga due to differences in climate, architectural vernacular etc.).</i>  <i>Community connections and neighbourliness are highly valued by the Bellingen Shire community. Housing should positively impact on public spaces such as the street and offer opportunities to socialise whilst retaining adequate levels of privacy.</i>
<b>Encourage walking and cycling</b>	<i>Homes should be designed to encourage walking and cycling and reduce the need for local private vehicle trips. For example, garages, car parking spaces and vehicle circulation areas should be rationalised and not visually prominent. Given the regional context of Bellingen Shire, at least one off-street car parking space per dwelling is to be provided, unless an innovative arrangement (e.g. car sharing and bike infrastructure) can reasonably provide for the mobility needs of the residents.</i>
<b>Include environmentally sustainable design features</b>	<i>House design should include cost-effective measures to reduce ecological footprints, for example through passive design that considers the microclimate of the area. Impervious surfaces should be minimised where possible, and pervious or landscaped areas should be generous. Opportunities to incorporate sustainable technologies such as renewable energy, greywater reuse etc. should be included where budgets allow. Existing mature trees on sites should be retained wherever possible, with modifications made to house design to accommodate vegetation retention, and additional trees and shrubs planted.</i>

## What infill could look like – Professionally-designed infill solutions for Bellingen Shire

Bellingen Shire Council engaged two local building design professionals to develop concept plans for infill housing for two hypothetical sites. Infill is providing housing in existing built up areas, in towns such as Dorrigo, Urunga and Bellingen. Providing visual examples of what infill housing could look like helps the community understand infill and recognise elements of good design.

Current planning controls allow for infill development in our town areas. However, there has been limited uptake of infill housing across our towns in recent years. The examples include testing of hypothetical planning controls so Council can:

1. Test whether the current planning controls are barriers preventing people building more homes in our town areas and,
2. Better understand the built form possibilities and implications of proposed changes to different planning controls.

### Planning Controls

Two scenarios were provided to the design teams, the first based on existing planning controls. The second was a hypothetical scenario, where some of the planning controls were changed slightly, to test the difference in built form outcome possibilities. The hypothetical planning controls were based on controls benchmarked from other NSW Councils.

For people who do not work in the planning or property industry, it can be difficult to interpret some planning and design controls. For more information about planning controls and what they mean, please refer to the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

The key planning controls for the design scenarios are:

Controls	Scenario 1: Existing Controls	Scenario 2: Hypothetical Controls
<b>Front Setback</b>	4.5m	4.5m
<b>Rear Setback / Secondary Road/Lane</b>	3 m	3 m
<b>Building Height 10m 10m</b>	10 m	10 m
<b>Building Height Plane Envelope</b>	Defined by a plane projected at an angle of <b>35 degrees</b> over the land to be built upon, from a height of <b>3m</b> above the ground level at the boundary of the site.	Defined by a plane projected at an angle of <b>45 degrees</b> over the land to be built upon, from a height of <b>4m</b> above the ground level at the boundary of the site.
<b>Site Area required per dwelling (density control)</b>	1 dwelling allowed per 300m <sup>2</sup> *	<b>No restriction</b> on number of dwellings per site (density controlled via landscaped area)
<b>Landscaped Area</b>	<b>100m<sup>2</sup>*</b> per dwelling	<b>40%</b> of lot area, min width 1.5m
<b>Private Open Space</b>	<b>24m<sup>2</sup>, 4 m</b> min width	<b>16m<sup>2</sup>, 3 m</b> min width
<b>Car Parking</b>	1 space per dwelling	1 space per dwelling
<b>Universal Design</b>	Silver Level	Silver Level
<b>Solar Access</b>	50% Private Open Space receives 3 hours sunlight during winter solstice	50% Private Open Space receives 3 hours sunlight during winter solstice

\*based on control for Density Locality 3 – refer to Locality Density Maps

## Infill Sites

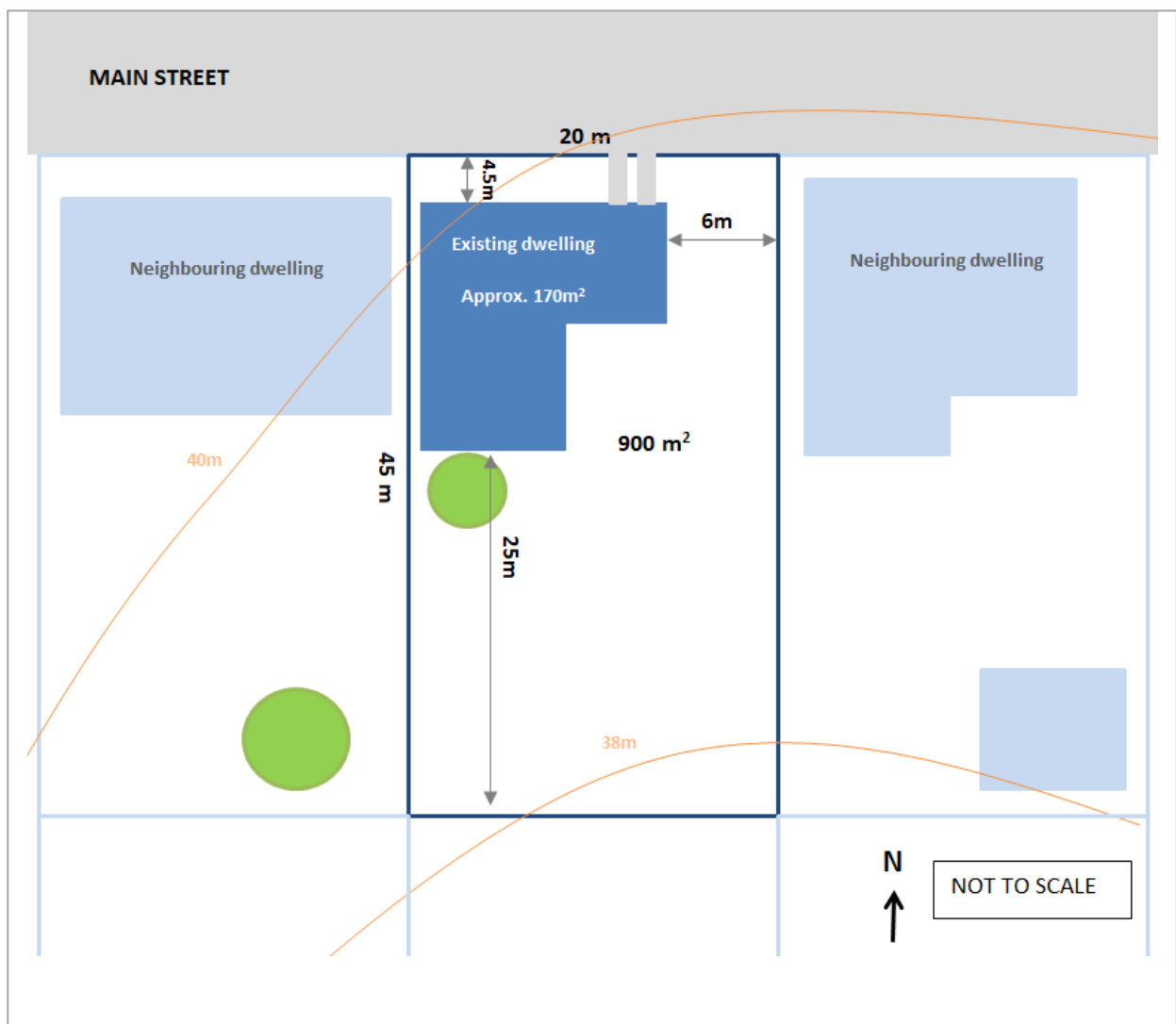
### Site 1

The site is located within walking distance to a town centre. The site has an area of 900m<sup>2</sup> with a 20 metre wide road frontage.

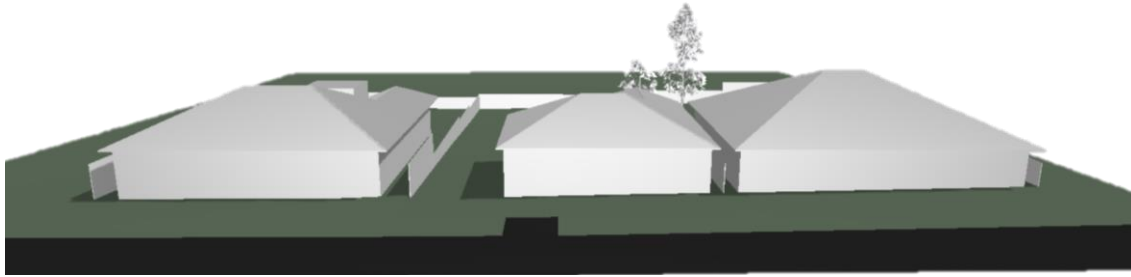
The block is 45m deep and contains an existing 3 bedroom dwelling with a single garage. The block slopes away to the south-east with a 5% slope. The site has a north-south orientation and is located on the south side of the road. The site is not constrained by flooding, bushfire or heritage. The site is zoned R1 General Residential.

Neighbouring development consists of low density housing, predominantly single-storey dwellings with large backyards.

Dwellings on the street display a variety of building styles and materials and the street has an eclectic character, although there are a number of notable older weatherboard cottages and very few modern homes/recent builds. Water and sewer lines run along the primary road frontage and the block is not obstructed by any existing easements.



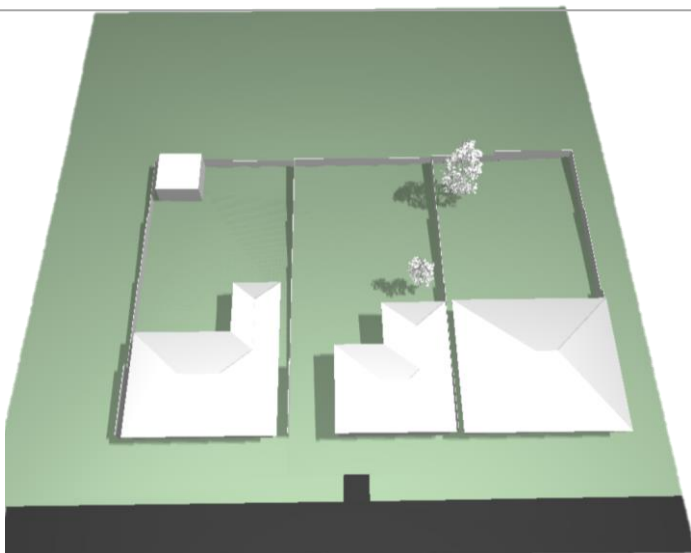
**Site 1 – 900m<sup>2</sup> with no rear lane**



View from the street (north elevation)



View from backyard (south elevation)



View from the sky (plan view)

Source: 3D Model created by Tricia Helyar Architect, 2019



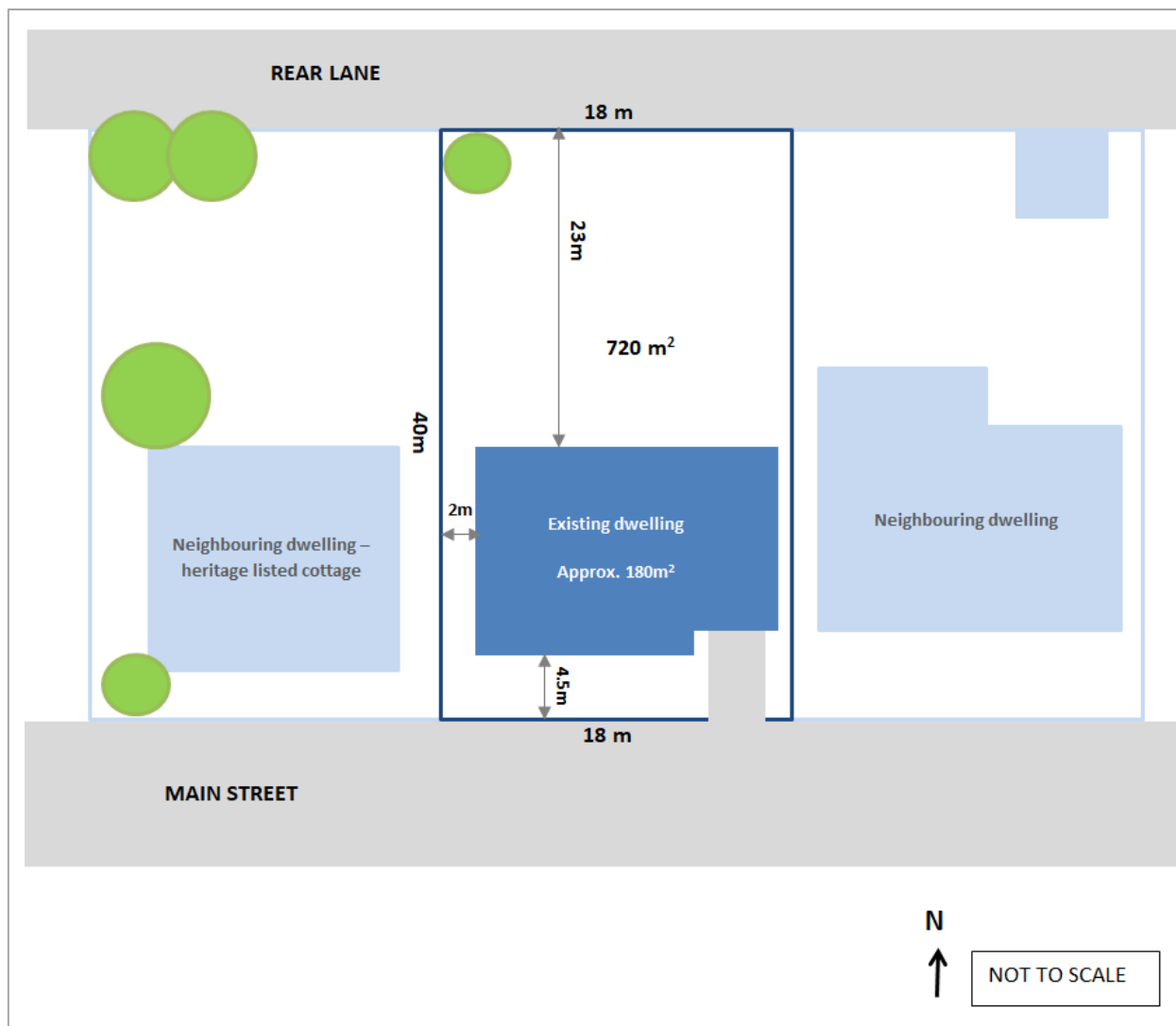
## Site 2

The site is located within walking distance to a town centre.

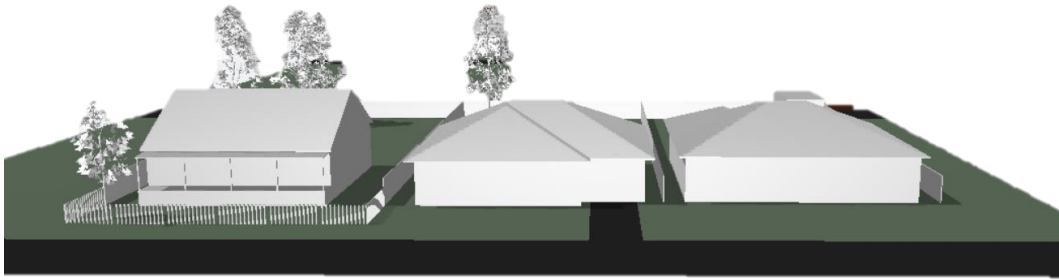
The site has an area of 720m<sup>2</sup> with 18 metre wide road frontage. The block is 40m deep and contains an existing single storey 3 bedroom dwelling with an (attached) single garage.

The block is practically flat. The site has a north-south orientation and has access to a rear lane.

The existing dwelling is located on the north side of the street. The neighbouring cottage to the west is heritage listed and single storey. The site is not constrained by flooding or bushfire. The site is zoned R1 General Residential. Water and sewer lines run along the primary road frontage and along the laneway and the block is not obstructed by any existing easements.



**Site 2 – 720m<sup>2</sup> with rear lane**



**Site #2 – View from the street (north elevation)**



**Site #2 – View from the rear lane (south elevation)**



**Site #2 - View from the sky (plan view)**

Source: 3D Model created by Tricia Helyar Architect, 2019

## Design Concepts

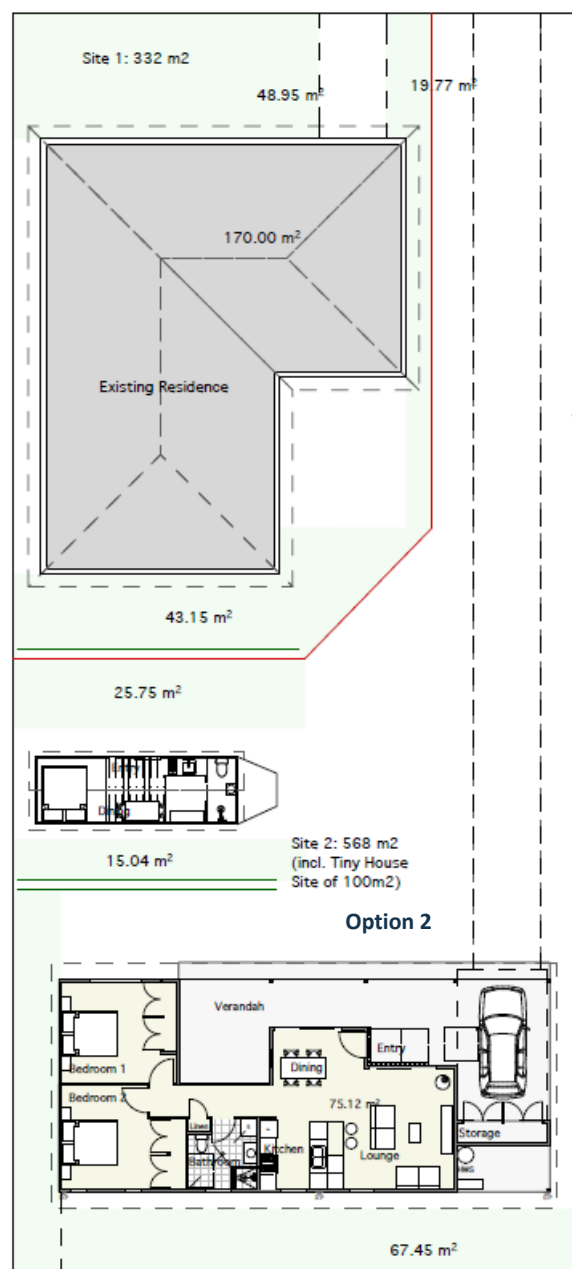
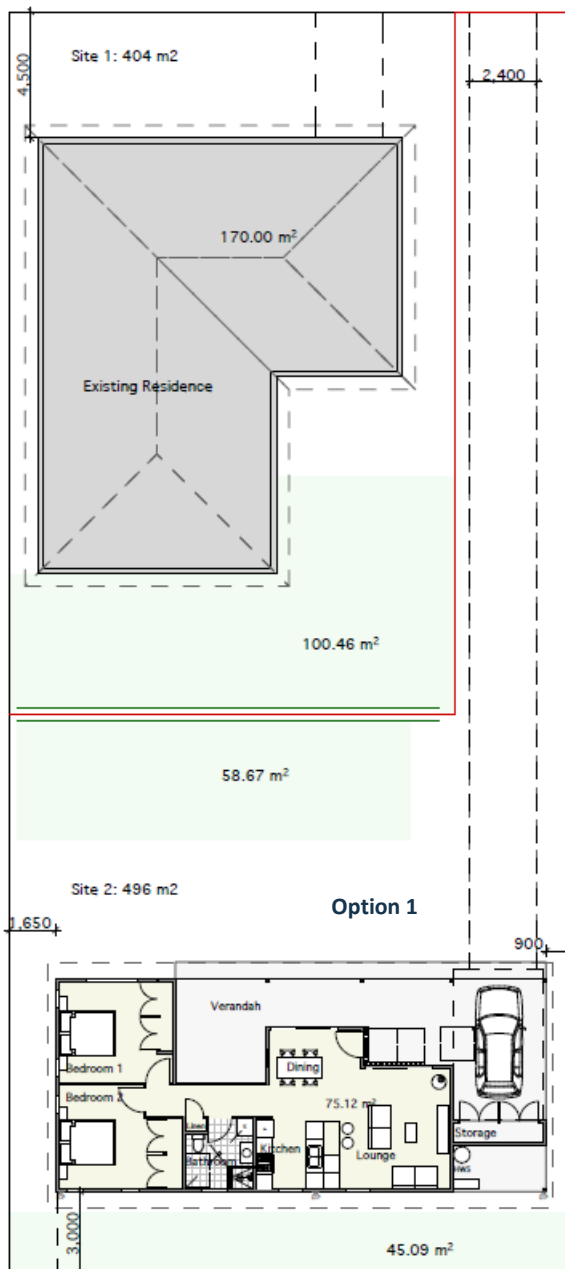
### KDH, Kalang Design House, Guido Eberding

#### KDH Site 1, Scenario 1

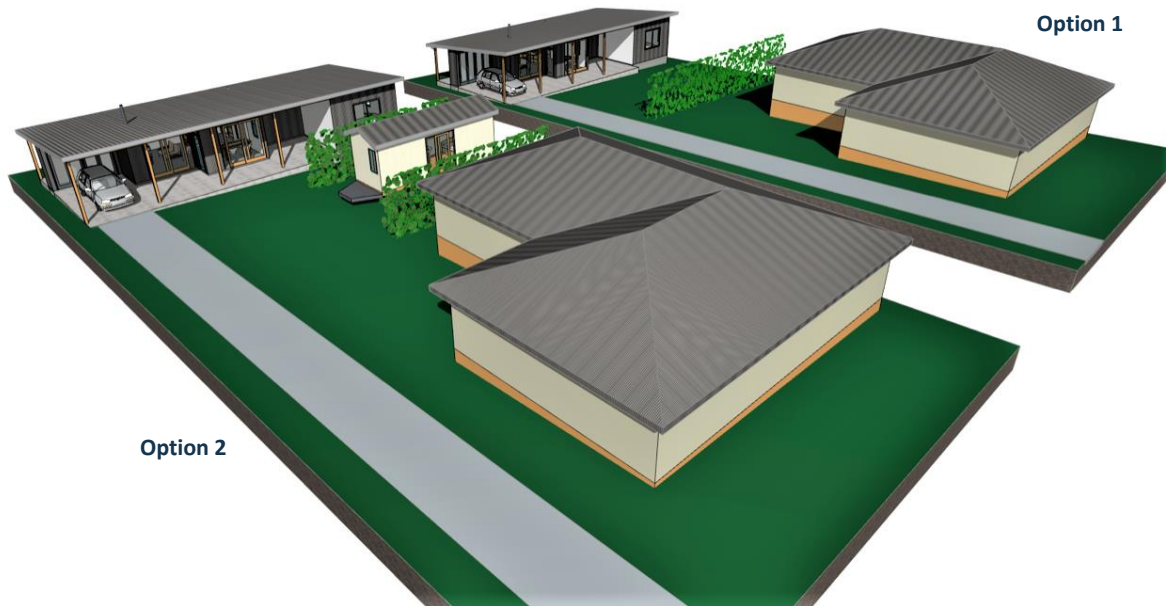
(900m<sup>2</sup>, no laneway, *existing* planning controls)

These designs keep the existing house and add a single-storey, solar passive home at the rear of the block. The rear two-bedroom home measures 75m<sup>2</sup> internally, and features a north-facing verandah. The home meets the Silver Level Liveable Housing Design requirements (for adaptable, accessible homes). Each home has a single carport and driveway. A small turning area would be required for the rear home to allow a vehicle to safely exit the long driveway in a forward direction.

In Option 1, the 900m<sup>2</sup> block is subdivided into two lots – the front at 404m<sup>2</sup>, and the rear at 496m<sup>2</sup>. Each lot has more than the required 100m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped area per dwelling. In Option 2, a tiny house is added to the rear lot (55m<sup>2</sup> internal area). The tiny house has no dedicated parking, consistent with exemptions for granny flats. The tiny home as a granny flat cannot be separately subdivided. The addition of the third dwelling has reduced the lot size for the front dwelling (332m<sup>2</sup>) but provided an additional, more affordable one bedroom housing option on the rear lot (568m<sup>2</sup>). The landscaped area has been reduced in the second option, the front home achieves the required 100m<sup>2</sup>, and the two bedroom and one bedroom dwellings share the landscaped area at the rear.



**KDH, Site 1: 900m<sup>2</sup>**



**KDH Design, Site 1, Existing Controls:** Option 1 in background (two homes and subdivision); Option 2 in foreground (three dwellings including one tiny house)



**KDH Design, Site 1, Proposed Controls:** Option 1 on the left (no rear lane); Option 2 on the right (with rear lane)

Source: 3D Model created by KDH, 2019 (*hardstand areas added to bottom graphic by author*)



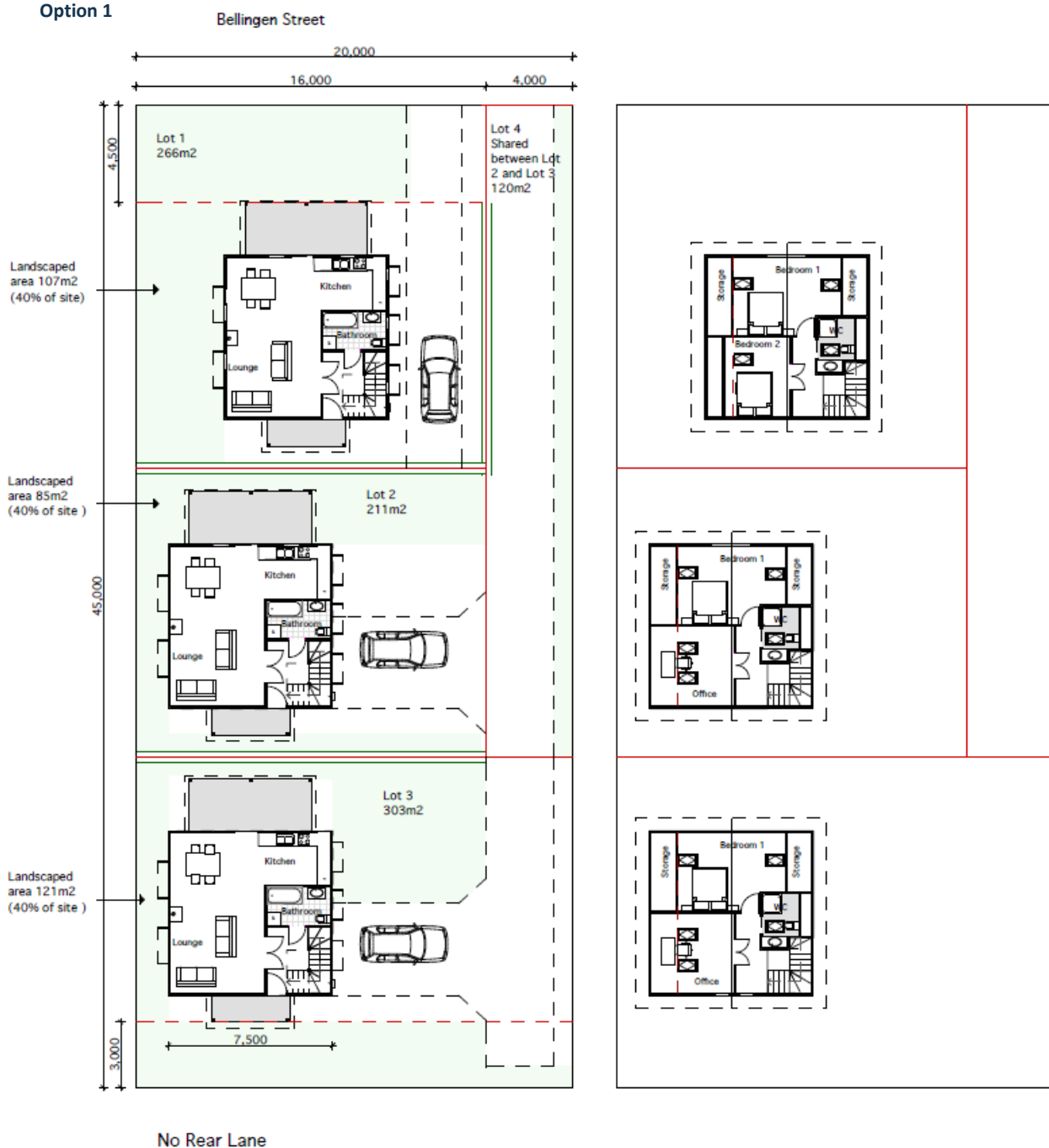
## KDH Site 1, Scenario 2

(900m<sup>2</sup>, hypothetical planning controls. Option 1 no rear lane)

This design involves demolition of the existing home and construction of three (3) two-storey detached houses. The homes are modest (2 bedrooms or 1 bedroom with office), measuring approx. 100m<sup>2</sup> inside. They are solar-powered and maximise energy efficiency as they are designed according to solar passive principles. The homes have been designed to comply with the Silver Level Liveable Housing Design requirements. Each home has a dedicated car space.

The proposal includes subdivision into three small lots, the front lot at 266m<sup>2</sup>, the middle at 211m<sup>2</sup> and the rear at 303m<sup>2</sup>, with 120m<sup>2</sup> of space being utilised for shared access between the two rear lots. Each home is small, and contains the hypothetical required landscaped area (40% of each lot). The design provides small building footprints with space around each and landscaping opportunities. A more intensive development (e.g. attached dwellings/townhouses) may be possible. Whilst minimum lot size for subdivision controls were not specified as part of the design exercise, Council's current controls restrict Torrens Title subdivision to a minimum lot size of 230m<sup>2</sup> with approved home designs, meaning proposed Lot 2 does not comply with current controls (except as a strata subdivision).

### Option 1



## KDH Site 1, Scenario 2

(900m<sup>2</sup>, hypothetical planning controls. Option 2 with rear lane)

This is a variation on the previous design. The rear lane provides each home with its own access, meaning driveways are not shared. Separate, shorter lengths of driveway are safer and with good landscaping and material choice are less visually prominent. Despite the middle lot having its own access, the length of an access handle (driveway) is not included in minimum lot size calculations so the middle lot measures 211m<sup>2</sup> (cannot be subdivided into Torrens Title under current controls which limit minimum lot size to 230m<sup>2</sup>).

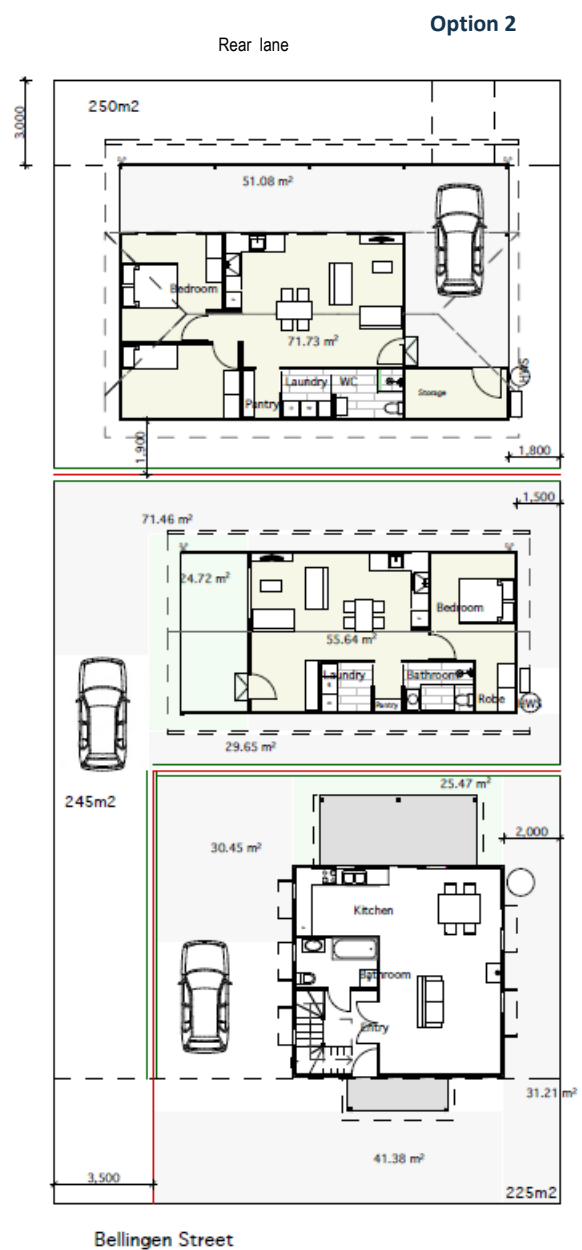
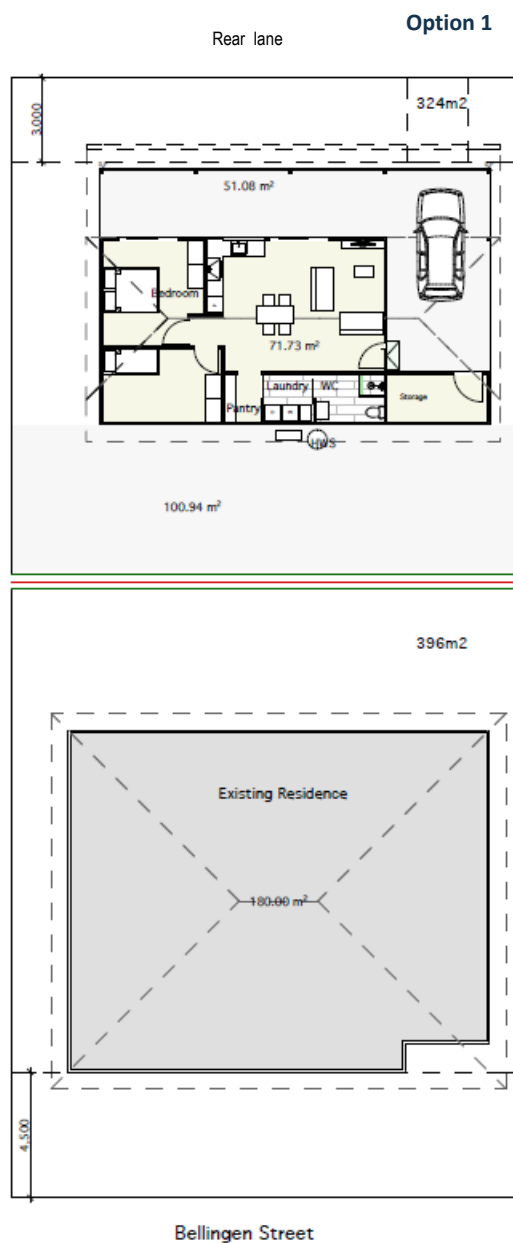
In this scenario, the hypothetical landscaping control (40% of the area of each lot) results in a greater amount of landscaped area than the current control. The current landscaping control for multi-dwelling housing (for a property in Locality Density #3) requires 100m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling regardless of lot size (and 40m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling in Locality #4). The requirement to make landscaped area proportionate to the size of the lot (rather than a blanket figure per dwelling) controls how much space buildings and hard surfaces can take up on the site. This type of control can provide smaller building footprints and increase opportunities for plants and trees. However, this can also incentivise two-storey buildings as single storey buildings cover a larger footprint and impacts such as overshadowing need to be addressed through design. The higher amount of landscaped area required can also affect the development yield – not as many homes may fit on the site as more area is required for landscaping.



## KDH Site 2, Scenario 2 (720m<sup>2</sup>, rear lane. Option 1 *existing* planning controls. Option 2 *hypothetical* controls)

Option 1 on a 720m<sup>2</sup> site with a rear lane includes keeping the existing house and constructing a small two bedroom home facing the laneway. The new home has an internal area of ~72m<sup>2</sup>, with a large front verandah and over 100m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped area. A larger home would be permitted, however the compact design is efficient and meets an identified need for smaller, more affordable homes in the Shire. There is one parking space provided and the home complies with the Silver Level Liveable Housing Design requirements for accessibility.

Option 2 shows a more intensive proposal, with three small detached homes on the site, each of a different design. The front dwelling is a one/two bedroom, two-storey home with one car space on a small lot of 225m<sup>2</sup>. The hypothetical landscape control requires 40% site area to be landscaped or 90m<sup>2</sup>. The middle lot contains a tiny home (at approx. 55m<sup>2</sup>) on a 245m<sup>2</sup> lot inclusive of the driveway/access handle. The subdivision of these lots (Torrens Title) is not enabled by current planning controls (which require a minimum lot size of 230m<sup>2</sup> with approved dwelling design, excluding the driveway). The rear lot faces the laneway on a lot of 250m<sup>2</sup>. In order to meet landscaped area requirements (of 40% of each lot size); the properties need to make use of all the land surrounding the house (all four sides, including some narrow areas) rather than the conventional front and rear yard arrangement. In this Option there are limited opportunities to retain, grow and maintain small trees for example.



**KDH Site 2: 720m<sup>2</sup>**





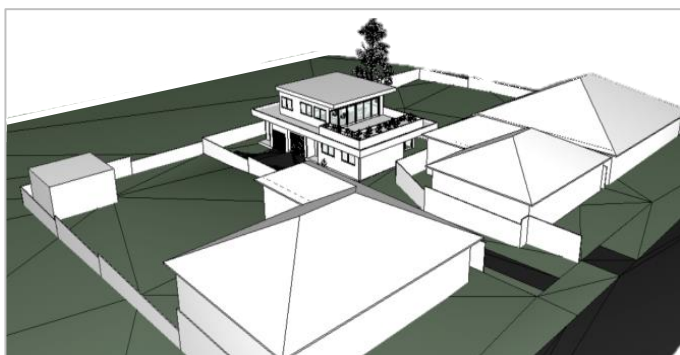
## THA, Tricia Helyar Architect, Tricia Helyar

### THA Site 1, Scenario 1

(900m<sup>2</sup>, no rear lane, *existing* planning controls)

This design keeps the existing home and includes construction of a modern two-storey building at the rear. It appears as if the building is one house, but it is actually two separate homes attached to each other. The first home is a single level, two bedroom, 1 bathroom with a floor area of 98m<sup>2</sup>. The second home is split over two storeys, containing two bedrooms, 2 bathrooms (126m<sup>2</sup> of floor area).

Each home has a single garage and north-facing private open space and each has more than the required 100m<sup>2</sup> of landscaping per dwelling. A small green roof area has been provided on the first floor balcony. The building complies with the existing height and building envelope controls. The building is similar in height to the front house and when viewed from the street the building is not prominent. The rear building increases the built upon area of the site by 320m<sup>2</sup> but provides two additional modestly-sized homes to the neighbourhood without major impacts upon the streetscape. Whilst this design cleverly provides two smaller homes in one building, meeting an identified need to provide smaller dwellings in the Shire, a large 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom house of this size and form would also be permitted under existing planning controls. Therefore there may be a need to guide the market (e.g. via incentives or controls) to encourage provision of smaller homes.

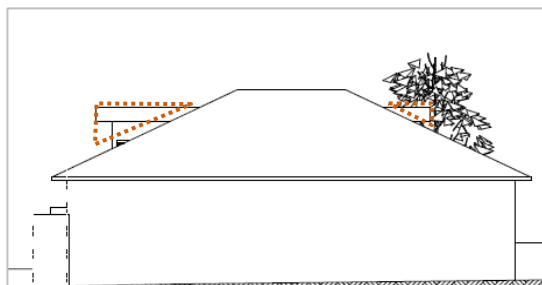


**THA Design, Site 1: View from the sky (oblique view)**

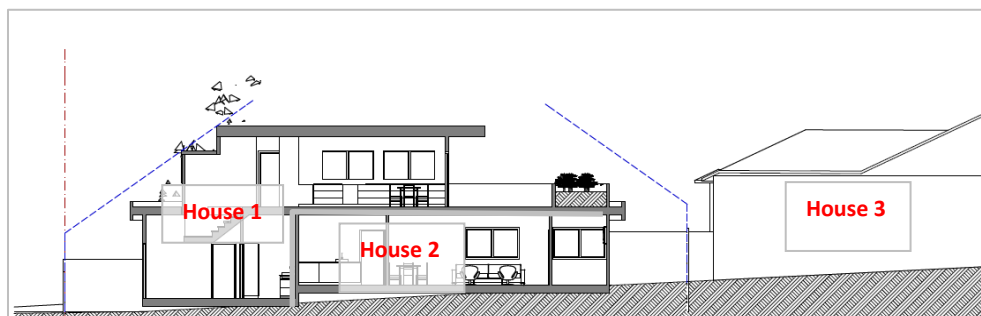
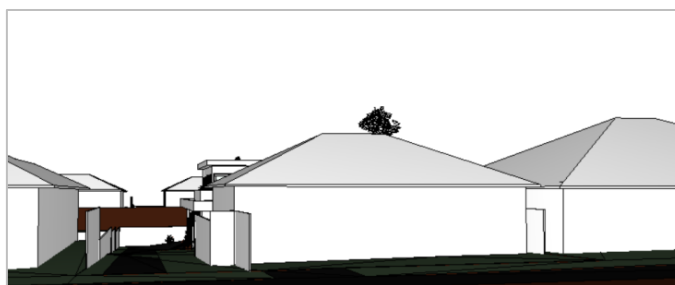
The rear building is two small homes attached to each other.



**Side view – east elevation**

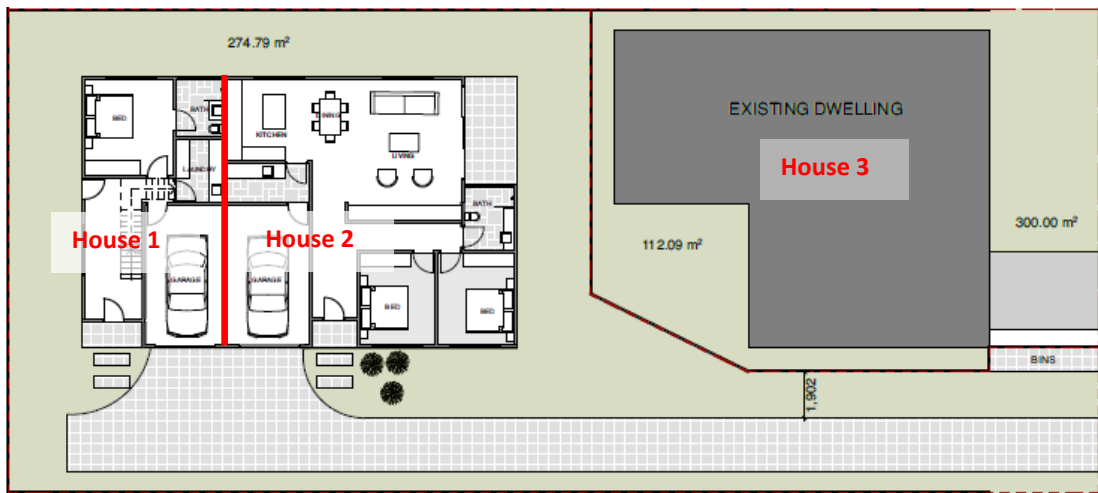


**View from the street. Front (north) elevation.** The proposed homes at the rear are hidden behind the existing house. Only small parts of the roofline are visible from the street (shown highlighted by the orange dotted line).

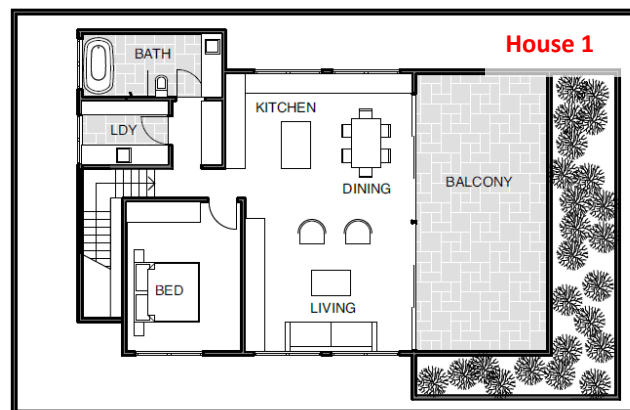
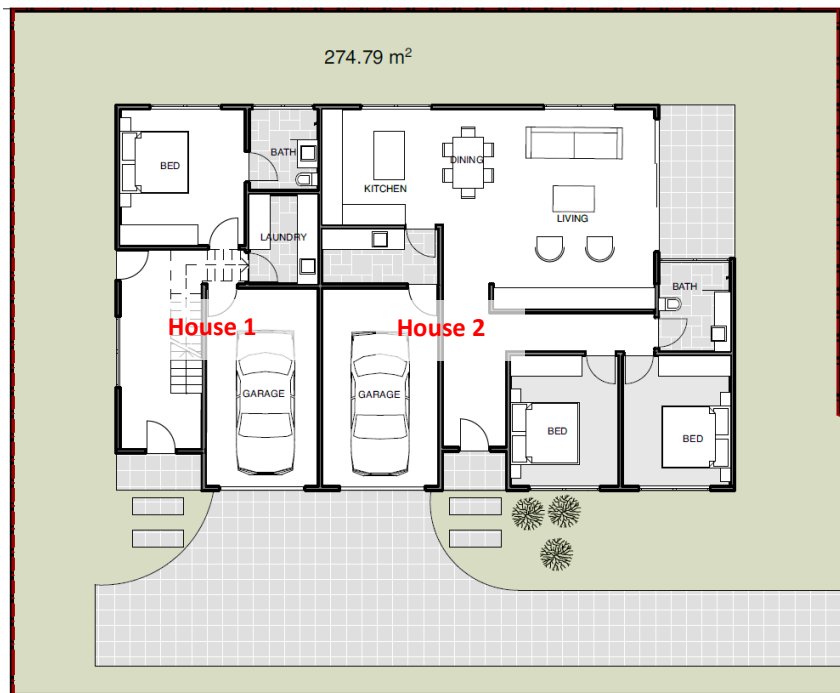


**Section plan.** This cross section shows how the stepped design complies with the building height controls (shown as the blue dotted line). The 6.9m high home is similar in height to the existing home (5.8m).

**THA Site 1: 900m<sup>2</sup>**



**Floor Plan Ground Floor.** The red line shows the separation of the two homes in the rear building.



**Top: Floor Plan Ground Floor**  
**Bottom: Floor Plan First Floor**

## THA Site 1, Scenario 2

(900m<sup>2</sup>, no rear lane, *hypothetical* planning controls)

This design provides 5 homes on a 900m<sup>2</sup> site. The existing home is retained (House 5). The design provides 4 compact dwellings on the rear site, attached to each other in a terrace arrangement. The terraces consist of 2 three-bedroom homes with a single garage each (Houses 1 & 2); 1 one-bedroom with a single garage (House 4) and 1 granny flat with no parking (House 3). The roof has three ridges to reduce the scale of the building and to reflect the pitched roof character of the area. The first floor has north facing balconies for private open space, and some screening measure (dependant on the layout of the existing dwelling) may need to be introduced to minimise overlooking.

The subdivision proposes to excise the front home onto a 300m<sup>2</sup> lot. This design proposes 112m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped area for the front lot, just shy of the required 40% (120m<sup>2</sup>). The rear lot measures 600m<sup>2</sup> or ~500m excluding the access driveway. 246m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped area has been designed for the rear lot, compliant with the 40% of the lot area requirement. The terraces could be strata subdivided. Each dwelling has been provided with the hypothetical amount of private open space (16m<sup>2</sup>). The increased hypothetical building height plane control provides more opportunities for increased density on the site, however the architect has noted that a 3-storey design is possible and may be pursued by some developers, which would have greater impacts to neighbours and the streetscape.



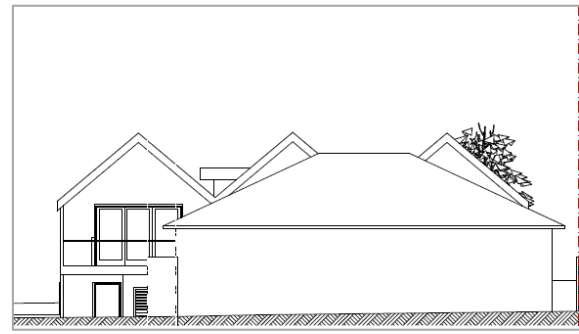
**THA Design, Site 1: View from the sky (oblique view)**  
Four homes have been constructed at the rear of the block.



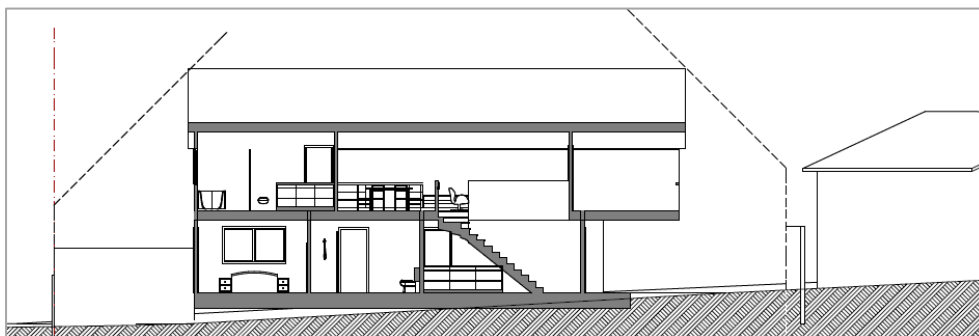
**View from the back (south elevation)**



**Front view (north elevation)**

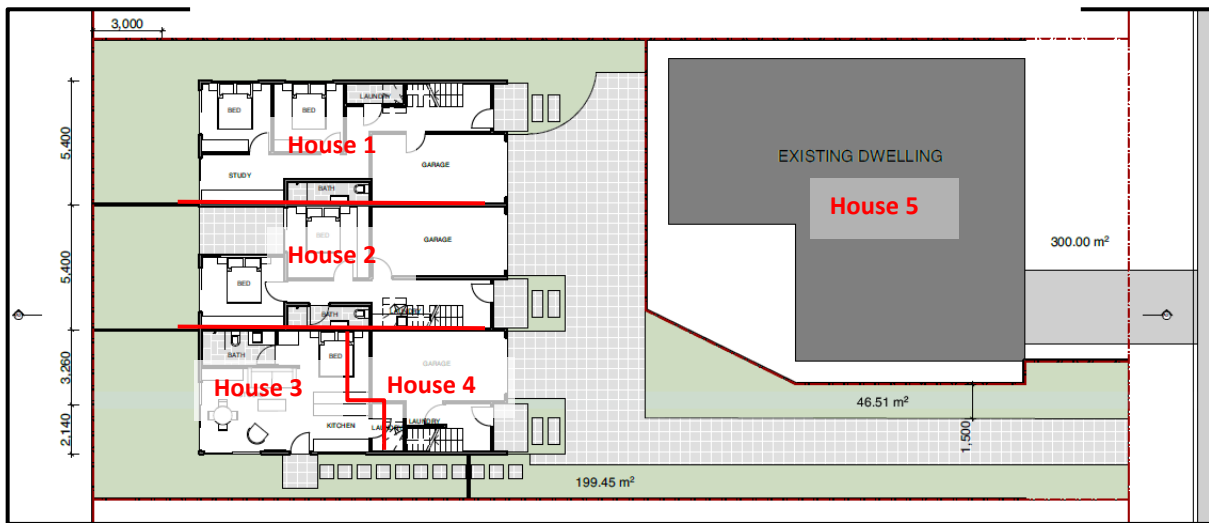


**View from the street (north elevation)**

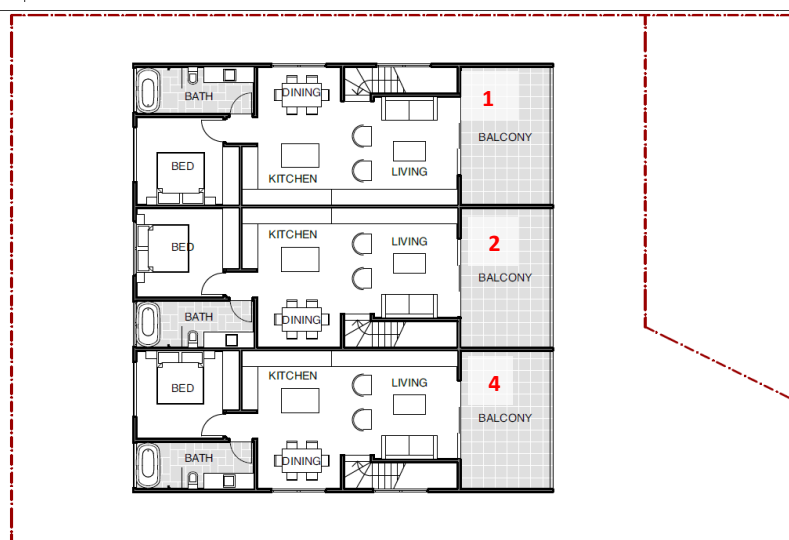


**Section View.** This cross section shows how the design fits within the hypothetical building height plane controls (shown as the black dotted line). The homes measure 7.3m high at the ridgeline, compared to the 5.8m of the existing home.

## THA Site 1: 900m<sup>2</sup>



Site Plan Ground Floor



Top: Floor Plan Ground Floor

Bottom: Floor Plan First Floor

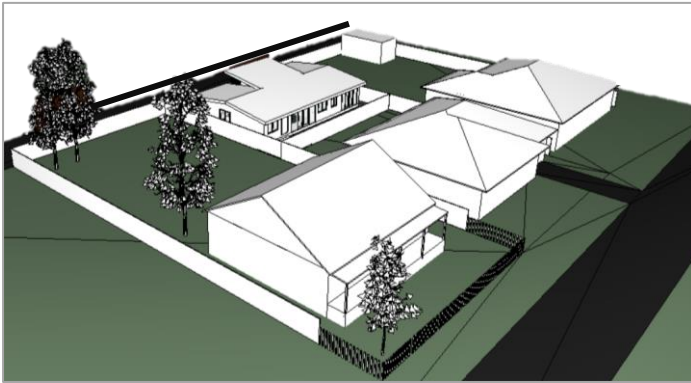


## THA Site 2, Scenario 1

(720m<sup>2</sup>, rear lane, *existing* planning controls)

Under the existing controls the new dwelling is sited on a new 300m<sup>2</sup> subdivided lot facing the rear lane. The existing home sits on the remaining 420m<sup>2</sup>. The new home is a two-bedroom single storey dwelling. The building is well set back from the lane due to the site orientation with the north-facing living area on the laneway. The living spaces span the width of the building, allowing for cross ventilation and access to the landscaped areas on both sides of the building. The building would be fully adaptable for universal access. While more intensive development would be possible on the site, this dwelling was aiming to achieve a smaller, well-designed affordable dwelling with an internal floor area of 97m<sup>2</sup> (excluding garage).

The hypothetical site neighbours a heritage-listed property with a cottage and established trees. The proposed design is respectful of this setting and is single-storey and remains hidden from view when looking from the main street.

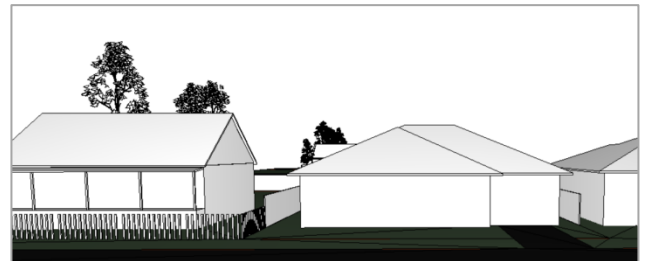


**THA Design, Site 2: View from the sky (oblique view).**

One home facing the laneway has been constructed behind the existing home.

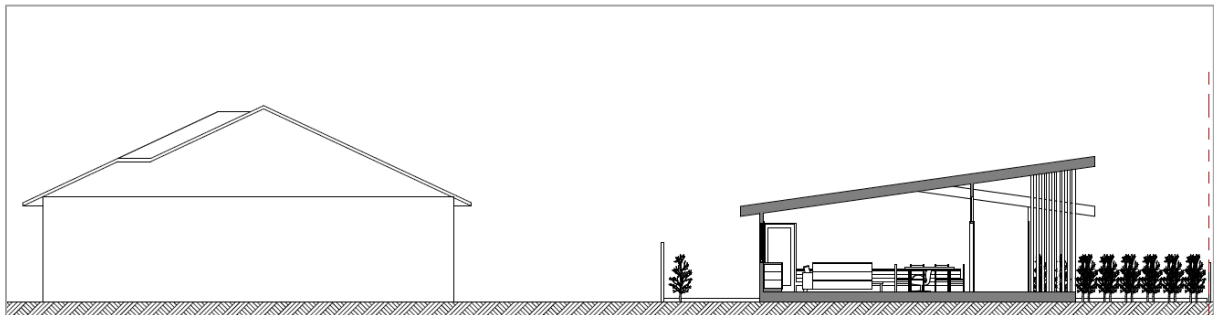


**View from the lane (north elevation)**



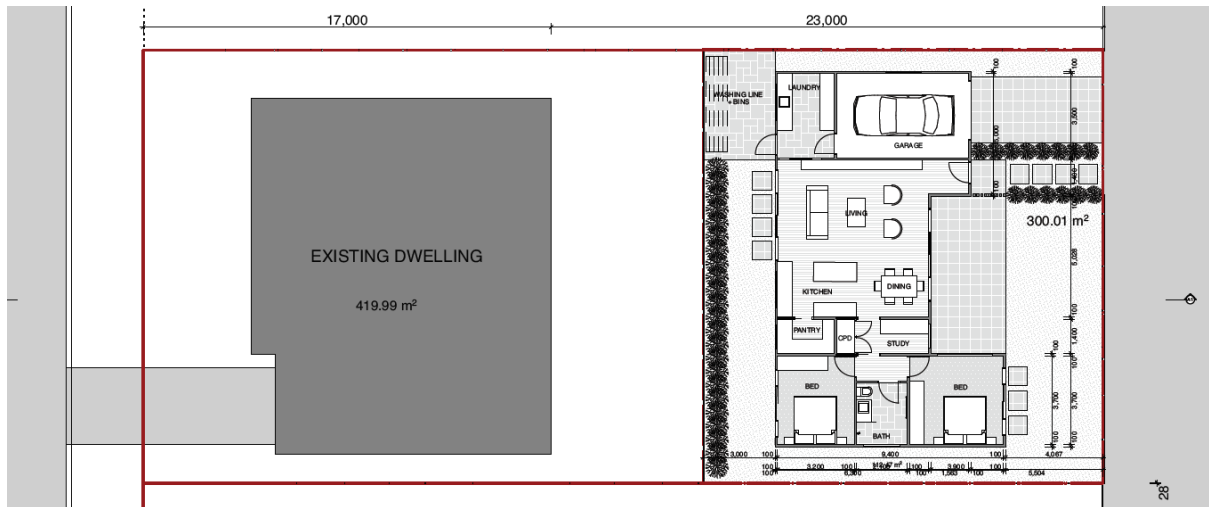
**View from the street (south elevation)**

The new home is barely visible from the street, and has negligible impact on the streetscape or neighbouring heritage cottage.

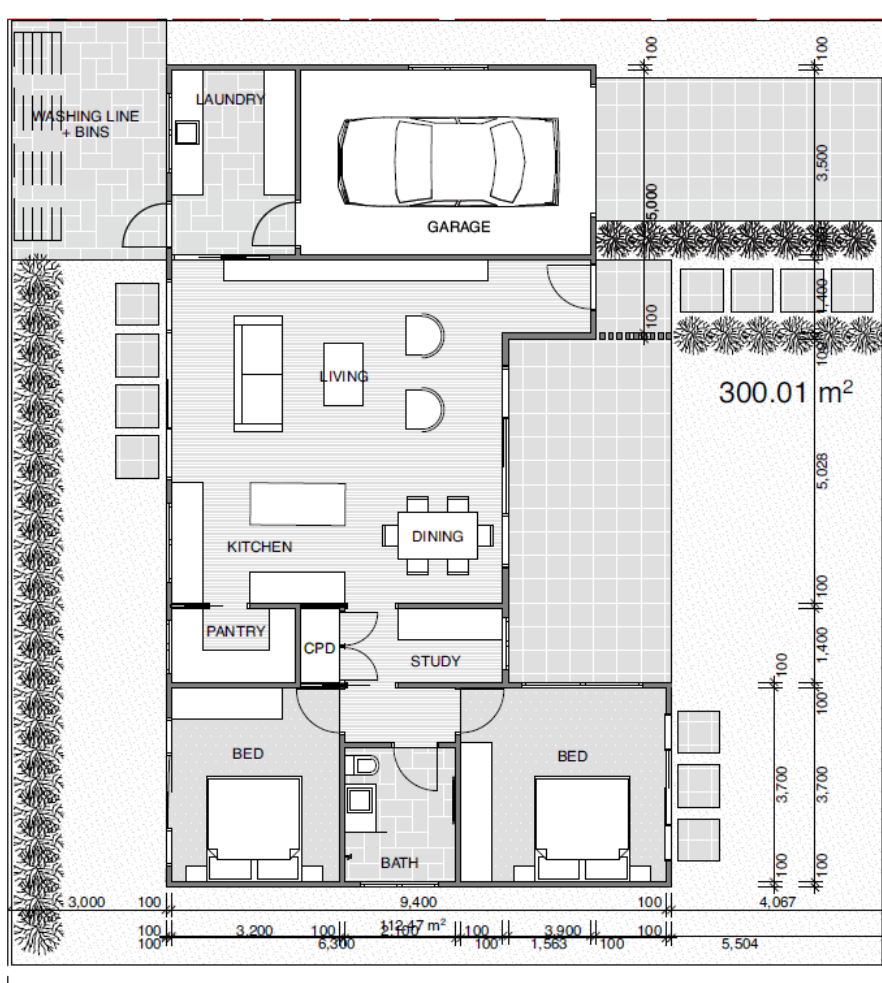


**Section View.** This cross section shows the new home is sensitively designed to be smaller than the existing home. The new home is 4.3m high (compared to 5.8m for the existing dwelling).

## THA Site 2: 720 m<sup>2</sup>



Site Plan



Floor Plan

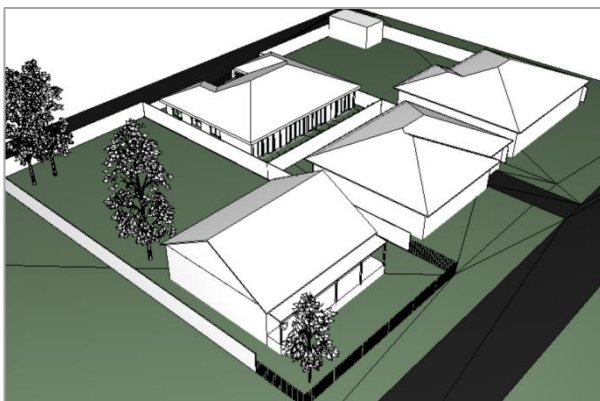
## THA Site 2, Scenario 2

(720m<sup>2</sup>, rear lane, *hypothetical planning controls*)

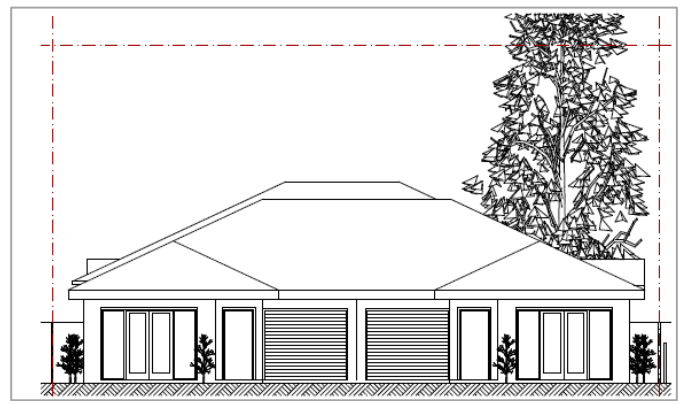
This design retains the existing home on a lot measuring ~350m<sup>2</sup>. The hypothetical controls do not limit the number of dwellings possible on the site and the design proposes construction of two additional dwellings (attached) at the rear, facing the laneway. The rear lot measures 344m<sup>2</sup>. The new homes have 2 bedrooms each and a have a single garage. The building presents as one home, but provides two compact homes, with 76m<sup>2</sup> of internal floor area each (excluding the garages). The living areas and private open space face north with the garages between to provide separation between the dwellings.

226m<sup>2</sup> of the rear lot is built upon area, leaving 118m<sup>2</sup> for landscaped area (59m<sup>2</sup> for each dwelling). This is almost 20m<sup>2</sup> less than the required landscaped area of 137.6m<sup>2</sup> (68.8m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling) which represents 40% of the lot area of 344m<sup>2</sup>. The landscaped areas along the sides of the dwellings do not count as landscaped area because they do not meet the minimum width of 1500mm (the side setbacks to the neighbouring boundaries are 900mm).

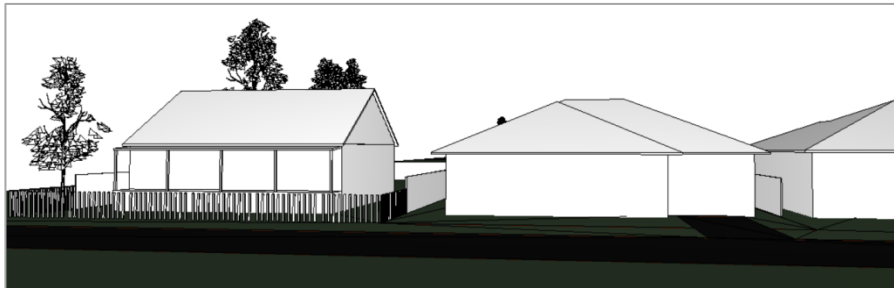
The home has been designed as single-storey at 5.4m high to suit the surrounds, although a stepped second-storey would be possible under the hypothetical building height plane controls.



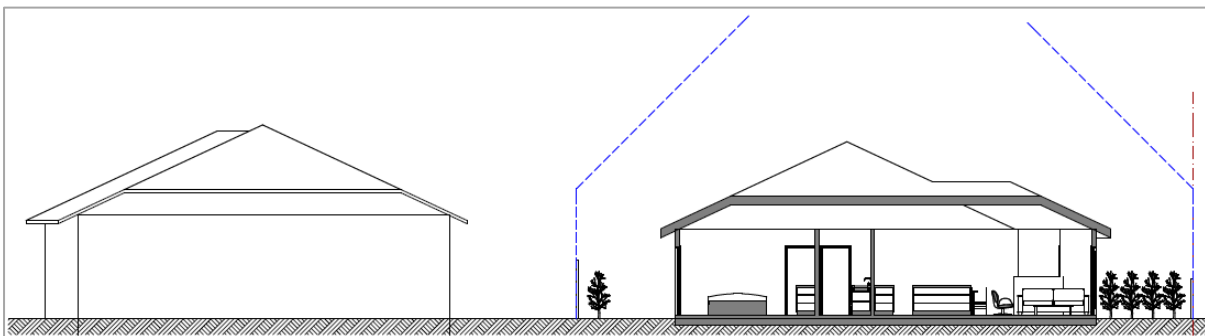
**THA Design, Site 2: View from the sky (oblique view).**  
Two attached homes facing the laneway have been built at the rear of the site.



**View from the lane (north elevation)**

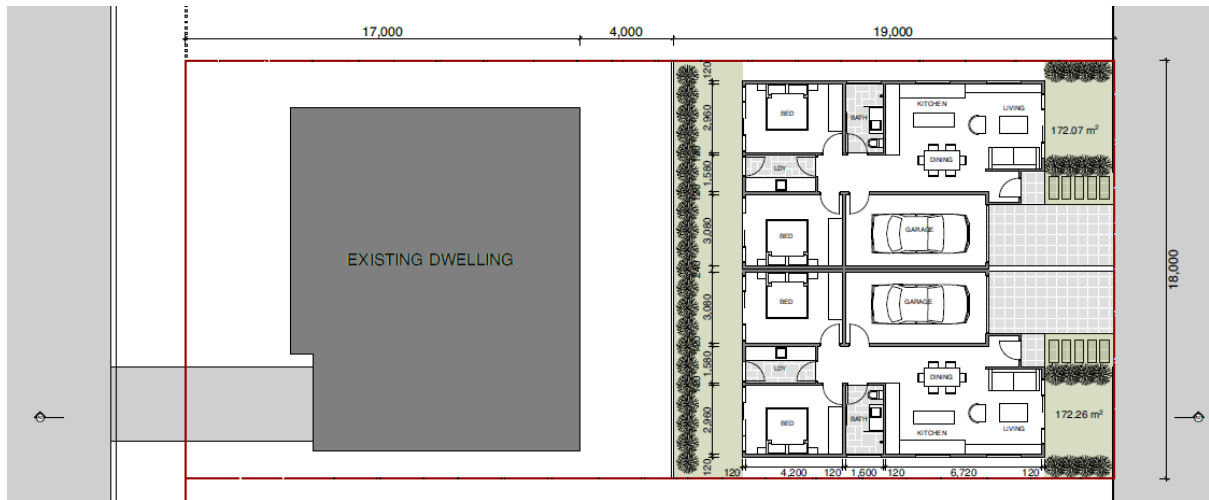


**View from the street (south elevation).** The proposed dwellings are not visible from the street.



**Section View.** This cross section shows the new home is sensitively designed to be as tall as the existing home. However the hypothetical building envelope (shown as a blue outline) shows a much larger building is possible.

## THA Site 2: 720 m<sup>2</sup>



Site Plan



Floor Plan



## Design Resources and Case Studies

There are many useful resources that promote quality housing design. The following list illustrates some easy-to-understand design guides (some include good case studies) for anybody wanting to learn more about the importance of good design.

### NSW Government Architects Draft Urban Design for Regional Areas

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Urban-Design-for-Regional-NSW>

This draft guide builds on the objectives and values of *Better Placed* — *an integrated design policy for the built environment in NSW*. Critically, the guide provides a road map for local government decision-makers, development applicants and local communities to work towards addressing urban design priorities in their regions to ensure healthy built environments. It describes processes to achieve good urban design, and how to assess built environment outcomes against the Better Placed objectives. The NSW Government Architects has published a comprehensive series of guidance and draft guidelines on good design, as illustrated below.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/policies/better-placed>



### Your Home – Commonwealth Government Guide to Environmentally Sustainable Homes

<http://www.yourhome.gov.au/>

*Your Home* is a guide to building, buying or renovating a home. It shows how to create a comfortable home with low impact on the environment – economical to run, healthier to live in and adaptable to your changing needs. A good place to start is: <http://www.yourhome.gov.au/you-begin/design-process>



Australian Government



**YourHome**  
Australia's guide to environmentally sustainable homes

Search Your Home



Introduction Before you begin Passive design Materials Energy Water Housing Case studies House designs



#### Passive design

Designing to take advantage of natural heating and cooling can increase comfort and use less energy.



#### Materials

Choosing materials carefully can reduce harmful health effects and minimise waste and environmental impact.



#### Energy

Learn how to reduce power consumption and about renewable energy systems.



#### Water

Learn how to reduce water use inside and outside through improved water use efficiency.



#### Housing

Think about whether your house will be adaptable and resilient to demographic and environmental changes.

## Josh's House

<https://joshshouse.com.au/>

After 20 years renovating other people's houses and gardens demonstrating sustainable design ideas, Josh Byrne (environmental scientist & well-known ABC TV Gardening Australia presenter) undertook the design and construction of his own 10 star energy efficient family home in the Fremantle suburb of Hilton.

Tired of hearing that sustainable construction has to cost more, Josh and his colleagues set out to prove that resource efficient homes could be built at a comparable cost and timeframe to regular houses. What sets this project apart from many others is that the building designs have achieved a 10 Star NatHERS energy efficiency rating, while intentionally using conventional building materials and construction methods so they can easily be replicated by industry and the wider community. The project also demonstrates a more sensitive approach to residential subdivision that has considered maximising effective garden area around the homes to allow for natural shading, children's play spaces and local food production – important health and lifestyle benefits that are rapidly disappearing from our suburbs.

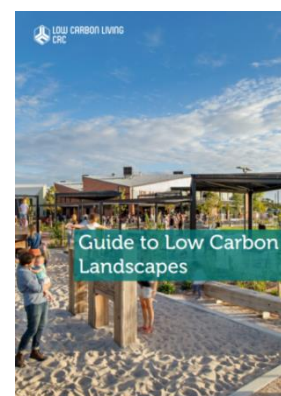
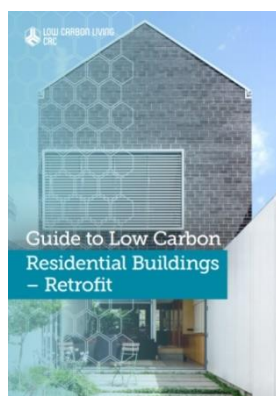
Construction commenced in November 2012 and was completed in June 2013. Now occupied as Josh's Family home, the house also functions as Living Laboratory where performance data is collected and reported in real time, new technology is tested and learnings are shared.



## Built Better

<http://builtbetter.org/lowcarbonguides>

The CRC for Low Carbon Living has produced a series of practical guides summarising best practice in various phases of the building lifecycle—construction, retrofit and operations for different climates and household needs.



## Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code – Design Guide and the “Missing Middle” Design Competitions

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Medium-Density-Housing/Design-Guides-for-Low-Rise-Medium-Density>

Currently, most new homes built in NSW tend to fall into two categories; traditional freestanding houses and apartments. Low rise medium density housing provides an alternative, as a more affordable housing option.

The Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code is supported by the *Low Rise Medium Density Design Guide for complying development*. The Guide aims to improve the design of medium density housing by addressing key considerations, including layout, landscaping, private open space, light, natural ventilation and privacy.



The NSW Government Architect’s Office ran a ‘Missing Middle Design Competition’ to promote and test the controls in the draft Design Guide. The results of this competition can be found here: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Medium-Density-Housing>

The Queensland State Government also ran a design competition; title “Density and Diversity Done Well”. South-east Queensland housing designs are generally considerate of sub-tropical climatic conditions – similar to much of the Bellingen Shire climate. The results of this competition can be found here: <https://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/aboutus/OQGA/Pages/DensityDiversityDoneWellOpenIdeaCompetition.aspx>

The above examples provide inspiration and illustrate good design, albeit at a variety of scales (with the larger scale developments more suited to a city rather than regional context).




## Centre for Liveability Real Estate (CSIRO)

<https://liveability.com.au/>

Our mission is to provide support for everyone to create and find a better home, one that is healthy, efficient, comfortable and connected to community.

The Liveability Features Framework was co-developed by Cecille Weldon and CSIRO. It defines and verifies an important cluster of 17 property features for Australian homes which deliver the potential for reduced running cost and increased comfort, if used correctly. They cover aspects of good building design, energy and water efficiency, renewables and energy ratings.


### The 17 Things™



#### The Renovators Guide to the 17 Things™

Sometimes it's hard to know where to start when you want to create a home that will deliver health, efficiency, comfort and connection to your local community. So we've put it all together for you. It's called The 17 Things™.


[Read more](#)



#### Renovating 'Right' from the Start

Passive building design is an aspect of good building design. There are seven key elements which can be used to design homes that are naturally heated and cooled and therefore require minimal mechanical heating or cooling.


[Read more](#)



#### The Secret of the Comfortable House

There are specific features in a home that can significantly assist you in achieving a truly comfortable home, one which can easily and efficiently adapt to changes in climate.

[Read more](#)




#### 1. Climate Zone

General climate classifications can be a great place to start to help you understand the bigger picture of your home's location and which specific climate appropriate design features to include.

[Read more](#)


### Room by Room Tips



#### Tips for Bedrooms and Living Areas

Want to slice 10% off your energy bill? Turn heating off half an hour before going to bed or leaving the house and you won't notice the house cooling. Includes How-To video.


[Read more](#)



#### Tips for the Living Room

You probably spend a lot of time in your living room, so it's the best place to start making your home more comfortable.


[Read more](#)



#### Tips for the Kitchen

The kitchen is home to one of the house's biggest energy guzzlers – the fridge – but simple actions can keep energy use down.

[Read more](#)



#### Liveability Videos

Whether it's checking the seals of your fridge or where the draughts are, our tips will also help you save on your bills! Our series of myth busters cracks into common myths about the home.

[Read more](#)

[View more Room by Room Tips posts](#)

## Queensland Government Housing and Public Works – Resources for Sustainable Homes

<https://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/Sustainability/SmartSustainableHomes/SustainableHomeResources/Pages/Default.aspx>

This website is a database of factsheets and short booklets and guides for homeowners, home buyers and builders as well as being useful for property industry professionals. The easy-to-read design guides include booklets on *Cost Efficiency*, *Indoor Air Quality*, *Safety and Security*, *The History of Sustainable House Design* (Queensland had an Act requiring sustainable house design in 1916!) and tips and factsheets for sustainability.



## Conclusion

During the *Homes for Our Future* engagement, support for infill was frequently noted as a way to provide more homes to meet the housing needs of our changing community. However, questions such as ‘what will infill look like?’ and ‘will it be compatible with our Shire’s unique country-town character?’ were also often expressed.

Infill housing already exists across the Shire, mostly harmoniously with surrounding development. In many instances infill housing is older (as in the walk-up flats in Urunga) or hidden from the street by landscaping or through design.

Some more recent examples of infill housing (such as duplex or townhouse development) in neighbouring areas and in Bellingen and Urunga have raised design-related concerns. For example common design concerns are buildings appearing too large and bulky, overlooking impacts on neighbours privacy, and properties having no or few trees, plants and lawns and too much built-up or concreted areas. Infill homes having insufficient parking was another concern, presenting a design challenge – how to balance enough parking area (essentially hard surfaces) and enough landscaped or green areas.

It is important to recognise sound *design processes* because it is at the beginning stages of planning and designing a home where challenges can be worked through and possible impacts minimised. Sometimes this design process is neglected, due to costs, time constraints, limited understanding of the benefits, lack of expertise and more. The planning system in recent times has been focused on quick supply of homes, although is now being reformed to include more consideration of design and built form outcomes.

It is important that these reforms include education around good design and also making sure good design can be delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner – well-designed homes should be accessible to everyone, e.g. for those living in the city or in the regions and for a wide range of budgets. Good design also supports sustainable living, which is very important to residents of Bellingen Shire.

A number of housing designs were created by local design professionals to show how current and hypothetical planning controls could be interpreted as new infill housing. These designs show the community what infill housing could look like. They also provide a basis to better understand building possibilities and how planning controls can be used to create different outcomes, including positive design elements and possible unintended consequences. The design teams included a short report and evaluation of current and hypothetical planning controls, to assist in understanding how the controls could be applied.

Often less desirable consequences of infill development result from poor design or limited investment in the design process, or from seeking to maximise development yields in order to make developments economically feasible (or more profitable). Cutting costs during construction can also lead to negative consequences and can compromise house design. The focus of providing new housing should move away from minimising costs to maximising value to future occupants and the community as a whole. Support for good design, that is accessible to the wider community, is fundamental to this shift.

Good design is not really about what a building or house looks like but about how comfortably it sits within its landscape and how it functions and supports the people using it over time. Whilst investing time and money in good design can cost more upfront, these costs are recouped over the life of the building – as a well-designed home built to last will save energy, water and money.

## Recommendations

Combined with good policy, governance and investment in infrastructure, good housing design can support growth that retains the special character of a place. Planning strategies and controls can promote good design in a number of ways.

### 1. Find and share more infill housing designs and real-life infill examples

To assist the community in understanding what infill housing could look like, more examples should be collected and shared. These examples can help inform continuing conversations about what good design means in our Shire. Infill examples can be used as inspiration and to stimulate new and innovative development that meets the housing needs of the community.

It is important to collect and include regional examples of infill housing. Infill housing can be delivered at many different scales, at different densities, and in many different ways, so it is important to have designs that are relevant to the Bellingen Shire context.

### 2. Community engagement and conversations about good infill design

The local infill designs and this study should be used during the public exhibition period for the Draft Housing Strategy to inform conversations about infill housing and good design across the Shire. The designs can be used to explore questions such as *what design aspects do people like?; what do they not like as much?; what can be improved?; and what should planning controls focus on and encourage?*

### 3. Nurture creative and design culture of the Shire and education about good design

We all want to live in well-designed, comfortable homes and reduce our environmental impact, but don't always know how best to go about this, especially given we all have different housing needs and budgets. However, there are many people with skills and passions across Bellingen Shire who can provide expertise or share insights relating to good design. Bellingen Shire is lucky to have a strong creative ethos and a community that cares about good design. Nurturing this culture means making or strengthening links and sharing knowledge between the community, design professionals and Council. These links will provide productive ways to understand different perspectives and work to provide solutions to issues.

Council should promote existing resources for people and groups wanting to learn about good design. In the longer term Council could also produce information and design guidance for local contexts.

### 4. Prepare Character Statements for Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga

By July 2020, Council must prepare a *Local Strategic Planning Statement* (LSPS) to describe character features across the Shire and identify desired future character. Council should also prepare complementary Character Statements for Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga. These important new planning documents will draw upon what we heard during the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement as well as be informed by further community input. Character Statements will be used to inform planning controls and decisions and will also be an important resource for the design and development industry.

### 5. Integrate design principles into planning controls

To ensure design is considered during the planning and development assessment process, planning objectives and controls should be updated to reflect the design principles on page 8. The NSW Government Architects *Draft Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* also contains many useful design principles that should be integrated into the local planning system and used to encourage good design and inform decision-making.

### 6. Use well-designed infill examples and refine planning controls to address common concerns about infill development

Planning controls currently allow infill development and various housing types, in all areas zoned R1 General Residential. Infill development can be controversial, usually in circumstances where neighbouring residents did not expect it, where infrastructure is insufficient or strained or where the design has not adequately considered potential impacts.

Understanding common concerns about infill housing can help refine planning controls to foresee and mitigate issues. For example the community have told us that infill development should not change the landscape of the area from majority green space to majority hard surfaces, that on-site parking should be provided for homes and that environmentally sustainable design and living should be encouraged. Planning controls should seek to emphasise the design process (for example by stepping through site analysis and requiring a site analysis plan). Planning controls should also be outcomes focused and include objectives which explain the purpose and aim of each control.

Whilst the impacts of modelled infill housing development in a neighbourhood may be minimal or manageable, concern may arise where development occurs beyond what was expected or modelled, or much faster than expected (i.e. more people develop infill than expected) leading to cumulative impacts. In a low-growth area such as Bellingen Shire, there is time to proactively plan to manage infill growth impacts, but if the market changes, strategies and planning measures need to be re-evaluated to manage growth. Effective monitoring of housing growth will be necessary and planning strategies and controls need to be kept up to date, with regular policy reviews undertaken.

**7. Provide planning controls that provide for generous landscaped areas and encourage tree planting and landscaping, consistent with the local character of the Shire**

An important and highly valued aspect of residential character across the Shire is the landscaping and sense of greenery. Even on small sites, in small areas or within multi-dwelling developments in the Shire, landscaped areas are prominent. Gardens of all types, shapes and sizes are notable features in most streetscapes. There are many opportunities to build upon a neighbourhood's sense of place through landscaping, as well as providing environmental and wellbeing benefits.

Infill development can and should include generous landscaped areas. Infill benefits from landscaping in many ways, including by softening the visual impact of new buildings; providing visual interest and space for residents to use and relax within; supporting wildlife and pollinators; and moderating climate (providing summer shade, wind breaks, allowing water to percolate the soil etc.). Planning controls should consider how to encourage infill development that provides sufficient landscaped areas to maintain local character and encourage more planting and gardening. These controls could include requiring landscape plans as part of development applications, requiring a percentage of each lot area to be landscaped area (permeable, and not built upon) and requiring a small tree/s be planted on each new dwelling lot.

**8. Invest in infrastructure to promote infill development in desirable locations**

Bellingen Shire Council has many current planning controls that encourage infill development. Relative to many other Council areas across NSW, these controls can be viewed as quite permissive. This suggests that there are other factors acting as barriers to infill development. Market research and community consultation indicates demand for infill housing products so it appears that infrastructure availability (the cost and ease of connecting to water, sewer, and utilities) is a significant barrier to infill. Planning controls relating to infrastructure provision for infill developments mean additional costs and limit viability of small-scale infill developments. Undertaking infrastructure network plans for desirable areas (e.g. infill focus areas) and investigating cost-sharing mechanisms is recommended.

## **Appendix – Infill Design Concepts – Architect's Drawings**