



## 2. The Strategic Approach

### 2.1 Growth Management Philosophy

Growth management is the mechanism by which the growth of an area is planned and controlled. One of the biggest issues to be tackled is the balance between urban consolidation (that is, the increase of existing residential densities) and the containment of urban sprawl as well as the impact of rural residential development on the rural uses and landscape.

The growth management philosophy for the Shire must consider the broader policy framework of the North Coast Urban Planning Strategy, North Coast Regional Environmental Plan, the Upper North Coast Catchment Blueprint, Guidelines for Sustainable Urban and Rural Settlement for the North Coast and other plans and policies affecting land use. It also must consider Ecologically Sustainable Development and Total Catchment Management principles.

The growth management philosophy for Bellingen Shire is:

- ▶ Limit expansion to those towns that have the capacity for growth;
- ▶ Provide for new rural residential development only where appropriate services can be provided and where environmental impacts can be minimised;
- ▶ Encourage a wide range of agricultural and other complimentary rural uses such as tourism having regard to environmental impact.
- ▶ Encourage and promote a diverse range of agricultural and other rural uses; and
- ▶ Embody the concepts of:
  - Ecologically Sustainable Development
  - Total Catchment Management, including the Actions in the Upper North Coast Catchment Blueprint

Growth management is not just about providing for more subdivision and housing. It is about managing the social and economic implications of future growth in a responsible manner while raising the awareness of the need to protect and preserve the environmental values of an area.

There is a need to ensure that growth management occurs in a wider strategic context. Therefore, the growth management of Bellingen Shire has to consider the impact on and of other areas outside the Shire. This includes economic, social and environmental impacts and the links to Coffs Harbour and the settlements in Nambucca Shire.

### 2.2 Detailing the Vision

Having regard to the issues raised by the community throughout the development of the Strategy, the Shire will be recognised for its outstanding quality of urban and rural life and for its commitment to environmental protection.



***Council is committed to working with interested organisations and individuals, together achieving:***

- ▶ ***quality residential development – in safe neighbourhoods with well planned access to nearby workplaces, services, recreation opportunities, and natural areas;***
- ▶ ***a strong and sustainable economy based on our resource assets, our natural appeal to tourists, and the footloose industries and activities of the information age;***
- ▶ ***contained urban development, surrounded by contiguous corridors of open space, protecting the integrity of rural land;***
- ▶ ***reduced dependency on the car as mobility options expand;***
- ▶ ***high standards of environmental protection – that preserve habitat, enhance ecological diversity, and maintains air and water quality;***
- ▶ ***protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and history; and***
- ▶ ***efficient servicing, infrastructure and resource utilisation.***

## **2.3 Community Consultation**

Council sees community consultation as a major component of the Bellingen Shire Growth Management Strategy. Consultation gives Council an opportunity to listen to what the community desires for the future of the Shire as well as allowing the Council to explain to the community the development issues and wider context of policy development within the North Coast region and NSW. It is also important to recognise that the community is vitally interested in the future of the Shire and as such should have input into the development of policies for the future.

A range of community consultation techniques were adopted to allow the community to identify their visions for the future as well as the actions that could be taken to achieve this vision for the Shire. These techniques included newsletters, media releases and public workshops.

### **2.3.1 Newsletter Content**

The newsletter was A4 booklet style newsletter which provided a background to the project, outlined the issues to be considered, the tasks to be undertaken and included details on how people could get involved. The newsletter included a “have your say form” which allowed participants to respond to six questions to allow the project team to understand the issues relevant to the Growth Management Strategy. The questions included in the “have your say form” were as follows:

- ▶ How would you describe the character of the town you live in or adjacent to? What makes it special?
- ▶ Do you support the orderly growth of these towns? Where should this growth be located?
- ▶ Do you support medium density development to accommodate this additional growth?
- ▶ What do you see as being the major constraints to development in Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo?
- ▶ Where should rural-residential development ( $\geq 1$  hectare allotments) be located?
- ▶ What facilities/ services do you think should be provided in the Urunga and Dorrigo Central Business Area?



### **2.3.2 Newsletter Distribution**

The newsletter was distributed via the Bellinger Courier-Sun to householders in Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo.

### **2.3.3 Newsletter Responses**

A total of 115 newsletter responses were received during the consultation period. Details of the responses are outlined in the Community Consultation Report.

### **2.3.4 Media Releases**

A series of media releases were issued via the Bellinger Courier-Sun and Don Dorrigo Gazette to inform the general community about the public workshops for the Growth Management Strategy and provide information about the progress and findings of GHDs investigations.

### **2.3.5 Public Workshop Locations and Dates**

Three workshops were held in the Shire at the following locations and dates:

- ▶ Valley (Bellingen) 12 May 2005
- ▶ Seaboard (Urunga) 20 May 2005
- ▶ Plateau (Dorrigo) 26 May 2005

They were held in these locations to ensure that the views of the different areas of the Shire were obtained.

Attendance at the workshops was reasonable (given the previous community consultation undertaken for the project) with the following numbers of people registering their attendance; Bellingen – 42, Urunga – 22, Dorrigo – 22.

### **2.3.6 Public Workshop Format**

The workshop used a technique of group consensus. The attendees were seated at tables in groups of 4 to 6 with other people from the same area. This enabled group discussion of the issues and provided a group focus for the workshop. Following the group discussion feedback from each table was written down on butcher's paper and shared with the rest of the workshop participants.

The workshop was facilitated by an independent facilitator who gave an overview of the workshop.

A number of questions were asked during the workshop which included:

- ▶ What words would you use to describe the character of Bellingen?
- ▶ What do you see are the good and bad attributes of residential development?
- ▶ What do you see are the good and bad attributes of rural- residential development?
- ▶ Given that some growth is inevitable, how can we plan for growth whilst maintaining the character of Bellingen?
- ▶ What words would you use to describe how you would like to see Bellingen in 20 years from now?



## **2.4 Community Aspirations**

The community's aspirations for the management of growth in the Shire is important. Community comment and feedback has been summarised in a separately published Community Consultation Report, dated September 2005.

It is clear that the community support the future development of the Shire provided:

- ▶ Lifestyle attributes of the area are retained
- ▶ Natural features of the area are conserved
- ▶ Viable towns support a mixture of housing types
- ▶ Rural residential development is located where it does not impact on agriculture
- ▶ Development is in harmony with the natural environmental attributes
- ▶ Urban development is contained
- ▶ Industry is hi tech, clean and green
- ▶ Tourism is promoted
- ▶ Council listens to the community
- ▶ Adequate and accessible community services are provided
- ▶ Arts, crafts, music and film are promoted

These aspirations are considered to be integral in determining the ultimate size, shape and character of the Shire's settlements.