



3. Population and Housing Analysis

In order to plan for future growth an analysis of the current and projected population over the life of the Strategy is required. It is here that the social and economic issues relevant to the Shire are understood.

3.1 Existing Population Characteristics

In 2001 the Bellingen Shire had a population of 12,208 which was a decrease of 45 (-0.37%) people since 1996 and an increase of 556 (4.8%) people since 1991.

The estimated 2004 resident population in the Shire was 12,996 persons (Dept of Health, 2005). This estimate suggests that the population has grown by 6.5% in the past 3 years.

The 2001 Census for population and housing provides details of the population and housing characteristics for the Bellingen Shire. The following statistics are the main features of the Bellingen Shire:

- ▶ The urban areas of the Shire had 7,377 people (60.4%) and the rural areas had 4,831 people (39.6%).
- ▶ The Valley has 6061 people (49.6%), the Seaboard has 3,914 people (32.1%), and the Plateau has 2,233 people (18.3%).
- ▶ The most populated rural communities (apart from the settlements) are Glenniffer – Valery (600), Boggy Creek – Kalang (569), Darkwood – Thora (544), Fernbrook – Dorrigo (449) and Never Never – Gordonville (413).
- ▶ The least populated part of the Shire is Cascade – Megan (227).
- ▶ There are a total of 5,513 dwellings of which 4,174 are occupied private dwellings and 185 dwellings are classified as caravans and cabins, 44 are improvised homes or attached to a shop whilst 187 are flats, units or apartments and 135 are town houses. The number of unoccupied private dwellings is 680 (12% of the total number of private dwellings) which is higher than the region (11%) and the State (9%).
- ▶ The village of Mylestom has the highest proportion of children aged 0-4 years (7.6% of the total population of the village).
- ▶ The town of Urunga has the highest proportion of people who are over 65 years old (29.9% of the total population)
- ▶ The Valley has the highest proportion of the population less than 4 years old (6.2%) and the Seaboard has the highest proportion of people over 65 years old (25.1%)
- ▶ Median weekly household incomes were \$400- \$499, which is less than the region (\$500-\$599) and lower than the NSW income of \$800-\$899).
- ▶ Skill levels of the workforce are 34% with vocational qualifications which is higher than the region (31%) but less than the State (36%).
- ▶ The main employment of the workforce is in retail trade (14.6%) followed by health and community services (11.9%), agriculture (11%) followed by education (10%) and manufacturing (8%) then Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (7%) and construction which is also 7%. The remaining



industry sectors are very diverse and include property and business (6%), wholesale trade (4%), Government Administration (4%) cultural and recreational services (3%), transport and storage (3%), personal and other services (3%), finance and insurance (2%), Communication services (2%) and electricity, gas and water supply (1%).

- ▶ 55% of working age residents are working or actively seeking employment (i.e. workforce participation rate)
- ▶ The unemployment rate is 14.6% for the Shire which is more than the region (13.2%) and NSW (7.2%).
- ▶ The population of the Valley was the most mobile with 43% of the population living at another address 5 years ago.
- ▶ Access to private transport is a key issue in many communities but only 9% of households do not have access to a motor vehicle compared with 10% for the region and 12% for the state.

The population and dwelling numbers for each of the settlements for 2001 and 1996 are provided in Table 3-1. It shows that all settlements except for Dorrigo had an increase in population and all settlements had an increase in the number of dwellings.

Table 3-1 Settlement Population and Dwelling Characteristics

Settlement	Population				Dwellings			
	1996	2001	Change		1996	2001	%Change	
			No.	%			No.	%
Bellingen	2,517	2,756	239	9.5	1,046	1,134	88	8.4
Urunga	2,439	2,442	3	0.1	1,302	1,335	33	2.5
Dorrigo	948	903	-45	-4.7	440	455	15	3.4
Fernmount / Raleigh	825	906	81	9.8	336	379	43	12.8
Repton	511	565	54	10.6	214	237	23	10.7
Mylestom	347	354	7	2.0	218	218	0	0

Source: ABS CData 2001 and Bellingen Community Profile

3.2 Population Projections

Forecasting the size and characteristics of the future population is a complex matter, and the predictions are generally more suitable for use in short-term planning compared with long-range projections. Population change is determined by two key factors (i.e. births/ deaths and migration) and is more accurately calculated at a large spatial scale. At a micro scale, population is more greatly influenced by local development and factors such as migration, which are difficult to predict, control and record.

DIPNR (now DOP) population projections for the Bellingen Shire for low, medium and high growth are outlined below.

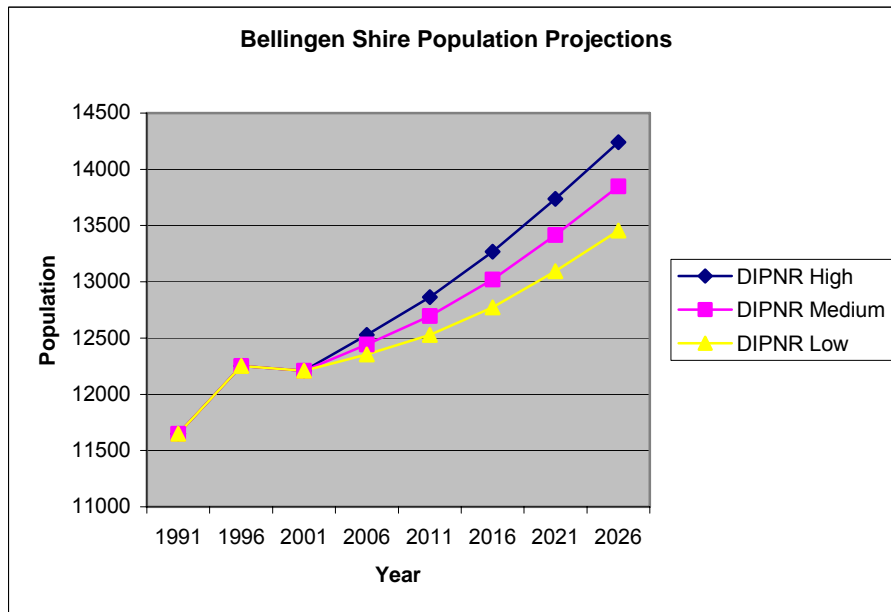


Figure 3-1 Bellinghen Shire DOP Population Projections

Source: HVR Foundation 2003 and BSC

Figure 3-1 reveals that the Shire is expected to grow between 1,249 and 2,034 persons by the year 2026. Historical data suggests that this increase in population is likely to be distributed across the Shire with Bellinghen accommodating 22.4%, Urunga 22.1% and Dorrigo accommodating 7.9% of this population respectively. The remainder of the population would be accommodated within the existing villages and rural areas of the Shire.

3.3 Forecasting Population Projections

During community consultation it was felt by the general community that the DOP population projections for the Shire seemed very low. In order to 'test' the DOP projections, an analysis of Council (BSC) dwelling statistics was undertaken for the 10 year period between 1995 and 2004. Figure 3-2 illustrates the residential, rural-residential and rural dwelling constructions in the Bellinghen Shire during that period.

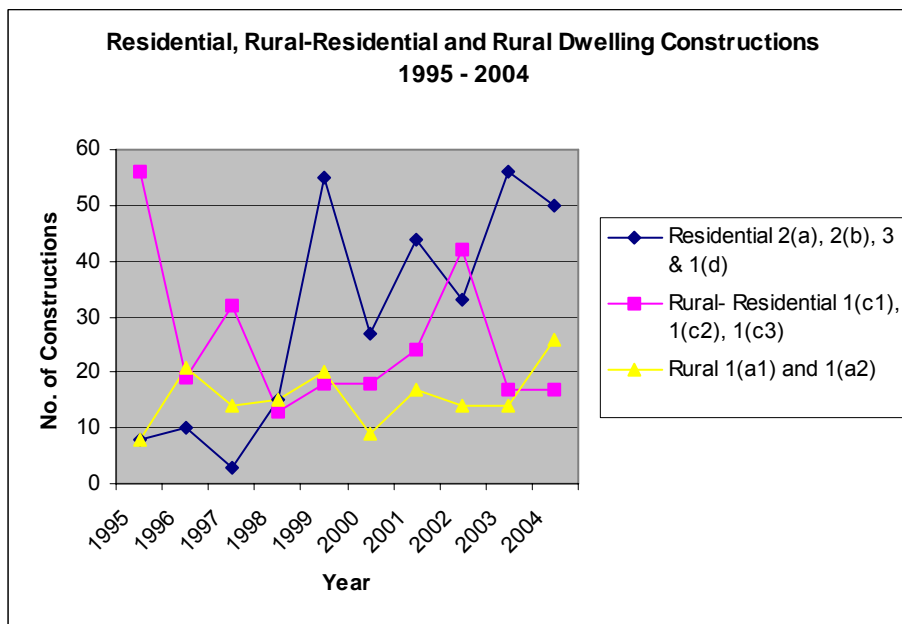


Figure 3-2 Bellinghen Shire Dwelling Constructions 1995 – 2004

The above figure indicates that on average 30 residential, 26 rural-residential and 16 rural dwellings have been constructed across the Bellinghen Shire per year since 1995. The majority of these dwellings have been constructed in and around Bellinghen and Urunga as illustrated in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Bellinghen Shire Residential, Rural-Residential and Rural Dwelling Constructions 1995 – 2004

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Bellinghen Residential	4	4	1	14	35	17	28	24	19	31
Bellinghen Rural-Residential	10	5	8	3	2	4	4	9	1	7
Urunga Residential	4	4	1	1	7	0	12	0	30	9
Urunga Rural-Residential	26	11	9	6	8	4	11	12	2	4
Dorrigo Residential	0	0	0	0	9	3	0	1	4	7
Dorrigo Rural-Residential	2	1	4	1	1	2	0	2	4	1
Other Valley Residential	0	1	0	0	2	6	3	8	0	0
Other Valley Rural-Residential	7	1	3	0	4	3	3	4	1	2



	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Other Valley Rural	5	13	3	10	7	7	6	6	5	16
Other Seaboard Residential	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	3
Other Seaboard Rural-Residential	10	1	8	3	1	5	6	15	9	3
Other Seaboard Rural	0	4	5	4	6	1	3	2	5	4
Other Plateau Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Plateau Rural-Residential	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other Plateau Rural	3	4	6	1	7	1	8	6	4	6
TOTAL	72	50	49	43	93	54	85	89	87	93

Dwelling projections were determined using the above historical data from Council dwelling approvals in Bellingin, Urunga and Dorrigo. Average dwelling constructions per year were then used to calculate the expected number of dwellings within each town by 2026. Figure 3-3 illustrates the expected residential dwelling projections for Bellingin, Urunga and Dorrigo and the comparison between DOP and BSC projections.

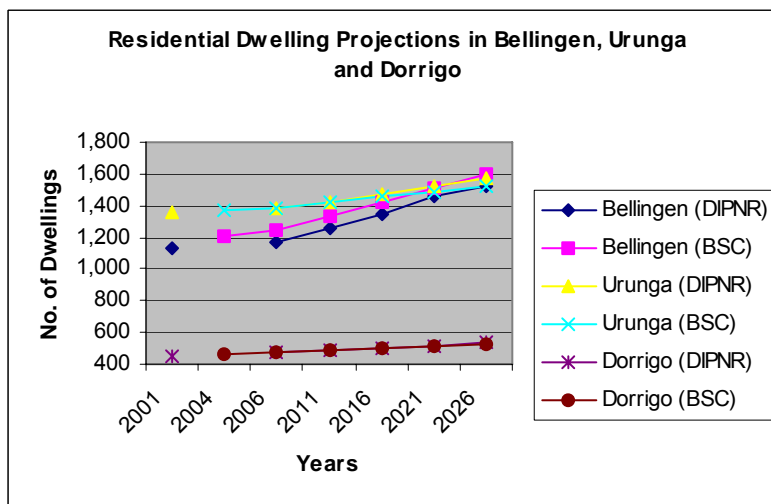


Figure 3-3 Dwelling Projections

Source: HVR Foundation 2003 and BSC



Figure 3-3 highlights the similarities between the expected DOP dwelling projections and the Council extrapolated historical statistics. Based on this information it would appear that the DOP projections accurately reflect the expected future growth within the Shire.

Population projections were then calculated using the above historical data from Council dwelling approvals in Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo. Average dwelling constructions per year were multiplied by the projected occupancy rate to calculate the expected growth rate to 2026. Figure 3-4 illustrates the expected population projections for Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo and the comparison between DOP and BSC projections.

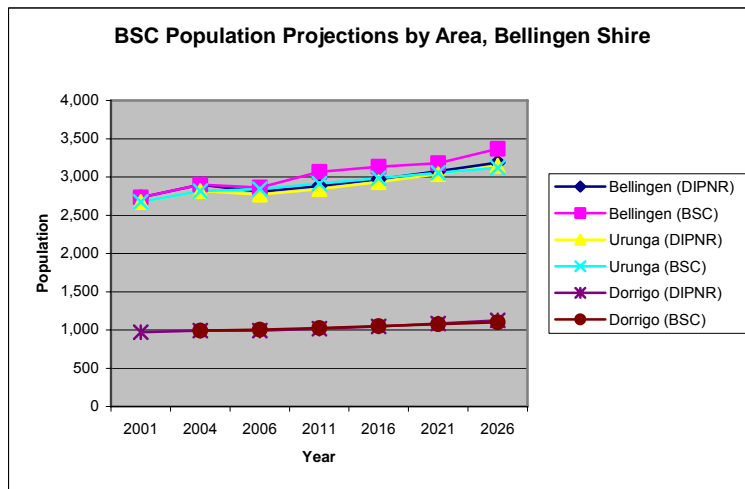


Figure 3-4 Population Projections by Area

Source: HVR Foundation 2003 and BSC

Figure 3-4 highlights the similarities between the expected DOP population projections and the Council extrapolated historical statistics for Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo. Figure 3-5 illustrates the comparison between DOP and BSC projections for the Shire.

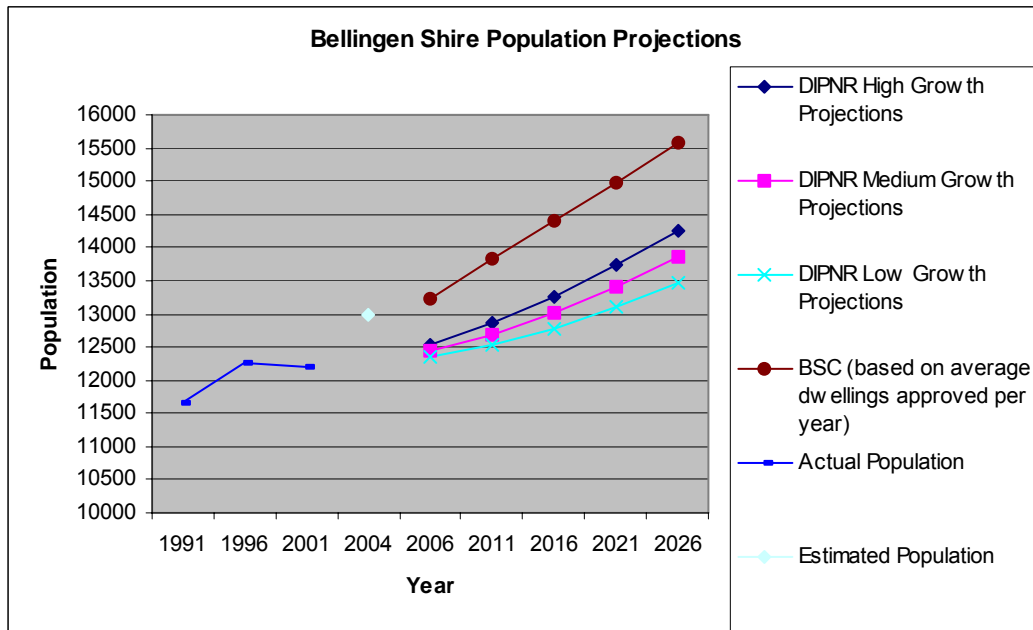


Figure 3-5 Population Projections for Bellingen Shire

Figure 3-5 highlights the extrapolated population projections for the Shire and the difference between DOP projections and the projections derived from BSC dwelling statistics. The projected population is expected to grow between 461 (DOP low growth projections) and 2,574 (BSC dwelling projections) by 2026. Given the similarities between the DOP and BSC extrapolated projections for Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, it can only be assumed that the DOP projections have not factored in the growth of other parts of the Shire including Repton, Raleigh, Mylestom, rural-residential development and other rural housing.

3.4 Population Projections used for this Strategy

Given the disparity between the DOP and BSC projections, forecasting for additional residential and rural-residential land will use averaged DOP and BSC projections to ensure adequate supply of appropriate zoned land without over supply. It should be noted that due to the discrepancies between DOP and BSC projections there will be a need to monitor the progress of development to ensure, where possible, that demand meets supply.