



6. Considerations for Future Growth

6.1 Potential for Growth of Settlements

In order to ensure that a settlement is sustainable it should not have any adverse impacts on its social, economic and environmental sustainability. This means that it should provide for an adequate level of social services and infrastructure so that the residents can enjoy an adequate quality of life. It should also provide a broad base of economic activity as well as not causing pollution of surrounding waterways by ensuring that domestic effluent is disposed of in an acceptable manner and there is not any significant impact on biodiversity. The growth of a settlement can be both within the existing boundaries (infill development) and an expansion of the existing boundaries.

6.2 Specific Issues

An analysis of the issues affecting the Shire's settlements has been undertaken in order to determine the capacity of each settlement to accommodate new growth.

6.2.1 Health Facilities

The LGA is currently serviced by the Bellinger River District Hospital and Community Health Service and the Dorrigo Multi-Purpose and Community Health Service. The Bellinger River Hospital has 34 acute beds and offers day only surgery and low level obstetrics whilst the Dorrigo Hospital has 21 residential beds, 6 acute care beds with no surgery or obstetric care.

The Health Services Care Plan prepared by the North Coast Area Health Service in 2005 provides relevant information regarding the services and facilities offered within the LGA.

The Health Services Care Plan states that within the life of the plan (up to 2008):

- ▶ Bellinger River District Hospital will continue to provide current acute services
- ▶ Surgical Services to be maintained and networked
- ▶ The current role delineation will be maintained
- ▶ Community Health services will be maintained
- ▶ Network and support with Dorrigo MPs will continue
- ▶ Catchment population will continue to flow to Coffs Harbour Health Campus for tertiary care.
- ▶ Dorrigo MPS will continue to provide current services
- ▶ Government Access Centre function will continue
- ▶ Primary patient flows for higher level care from Dorrigo will continue to be to CHHC.

Significant Characteristics

- ▶ Moderate growth - population projected to grow by 882 or 6.9% between 2001 and 2011(ERP NSW Health June 2003)
- ▶ Significant aged population – 17% of total population in 2001 were aged 65 years and over, projected to grow to 20% by 2011(ERP NSW Health June 2003)



- ▶ Aboriginal population – in 2001 (Census) 2.7% of the Bellingen population (325 people) were Aboriginal
- ▶ Slightly higher than average paediatric population – in 2001, 23% of the Bellingen population were aged 0-14 years, projected to decline to 18% by 2011. This is slightly higher than the state average of 21% declining to 18% over the same period (ERP NSW Health June 2003)
- ▶ Low socio-economic status – using the SEIFA scores (reference score for Australia is 100),
- ▶ Bellingen LGA scores 890.07 for Economic Resources and 949.14 for Relative SE Disadvantage (based on NSW average of 1,000).

Impacts on Health Service Provision

- ▶ Moderate growth in population coupled with ageing of population will place additional demand on all service areas. Aged residents are high consumers of most areas of health, particularly chronic and complex care. Without significant increase in Commonwealth provision of residential aged care accommodation, there will be an increased occupancy of acute hospital beds
- ▶ The Bellingen paediatric population will impact on Emergency Department (ED), and require integrated paediatric services, including overnight services within the network, and tertiary paediatric services outside the Area
- ▶ Low socio-economic status will mean steady demand on all public health services, including ED.

Analysis

- ▶ Inpatient separations at Bellinger River District Hospital have remained steady over the last three years with a decrease in average cost weight, but increase in bed-days, occupancy rates and average length of stay (ALOS), this is reflected in the predominantly medical separations
- ▶ Day only separations have decreased
- ▶ The ALOS has increased significantly which could be due to the increase in non-acute care, however the numbers are small and firm conclusions cannot be reached.
- ▶ Minimal change has occurred over the last three years in the mix of acute medical, surgical and paediatric care. Also there has been minimal change in obstetric care, which remains low
- ▶ A decrease in rehabilitation and extended care services could be due to termination of a contract with the Department of Veteran Affairs.
- ▶ Most acute care separations are for adult medical care with minimal paediatrics and there has been no change over the last three years with this mix
- ▶ Emergency department and outpatient services have both decreased
- ▶ Extended care and primary & community occasions of service have increased which is consistent with the trends for most community services.

Given the anticipated growth rate identified by the Health Services Care Plan, health care services and facilities, in Bellingen, LGA will continue to provide adequate care with assistance from Coffs Harbour Health Campus.



Opportunities and Constraints

Bellingen

- ▶ The low number of births at the hospital makes it difficult for General Practitioners and Midwives to maintain obstetric skills, and for midwives to be recruited.
- ▶ The physical structure of the current facility, particularly in relation to service functionality and security of staff and patients
- ▶ The design and functionality of Emergency Department.

Dorrigo

- ▶ Viability of Paediatric services in Dorrigo
- ▶ Maintaining a viable procedural services with local follow up.
- ▶ Current transport services are infrequent and inflexible.
- ▶ Reliance on Coffs Harbour Health Campus

6.2.2 Education Facilities

A number of government schools operate within the Bellingen LGA. An assessment of their capacity to cater for future expansion in line with expected population growth is outlined below:

Bellingen High School

Recent discussions with Bellingen High School reveal that current student numbers total 670 but the school can cater for up to 715 to 720 students. The school has also indicated that sufficient land exists to accommodate an additional 6 to 10 buildings which could increase capacity by an additional 250 students.

Bellingen Public School

Recent discussions with Bellingen Public School reveal that current student numbers total 282 but the school has had up to 500 students in the past. The school at that time had 4 additional demountables. The school therefore has capacity for an additional 100 students assuming that 4 demountables could be located at the school.

Bellingen Catholic Primary School

Recent discussions with Bellingen Catholic Primary School reveal that it is capable of minor expansion in line with forecasted development.

Urunga Public School

Urunga Public School has indicated that current student numbers total 290 but the school can cater for up to 350 students. The school has also indicated that sufficient land exists to accommodate an additional 3 classrooms which could increase capacity by an additional 75 students.



Dorrigo Schools

It is understood that school facilities in Dorrigo are capable of minor expansion in line with forecasted development.

Chrysalis School for Rudolf Steiner Education

A non-government school, Chrysalis School for Rudolf Steiner Education also operates in Bellingen. It is understood limited capacity exists for expansion within this school at present.

Given the capacity that exists for additional students in all schools, future development can be adequately serviced.

Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Capacity exists for additional students in all schools with investment required for significant increases.

6.2.3 Water and Sewerage Infrastructure

Water

Bellingen Shire has two water supply schemes, the Dorrigo Scheme and the Lower Bellinger Scheme serving the towns of Bellingen, Urunga, Repton, Newry Island, Raleigh and Mylestom. The Dorrigo Scheme draws water from the Bielsdown River and as a backup, Rocky Creek. It is pumped to a modern sedimentation and filtration treatment plant and then to two daily balancing reservoirs to serve the town.

The Lower Bellinger Scheme draws water from a well and three bores in the gravel beds adjoining the Bellinger River just upstream of Bellingen. The raw groundwater is of a better standard than surface water so only minor level of treatment is required. The water is distributed via a network of pumping stations, distribution mains, and daily balancing reservoirs at Bellingen, Marx Hill, Raleigh, Urunga and Repton.

Current estimates reveal that water extraction levels from the Bellinger River for the Lower Bellinger water scheme are reaching the limit of Council's licence. The current requirement from Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (formerly DIPNR) is for Council to determine the relationship between environmental river flow and extraction from the bore flow. DNR have requested that Council prepare an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan prior to issuing an amended licence and the rezoning of land for urban development. Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCMP) is a way for local water utilities to manage their water systems to maximise benefits to the community and environment. It involves the integration of water supply, sewerage and stormwater, to ensure that water is used optimally within a catchment resource, state and national policy context (NSW Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability). The purpose of developing an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan (IWCMP) is to evaluate integrated water management opportunities within the Shire. This plan should contain the Council's vision to manage urban water services within the local catchment context.

Council have initiated a recent investigation of the borefields as a precursor to the IWCMP. Council's consultants, Parsons Brinckerhoff have revealed that extraction levels from the Bellinger River could be doubled for the Lower Bellinger water scheme without significant environmental impact.

Sewer

The urban areas of Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga are provided with a reticulated sewerage scheme. Dorrigo sewerage is treated to secondary standard, before discharge to the Bielsdown River. Council is currently planning an upgrade of the plant and implementation of an agricultural reuse scheme by 2006.



Bellingen sewage is treated to tertiary standard, before discharge to the Bellinger River.

Urunga sewerage is treated to tertiary standard, before discharge to the Urunga Lagoon.

Adequacy of Infrastructure

The existing water and sewer systems of Bellingen Shire have been assessed by GHD (Water and Sewer Investigation, 2005) to determine whether they are adequate for future residential developments. The growth areas originally identified in the draft Growth Management Strategy prepared in 2003 comprising a total land area of 40 hectares (ha) of land in the Dorrigo area, 138.8 ha in the Urunga area and 74.6 ha in the Bellingen area were used to assess infrastructure adequacy. To estimate the yield of the future developments 10 lots per hectare was used.

In general the assessment of both the sewer and water systems involved estimating the number of properties currently serviced by each. This was done by assuming that individual allotments were serviced based on their proximity to an existing reticulation main, as there was no individual connection information available. This together with the zonings from the Bellingen Shire Council Local Environment Plan (LEP) were used to estimate the potential existing connected properties, or equivalent tenements (ET). This method of estimating the existing properties serviced does not distinguish between developed and undeveloped land, thus includes all potential infill development.

The bulk water supply system for both Dorrigo and Lower Bellingen has sufficient capacity to accommodate those future growth areas without any infrastructure requirements.

The Dorrigo sewer pumping station system was assessed to have one pump under capacity, D2. The future developments will drain directly to the Dorrigo wastewater treatment works (WWTW) gravity catchment and therefore do not impact on any other pumping station catchments. No improvements are therefore required for future development in Dorrigo.

The Bellingen sewer system has three pump stations under capacity for the estimated maximum ET yield from existing zoned areas for urban development, including both developed and undeveloped residential, business and industrial zone land. These are B1, B2 and B3. The future developments will result in B6 requiring augmentation and pump upgrades of the already under capacity B1 and B3.

The Urunga sewer system has four pump stations under capacity under the maximum estimated peak wet weather flow (PWWF) from the existing developed areas. These include YR1, YR5, U1 and U6. The proposed future development areas within the Urunga WWTW catchment will require servicing by new pump stations. These new pump stations may pump into the gravity catchment of either U1 or U5 or alternatively pump straight to the Urunga WWTW. If the new pump stations were to pump into the existing pumping station catchments augmentation of these pump stations, rising mains and downstream carriers and pump stations will be required.

The Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga WWTW all have sufficient capacity for the estimated sewer flows with provision for future growth areas. The Dorrigo WWTW has a design ET of 1,550; the Bellingen WWTW has a design ET of 4,000 and Urunga 6,650 ET.

The ultimate development of the future growth area in Dorrigo would increase the total ET serviced by the Dorrigo WWTW from 652 ET to 1,052 ET, below both the current and design capacity ET limits.

These ultimate ETs from the future growth area in Bellingen would bring the estimated total ET treated by the Bellingen WWTW to 2,174, well below the design limit and current capacity of 3,200 ET.



The additional 1,017 ET from the ultimate development of the future growth area in Urunga would bring the estimated total of ET treated by the Urunga WWTW to 2,176, well below the design limit and current capacity of 3,100 ET.

Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Consider incentives for potential developers to implement water sensitive urban design such as recycling grey water for re-use in toilet flushing, garden irrigation etc;
- ▶ Despite the results of the borefield investigation by Parsons Brinckeroff, no further rezoning of land utilising the Lower Bellingen water supply can take place until such time as an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan is prepared by Council.
- ▶ Future urban development in Bellingen will require the augmentation of the identified pump stations currently under capacity.
- ▶ New pump stations will be required in South Urunga. If they are to pump into the existing pumping station catchments augmentation of these pump stations, rising mains and downstream carriers and pump stations will be required.

6.2.4 Electricity

Country Energy is the responsible authority for the supply of electricity to the Bellingen Shire. It is understood that Country Energy are in the process of providing upgrades to the capacity of the system around Bellingen to resolve current deficiencies.

Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Ensure that adequate infrastructure exists prior to the rezoning of additional residential and rural-residential land.
- ▶ Analysis of future areas for development should acknowledge the location of any existing easements, which should be included in any Master Plan/ DCP.
- ▶ The visual impact of existing transmission lines needs to be considered.

6.2.5 Transport and Access

Roads

The Pacific Highway passes through the coastal part of the Shire and provides a north south link through the Shire. The Waterfall Way links the coast and Pacific Highway with the New England Highway to the west. Much of the traffic through the Shire relies heavily upon these two main roads. Most of the Council public roads do not meet contemporary engineering standards for their current traffic volumes. In the valley this is largely due to the topographical constraints to ideal vertical and horizontal alignments (long narrow river valleys with narrow floodplains and steep ridges). On the plateau the main constraint tends to be the standard of physical formation within an existing acceptable alignment. In virtually all cases substantial road upgrading works will be required to achieve acceptable road standards.

Lavenders Bridge

Lavenders Bridge has been identified as a possible constraint to the future development of North Bellingen, particularly given the reliance of residents at North Bellingen for services and facilities at South



Bellinghen and the cutting of Bridge Street during minor flood events. The existing bridge provides for 8 spans supported by five timber piles per head stock and five timber girders per span. The width of the carriageway is 5.4 metres between kerbs and a footpath is provided for pedestrians. The deck level is constructed at 3.8 metres AHD and provides a flood free level of service of 1 in 6 months ARI.

Council currently levies a contribution via the Bellinghen Bridge Contribution Plan for all urban and rural-residential development to recoup construction costs of the current bridge. Council will consider whether a new contribution plan is to be prepared for the reconstruction of the current bridge and whether any future development be required to pay a contribution.

Hyde Street/ Bridge Street Intersection

For the same reasons identified with Lavenders Bridge, the Hyde Street/ Bridge Street intersection has been identified as a possible constraint to the future development of North Bellinghen. Concern has been raised over the performance of the intersection particularly during peak periods. An analysis of the performance of the Hyde Street/ Bridge Street intersection has been undertaken to determine the likely impact development at North Bellinghen may have on the intersection up to 2026. (See Table 6-1).

Table 6-1 Current Intersection Analysis

Year	Period	Worst Approach	Degree of Saturation	Level of Service	Average Delay (seconds)	Longest Queue Length (m)	Comment
2006	am	Bridge St - Right	0.319	B	15.4	14	Satisfactory
	pm	Bridge St - Right	0.508	B	23.6	24	Satisfactory
2011	am	Bridge St - Right	0.55	B	22.7	29	Satisfactory
	pm	Bridge St - Right	0.883	E	56.5	71	Unsatisfactory - planning for upgrade required or make Bridge St Left in/out only
2016	am	Bridge St - Right	0.9	D	54.1	82	Tolerable in peak periods
	pm	Bridge St - Right	1.529	F	522.9	473	Capacity exceeded - Upgrade required
2021	am	Bridge St - Right	1.445	F	448.1	475	Capacity exceeded - Upgrade required



Year	Period	Worst Approach	Degree of Saturation	Level of Service	Average Delay (seconds)	Longest Queue Length (m)	Comment
	pm	Bridge St - Right	2.628	F	1527.1	977	Capacity exceeded - Upgrade required
2026	am	Bridge St - Right	2.331	F	1244.4	972	Capacity exceeded - Upgrade required
	pm	Bridge St - Right	3.142	F	2000.3	1257	Capacity exceeded - Upgrade required

The above table illustrates that the existing configuration at the intersection would begin to fail by 2011 and that an upgrade of the intersection or restrictions on turning manoeuvres would be required by 2016 to improve the performance of the intersection. Should the intersection be upgraded, it would function at a satisfactory level of service as illustrated in following Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Roundabout Intersection Analysis

Year	Period	Worst Approach	Degree of saturation	Level of Service	Average Delay (seconds)	Longest Queue Length (m)	Comment
2016	am	Bridge St	0.793	B	15.2	81	Satisfactory
	pm	Bridge St	0.767	B	15.8	76	Satisfactory

Pacific Highway Upgrade

The proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway will have an impact on the potential future development of the land surrounding Urunga. The preferred route has been selected by the RTA (Option 4b), and will be to the west of the town. This option will lessen the traffic constraint on the land to the south of the existing residential zone.

Rail

The North Coast Railway Line passes through the coastal part of the Shire, with an unmanned station at Urunga and a siding at Raleigh. It carries regular passenger and freight services. The main station is at Coffs Harbour

Air

The Coffs Harbour International Airport is the main facility for the region. Virgin Blue and Qantas are the main domestic carriers and also private air charter companies operate out of the airport.



Bicycles and Pedestrians

Currently walking and cycling do not account for many trips made to and around the Bellingen Shire. This would be due to the large distances between towns and villages, topography and lack of foot and cycle paths. Council in conjunction with GHD prepared a Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan. The PAMP and Bike Plan aims to:

- ▶ Define 'Core Activity Zones' typically main commercial areas
- ▶ Define 'Other Trip Generators' including shops, schools, sporting facilities, clubs, hospitals
- ▶ Define Primary Pedestrian and Cyclist Routes including routes from residential areas to 'Core Activity Zones' or 'Other Trip Generators'

The PAMP and Bike Plan provides recommendations to guide the development of new pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Shire by filling in the gaps of the core activity areas of each town through new footpaths, shared paths, crossing points and bicycle parking, particularly if safety issues have been raised. It also aims to build a structured network of key routes into the town centre and between major trip generators including schools. Cost estimates for recommended facilities are also provided.

Car Parking

Car parking availability is a key factor in determining if the car will be used as the mode of transport for a particular trip. Car Parking has been identified as an issue within each of the Central Business District of Bellingen and the Central Business Areas of Urunga and Dorrigo. The Bellingen CBD Study undertaken in 2002 analysed car parking and associated issues. The study made reference to a previous study in 1991 which accompanied the proposed plan for the Town Square. The 1991 study concluded that there was adequate supply to meet the then present demand and that up to 30 parking spaces could be removed from Church St north of Hyde Street without adversely affecting parking supply in the CBA then or in the future subject to the following being undertaken:

- ▶ Remaining spaces in Church Street to be time restricted;
- ▶ Effective policing of time restricted parking spaces in the CBA;
- ▶ Conversion of some unrestricted spaces in Church and Oak Street to time restricted spaces; and
- ▶ Provision of a small, unrestricted car park on the southern side of Jarrett Park.

The 2002 Study made further recommendations including:

- ▶ Convert existing time restricted on-street parking in Hyde Street from 2 hours to 1 hour from Bridge Street to Oak Street.
- ▶ Provide two bays each of 15 minutes at the Banana Coast Credit Union in Church Street near the taxi rank in Hyde Street and at the National bank in Hyde Street.
- ▶ Formalise parking in Jarrett Park on the eastern side of the bridge to provide unrestricted parking.
- ▶ Provide parking spaces allocated for cars and caravans at either Hyde Street (west bound, southern side in front of garage east of Oak Street), Hyde Street (east bound, northern side in front of court house) or in car parks proposed for upgrading in Jarrett Park on the river.

Most of these recommendations have been implemented to improve the parking situation within the CBA, however continued pressure will be placed on CBA parking as it continues to service the Shire's growth.



Investigations into both the Urunga and Dorrigo CBAs reveal that adequate car parking is available, given the floor space areas they serve. Contributions plans have been prepared to levy future development for the provision of car parking.

Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Local access points to development areas need to be determined with respect to the existing road network and future demands
- ▶ Consideration needs to be given to the review of the Bellingen Bridge Contributions Plan to reflect the current replacement/ reconstruction costs of Lavenders Bridge in order to improve its flood immunity.
- ▶ An upgrade of the Hyde Street/ Bridge Street intersection would be required beyond 2011.
- ▶ The preferred route for the Pacific Highway deviation at Urunga has been selected by the RTA (Option 4b), and will be to the west of the town. Minor impacts will be experienced on land at Raleigh.
- ▶ Design of the future road network needs to provide for bus measures and on-road bicycle facilities linked to cycleways where identified in Council's Bike Plan.
- ▶ Safe pedestrian footpaths and cycleways should link community facilities, open space, schools, shopping areas, bus stations key employment areas with residential areas where appropriate.
- ▶ Any redevelopment of the Bellingen CBD should consider the need for additional car parking.

6.2.6 Community Facilities and Services

A range of community facilities are provided by Council and others throughout the LGA. These include:

Infrastructure, Facilities and Services provided directly by Bellingen Shire Council at November 2004

Aged and Disability

- ▶ Dorrigo Support Centre. Development Staff (2); Neighbour Aid/ Dementia Day Care and Supported Accommodation Program at Dorrigo, Services (2), service used 3092 occasions per year
- ▶ HACC centre (1) Open 1 day per week, 55 clients per year
- ▶ Senior Citizens Centres at Bellingen open 5 days per week, Dorrigo, open 4 days per week, and Urunga open 2 days per week (Buildings Only)
- ▶ Financial and administrative assistance to the Bellingen Shire Access Committee

Children

- ▶ North Bellingen Children's Centre (building only)

Education

- ▶ Pre-school (Buildings Only) (3)

Generic

- ▶ Community Development & Social Planning staff (1) (part-time)



- ▶ Administrative assistance to the Bellingen Shire Arts & Cultural Committee
- ▶ Neighbourhood Centres (Buildings Only) (2)
- ▶ Public Halls (Buildings Only) (10)

Youth

- ▶ Dorrigo Youth Service. Development Staff (1) Youth Service Office (1) Youth Room (1)

Infrastructure, Facilities and Services provided by Others and supported by Bellingen Shire Council at November 2004

Aged and Disability

- ▶ Action Respite Service for carers of people with a disability (1)- Provide land, building/office space & building maintenance.
- ▶ Senior Citizen Centres (3) – Provide land, building/office space & building maintenance.
- ▶ Senior Citizens Mylestom Hall - Provide subsidy for use of Mylestom Hall
- ▶ Financial assistance for Senior Citizen Week

Children

- ▶ Family Day Care (1) – Provide land, building/office space at nominal rent & building maintenance
- ▶ Special Needs in Bellingen Shire (SNIBS) (1)- Provide land, building/office space, building maintenance, participate in managing and waive DA and other fees
- ▶ Provision of Council buildings for playgroups in Bellingen and Mylestom.

Education

- ▶ Pre-schools (3) – Provide land, building/office space at nominal rent & building maintenance

Generic

- ▶ Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre (1) - Provide land, building/office space, building maintenance and waive DA and other fees.
- ▶ Urunga Neighbourhood Centre (1) - Provide land, building/office space, building maintenance and waive DA and other fees.
- ▶ Financial assistance for the Bellingen Shire Community Directory

Youth

- ▶ Bellingen & Seaboard Youth Services (1) – Provide land, building/office space, building maintenance, participate in managing, waive DA and other fees
- ▶ Financial assistance for Youth Week activities.

A range of community services are provided throughout the Bellingen Shire including:

- ▶ Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre, located near the Library in the park, Hyde Street. Provides information, advocacy, referral, community development, public facilities (photocopying and fax), small group rooms available
- ▶ Bellingen Bereavement Service.



- ▶ Bellingen Family and Children's Service inc. Auspices Family Day Care
- ▶ Bellingen and Seaboard Youth Services
- ▶ Bellingen Shire Support Network. Located in the Bellingen Children's Centre
- ▶ Bellingen & Nambucca Shire Action Respite Service
- ▶ *Bellingen Neighbour Aid Service based in Jacaranda House Respite Day Care Centre.*
- ▶ Dorrigo Government Access Centre, located in the Community Health Building of the Dorrigo Multipurpose Centre, provides government services primarily to the Dorrigo Community as well as the whole Shire area, namely RTA, Legal Aid, Centrelink, Department of Fair Trading, Housing, Health and Family Services.
- ▶ Dorrigo Support Centre
- ▶ Dorrigo Youth Services
- ▶ Meals on Wheels
- ▶ Urunga Neighbourhood Centre, located in Bonville Street, Urunga, information, referral for services, advocacy, different groups meet in these premises as their outreach service e.g. AA, Mid North Coast Health, Narcotics Anonymous
- ▶ Council supports the Area Assistance Scheme, employing a part time community development officer to manage the scheme locally. The AAS provides funds for human services to community organisations in local government and regional areas.
- ▶ Frontline Council employees have been informed of the Community Language Brochures supplied by the Department of Local Government and the availability of interpreters for people of non-English speaking background.
- ▶ Council has provided hearing loops in the Council Chambers and the foyer of the Administration Building in Bellingen to assist people with hearing difficulties.
- ▶ Council frames its policies and practices to be flexible to accommodate all of its citizens including those who are culturally diverse.
- ▶ Bellingen Shire Access Committee, an advisory Committee with 12 members of the community who either experience a disability, work with or care for people with a disability. Council financially assist this Committee by allocating funds for special access projects identified by the Access Committee.
- ▶ Council has developed a Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan to examine and review Council services under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Physical Access issues and service delivery have been reviewed as well as the responsibilities of Council as an employer of people with disabilities, under the Act.
- ▶ Council has also established an Arts & Cultural Committee of Council to advise council in the development of Art and Culture in the community.

Council has developed an Arts & Cultural Plan for the Shire with the assistance of the Arts & Cultural Committee and the wider community.



Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Review the use of existing Council owned facilities in consideration of need, location & usage to ensure maximum effectiveness of use and equity of access to services
- ▶ Lack of adequate &/or suitable accommodation for existing locally based services
- ▶ Outreach services. Insufficient promotion & research to reach clients leads to low access & usage & false indication of need, budgets not always adequate to cover travel costs to Bellingen Shire, outreach services reduced, downsized or terminated
- ▶ Impact of high growth and/or social stress or decline of some population centres as a result of government and industrial restructuring (DUAP AAS 1999)
- ▶ Transience and increasing population mobility
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Inequity of access to existing services
- ▶ Need for improved service co-ordination and access to address fragmentation
- ▶ Inadequate community infrastructure and services
- ▶ Lack of programs and services to meet the needs of young people and an aged and ageing population.

6.2.7 Open Space

The Bellingen LGA currently provides a range of passive and active open space throughout Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo. These include:

- ▶ Parks and Gardens – 256.8 hectares.
- ▶ Sporting Grounds – 27.6 hectares.
- ▶ Swimming Pools – outdoor (2) located at Dorrigo and Bellingen. River Baths at Mylestom and Urunga.
- ▶ Tennis Courts located at Bellingen Park, Robert Wolfe Park Bellingen, Hickory Street Dorrigo, Megan Hall, and Mylestom.
- ▶ Surf Clubs – North Beach and Hungry Head.
- ▶ Indoor Sports Stadium at Dorrigo Recreation Reserve.
- ▶ Skateboard ramps - Bellingen (2), Urunga and Dorrigo have one each.
- ▶ Play Equipment in Bellingen - Bellingen Park, Children’s Centre North Bellingen, Connell Street, Dowle Street, Hewitt Park, Piggott Park, Pre-school in Church Street, Robert Wolfe Park.
- ▶ Play Equipment at Dorrigo – Recreation Reserve, Wheaten Reserve, Bielsdown Park, Coronation Park, Dangar Falls, Heritage Park, Hollibone Street, Ray Cork Park.
- ▶ Play Equipment at Urunga – Atherton Drive, Bellinger Keys, Maramba Park, South Street



- ▶ Other locations for Play Equipment at Burdett Park Fernmount, Gilbert Reserve Bostobrick, Alma Doepel Park Mylestom, Tennis Courts at North Beach, North Beach Caravan Park, Raleigh Hall, Repton fire shed site.
- ▶ Cricket wickets at Connell Park, Bellingin, Dorrigo Recreation Reserve, Burdett Park at Fernmount, Mylestom Cricket Oval, Urunga Recreation Reserve.

Assuming a base provision rate of 2.83ha of land for both passive and active open space per 1,000 population, Bellingin LGA is considered to be well served by public open space with over 19ha provided per 1,000 population.

Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ Ensuring that the services and facilities provided are maintained to the safety standards required for usage.
- ▶ Ensuring the continual upgrade of services and facilities so that the community can continue its full usage of sporting and recreational facilities within the Shire.
- ▶ Promote the existing level of sporting equipment and facilities to their optimal quality to ensure the highest level of competitiveness within the area.
- ▶ With the expected population growth within North Bellingin, opportunities exist for the development of additional playing fields in North Bellingin to serve the existing and future population.

6.3 Settlements with Constraints for Expansion

A review of the settlement profiles indicates that some settlements are constrained for further expansion. This is because of the following issues:

- ▶ impact on waterways (lakes, creeks and ocean);
- ▶ location and access considerations;
- ▶ Heritage and or country town character;
- ▶ native vegetation;
- ▶ topography;
- ▶ flood prone and bushfire prone land;
- ▶ scenic landscape quality;
- ▶ proximity to intensive agriculture; and
- ▶ lack of facilities and services.

The settlements with constraints for expansion include Mylestom, Repton, Fernmount/ Raleigh and North Dorrigo. Table 6-3 shows the constraints of the settlements limiting future expansion.



Table 6-3 Settlements with Constraints for Expansion

Settlement	Constraint
Mylestom	Flooding, proximity to Bellinger River, isolated and lack of water and sewerage, bushfire risk
Repton	Topography and native vegetation, isolated and lack of water and sewerage and community services and facilities, bushfire risk
Fernmount/ Raleigh	Topography and native vegetation, isolated and lack of water and sewerage and community services and facilities, bushfire risk
North Dorrigo	Isolated and lack of water and sewerage and community services and facilities

It is noted that some land surrounding the settlements of Mylestom, Repton and Fernmount/ Raleigh may be considered for rural-residential development. However, the lack of appropriate services and facilities in the settlements means that no subdivision is recommended for residential development.

6.4 Urban Settlements with Capacity for Expansion

The settlements with opportunities for expansion include Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo.

Table 6-4 provides the details of these settlements which have some capacity for expansion and the issues that have to be addressed.

Table 6-4 Settlements with Capacity for Expansion

Settlement	Issues to be addressed
Bellingen	Flooding, Native vegetation, extensive and intensive agricultural uses, topography, landscape quality, and location of STW
Urunga	Native vegetation, flooding, SEPP 14 wetlands, proximity to Bellinger/Kalang Rivers
Dorrigo	Prime agricultural land, land use conflicts, topography, landscape quality

Each of the settlements which are considered to be capable of expansion are discussed below.

6.4.1 Expansion Opportunities in Bellingen

Having considered the community's desired future character of Bellingen and identified the opportunities and constraints associated with health, education, infrastructure, transport and community facilities, the following areas represent possible expansion opportunities:

- ▶ Additional households could be accommodated within the existing town area where they comply with Council's density and design requirements and complement existing development.
- ▶ Undulating land above the 1% AEP flood level adjacent to existing residential areas to the east of town where it can be screened to maintain the character of Bellingen's entry from the east. Any such development would be subject to the preparation of an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan by Council.



- ▶ Land to the north- east of town adjacent to existing residential areas may potentially be suitable for residential purposes where it lies within the walkable catchment of Bellingen CBD and North Bellingen shops and community facilities. Any such development would be subject to the preparation of an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan by Council.

6.4.2 Expansion Opportunities in Urunga

Having considered the community's desired future character of Urunga and identified the opportunities and constraints associated with health, education, infrastructure, transport and community facilities, the following areas represent possible expansion opportunities:

- ▶ Additional households could be accommodated within the existing residential zone where they comply with Council's density and design requirements and maintain the seaside image of Urunga.
- ▶ Elevated land above the 1% AEP flood level to the immediate north of the existing development at Yellow Rock may potentially be suitable for residential purposes where it complements existing development. Any such development would be subject to the preparation of an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan by Council.
- ▶ Land at South Urunga may potentially be suitable for residential purposes provided it does not create ribbon development and does not impact on natural environment. Any such development would be subject to the preparation of an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan by Council.

6.4.3 Expansion Opportunities in Dorrigo

Having considered the community's desired future character of Dorrigo and identified the opportunities and constraints associated with health, education, infrastructure, transport and community facilities, the following areas represent possible expansion opportunities:

- ▶ Additional households could be accommodated within the existing residential zone, particularly adjacent to Old Coramba Road where they comply with Council's density and design requirements and are compatible with existing development.

6.5 New Settlements

Once a town reaches its desired size and form threshold then self-contained village(s) or town(s) may need to be considered (subject to constraints to development) as part of a clear hierarchy of settlement in the Shire. This is considered a more sustainable way to cater for additional growth rather than continuing incremental fringe additions onto current development. In particular, it would make for more liveable communities, leading to a higher quality of life for residents.

Consideration has been given to the future population of the Shire, the capacity of existing settlements to accommodate this growth without impacting on the desired future character of the settlements and the identification of locations suitable for a new village(s) or town(s) within the Shire.

Given the future development opportunities available within each of the three main towns of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo and the identified environmental, servicing and infrastructure constraints across the majority of the Shire, it is not considered necessary to establish a new settlement within the life of this Strategy.



6.6 Rural-Residential Development

Rural residential development has long been recognised as a legitimate form of development that must be catered for in local government areas experiencing growth. However, not all rural areas are suitable for this form of development and the servicing of rural dwellings is expensive for all levels of government. The need for full cost recovery for rural settlement has been identified as an issue by Council.

As past experience shows, rural residential developments are heavily subsidised for the provision of facilities and services at the expense of other rate payers and service users. It is appropriate that the Council develops a cost recovery program to reduce the cost burden imposed on the general community and government.

Rural residential owners need to accept that their lifestyle is heavily subsidised and that the community should not be expected to continue to provide funds for service and facilities provision. A breakdown of the associated costs to Local Government and subsidies relating to rural residential development and the options for recovery of costs for services and facilities is provided below.

6.6.1 Development Costs

Roads

Many rural residential developments are located on rural roads at some distance from the closest urban centre. Such roads are utilised by rural residential residents travelling to and from the urban centre and are also traversed twice daily by a school bus. In some circumstances the road giving access to the rural residential development will need upgrading. The costs of such upgrading can be recovered through contributions made under Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 or by imposing a condition to upgrade the road in a development consent.

Another cost is the maintenance and upgrading of distributor roads and road bridges. Developers of new rural residential developments are rarely asked to pay for the upgrading of these roads and bridges because they do not have direct frontage. Ultimately these roads are used by rural commuters travelling to urban centres for employment, school or services and the additional traffic reduces the life span of the road surface. This can bring forward capital expenditure that may not have been budgeted for (DUAP, 1995). Recovery of the cost for upgrading these distributor roads and bridges can be sought through a Section 94 Contributions Plan.

Community Services

People living in rural residential areas still have expectations regarding community facilities including sporting facilities, open space, halls, libraries, community health clinics etc (DUAP, 1995). The provision of other community services such as health care, aged care, disabled and children's services is costly due to the distance that rural residential developments are from urban centres.

The cost for the provision of community facilities and services provided by Council can be apportioned to rural residential development and can be recovered through contributions made under Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Bushfire Services

A number of bushfire brigades service the areas in the LGA where there is potential to develop rural residential developments. Council provides supplies to these brigades and consequently is able to seek contributions under the provisions of Section 94 from developers for the provision of such equipment.



Effluent Disposal Systems

Many rural residential developments are not connected to existing sewerage schemes and effluent disposal systems are required to service dwelling houses. Such systems have the potential to cause adverse environmental impact if not operating correctly.

If on-site waste water disposal is used Council may consider it appropriate to monitor the maintenance and/or performance of such devices regularly (on an annual basis for instance). The NSW Government Regulatory reforms require separate approvals to install and operate a sewage management facility. The operational approval will include requirements to meet performance standards and may contain some monitoring provisions. Although Section 94 contributions cannot be collected to employ staff members or others to undertake these inspections it is appropriate that fees be levied on landowners and others to fund any necessary regulatory involvement by Council. The Local Government Act 1993 allows fees to be levied in these circumstances.

Water Demand during Drought

Whilst it is recognised that rural-residential developments are serviced by on-site water supplies, there is a demand placed on the town's water supply during times of drought. Given the current restrictions on the capacity of the Lower Bellingen water supply until such time as an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan is prepared by Council, the cumulative costs associated with water supply to rural-residential development during times of drought needs to be given consideration.

6.6.2 Cost Recovery Program

A cost recovery program should be implemented to ensure, as far as practical, that the full cost to Council for providing services and facilities to rural residential development will be recovered. This program includes the implementation of a Section 94 contributions plan that requires the payment of contributions for the provision of access roads, distributor roads and bridges, administrative services, open space, environment protection, health and community services and bushfire services.