



## Ballina Shire Rural Settlement Character Statements

### Part 1

Prepared for Ballina Shire Council  
by MikeSvikisPlanning and Tara McGready  
July 2014

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## Executive Summary

Ballina Shire Council commissioned Mike Svikis Planning and Tara McGready to prepare rural settlement character statements for nine locations in Ballina Shire. These covered Newrybar, Tintenbar, Fernleigh, Meerschaum Vale, Rous, Rous Mill, South Ballina, Empire Vale/Keith Hall, and Patchs Beach. A *Place Check* approach was used to assess the localities and discuss them with residents at a series of public meetings.

The project arose from the idea in 2009 that the Shire-wide Development Control Plan should have character statements that provided a basis for any area-specific planning controls. The project has also been identified for action in the Ballina Shire Growth Management Strategy and Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The meeting information was compiled, reviewed and summarised, and combined with locality maps. It has been split up in this report into a number of deliverables that document community views on a wide range of issues:

- Rural Settlement Character Statements
- Community *Place Checks*
- Consultant *Place Checks*
- Issues, Objectives and Strategies Arising from Meetings

The final document has been divided into two parts. Part 1 contains the rural settlement character statements and maps. Part 2 contains the supporting information collected during the project upon which the rural character statements were based.

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## Introduction

Mike Svikis Planning and Tara McGready were engaged by Ballina Shire Council to prepare character statements for nine rural settlement areas identified by Ballina Shire Council in its project brief. The localities nominated were Newrybar, Tintenbar, Fernleigh, Patchs Beach, Empire Vale/Keith Hall, South Ballina, Meerscham Vale, Rous and Rous Mill. Community consultation was a key aspect of the project.

The project arose from the idea in 2009 that the Shire-wide Development Control Plan should have character statements that provided a basis for any area-specific planning controls. The character statements were also a strategic action in the Ballina Shire Growth Management Statement. The project was included as a planned action for the 2013/14 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

## Methodology

The approach to preparing the character statements was based on a technique known as a *Place Check*, used both to prepare a site audit as well as to guide the community consultation for each locality. Council circulated the *Place Check* by mail to locality residents so they could participate, even if they could not attend the meetings.

In summary, the *Place Check* involved Mike and Tara inspecting each locality for answers to questions such as:

- What makes this place special?
- What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?
- Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?
- What limits how easy it is to get around?
- How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?
- How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?
- How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?
- How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?

These questions, in a slightly modified form, were then used as a basis for consulting with the local community to gain their responses to the questions, specific to their locality. Ballina Shire Council wrote to residents inviting them to complete a *Place Check* proforma and/or attend a public meeting to be held in their area in order to participate in a group *Place Check*. Meetings were held at Tintenbar (12 May 2014 where 33 people attended), Newrybar (14 May 2014 where 37 people attended), Meerschaum Vale (22 May 2014 where 60 people attended), and Empire Vale (26 May 2014 where 37 people attended). Thirty-three individually completed *Place Check* submissions were received by Council covering all of the rural localities discussed at the public meetings. The questions asked of the community were:

- What makes your locality special?
- Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?
- Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?
- Is it easy to get around? Why?
- How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything missing?
- What's great about your locality?

Each public meeting was structured around the *Place Check* and each locality was discussed in turn. The meetings were chaired by Mike and Tara and a Council officer (either Suzanne Acret or Matt Wood). When finalising the locality *Place Checks*, written *Place Check* submissions were taken into account on an equal basis to the verbal input at the meetings. The well attended meetings covered a wide range of issues and these were not always confined to planning or urban design matters.

The consultant *Place Checks*, community *Place Checks* and the community meeting information formed the basis of the rural settlement character statements which were then combined with locality maps. The community made it clear that each rural settlement has a focus, but the edges of each locality are not clearly defined and don't really need to be. The edges of each map in this document are not intended to represent the edge of each settlement.

The information collected as part of this project has been compiled, reviewed, summarised and split up into a number of deliverables that document community views on a wide range of issues:

- Rural Settlement Character Statements
- Community *Place Checks*
- Consultant *Place Checks*
- Issues, Objectives and Strategies Arising from Meetings

The final document has been divided into two parts. Part 1 contains the rural settlement character statements and maps. Part 2 contains the supporting information collected during the project upon which the rural settlement character statements were based.



## Rural Settlement Character Statements

### Newrybar

Newrybar is a compact, safe, small village characterised by its open main street, and a network of rural roads leading into surrounding open farmland and horticultural activities. The small main street urban environment of Newrybar has been gentrified in recent years with authentic, historic buildings taking on a new focus such as restaurants and shops. It retains a strong sense of its history and low key ambience, yet is in proximity to bigger centres such as Bangalow, Byron Bay, Lismore and Ballina where the community can visit for additional services and facilities. Moving the highway will strengthen connections to the outlying parts of Newrybar including the public primary school on Broken Head Road and the elevated, good quality farmland with views to the ocean and the Richmond Ranges. Residents identify with Newrybar as a place with a strong sense of community, and they consider the quiet rural atmosphere and historic old-world charm of the locality to be distinguishing features that they want to keep.

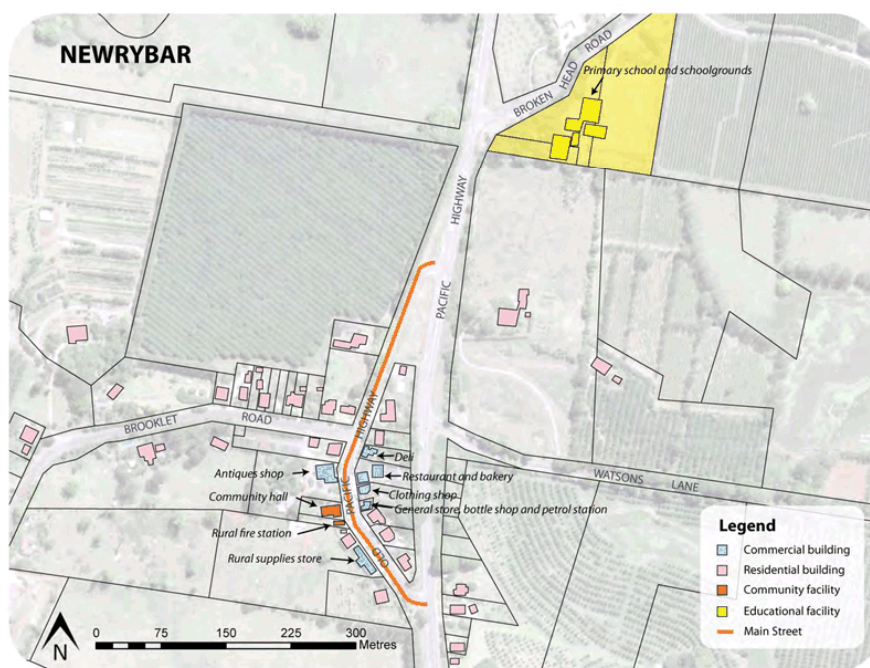


Figure 1: Newrybar



## Tintenbar

Tintenbar is a small, historical, rural hamlet characterised by heavily vegetated steep slopes leading down to Emigrant Creek. The wider area is a mix of rural residential and farmland, some places with distant ocean views. The centre of the community is focussed around a precinct at the intersection of Tintenbar Road and George Street where a hall, general store and medical centre are located. This precinct also contains a cluster of homes on residential-sized lots, but the locality extends through to its sports fields and tennis courts along Fernleigh Road and the Tintenbar-Teven Public School at the top of the hill at Fredericks Lane. The hamlet has a strong sense of community with a wide range of ages in its population. It hosts the largest rural school in the Shire and is a safe place to live a rural life that is not too far from the coast. Tintenbar is central to the coastal village of Lennox Head, and the towns of Alstonville and Ballina. The community of Tintenbar values the quiet, rural atmosphere of the hamlet but at the same time wants to ensure that the level of activity within its central precinct is maintained.

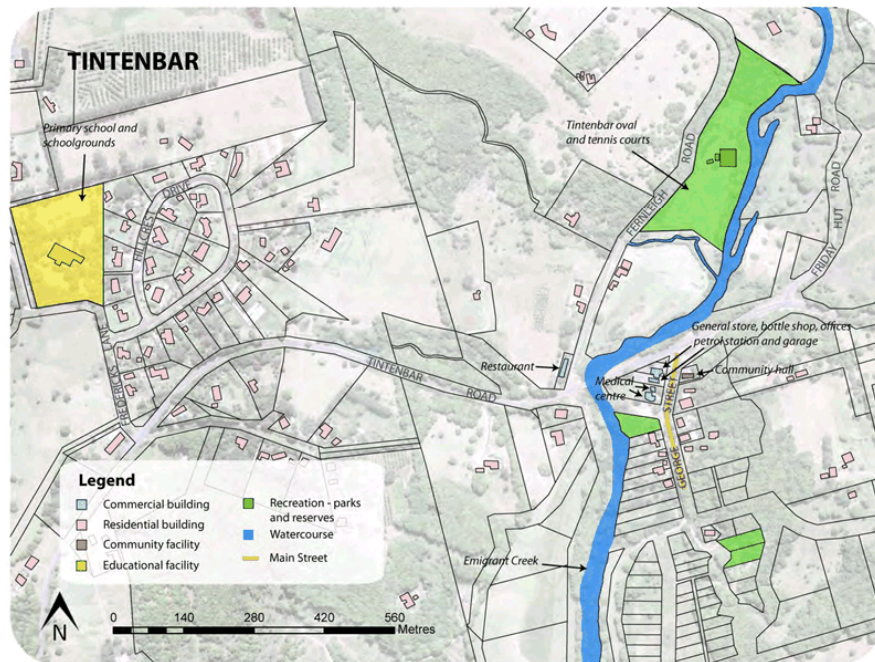


Figure 2: Tintenbar

## Fernleigh

Fernleigh is a small, rural locality along the Fernleigh Road, characterised by open rolling hills with a sense of elevation and distant views. The wider area is a mix of concessional lot rural residential and farmland, with a focus on horticulture and cattle. The main community focus is the small Fernleigh Public School, but the locality extends through to Burnett Park at the Nashua Road junction with Fernleigh Road and then up along Kirklands Lane. Fernleigh is halfway between Tintenbar and Newrybar, and relates to both these communities. The community considers the quiet atmosphere and beautiful undulating rural landscape make Fernleigh a special place.

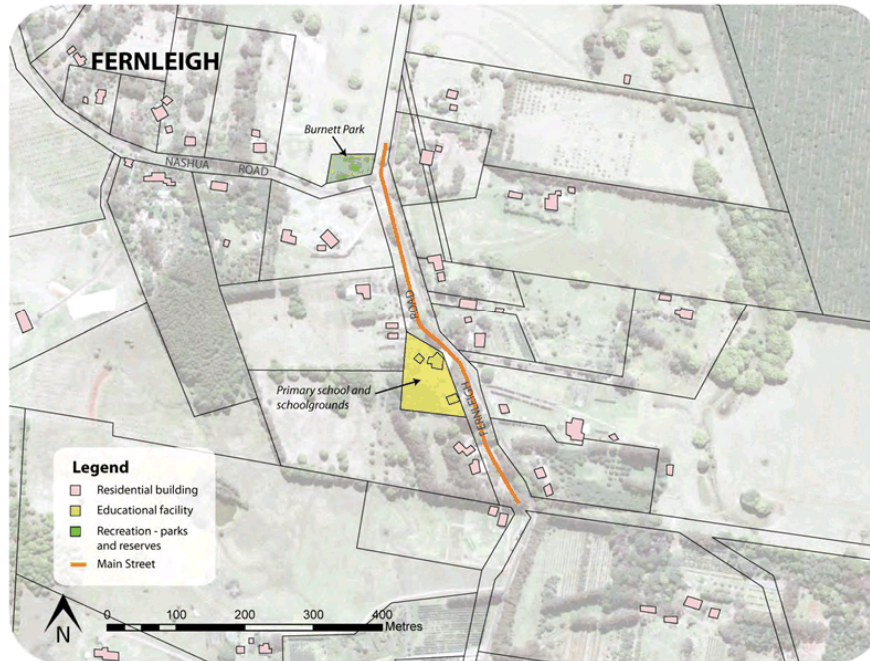


Figure 3: Fernleigh

## Meerschaum Vale

Meerschaum Vale is a small, rural locality along the Wardell Road, characterised by open rolling hills and a broad flat valley that marks the edge of the Tuckean Swamp and Richmond River floodplain. The community values the mist in the valley in the mornings and the swimming waterholes in the creek. The locality includes Big Scrub remnants, cattle farms and horticultural areas mixed with lifestyle properties. The main community focus is the Meerschaum Vale hall and the Rural Fire Service Station. Meerschaum Vale is a short drive from the school at Rous as well as Alstonville and Wardell, and relates to both these larger communities for services and facilities. Ballina and Lismore are available for higher level service and work opportunities. It is a close and caring community that embraces residents of all ages and backgrounds. There is a passion for the natural environment and a passion for the locality to remain small and rural.

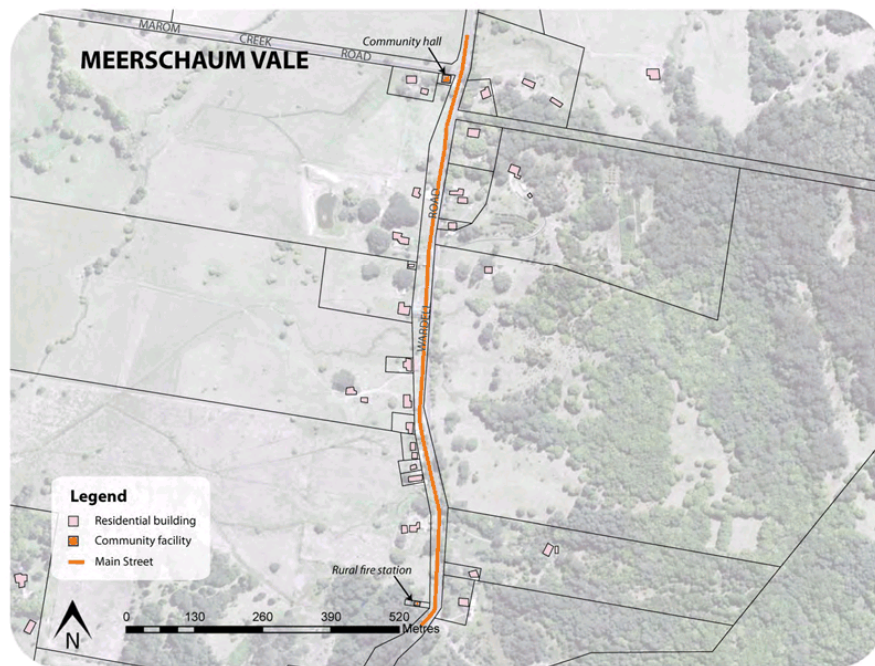


Figure 4: Meerschaum Vale



## Rous

Rous is a small, rural locality in the vicinity of Rous Road, characterised by open elevated grazing land, large horticultural areas and pockets of remnant rainforest such as the Davis Scrub Reserve. The main community focus is the Rous Public School at the intersection of Rous Road and Rous Cemetery Road. Rous is a short drive to Alstonville and relates to this larger community for services and facilities. Local employment includes successful wholesale plant nurseries that supply to retailers throughout NSW and interstate. Ballina and Lismore are available for higher level service and "off farm" work opportunities. It is a friendly community that retains an emphasis on commercial agriculture based on fertile red soils and reliable rainfall. The community has close, historic links to Rous Mill and the Rous Mill hall. Residents of Rous value the low density atmosphere, swimming at Marom Falls, roadside stalls that sell fresh fruit and vegetables, and the community gatherings at the school and hall.

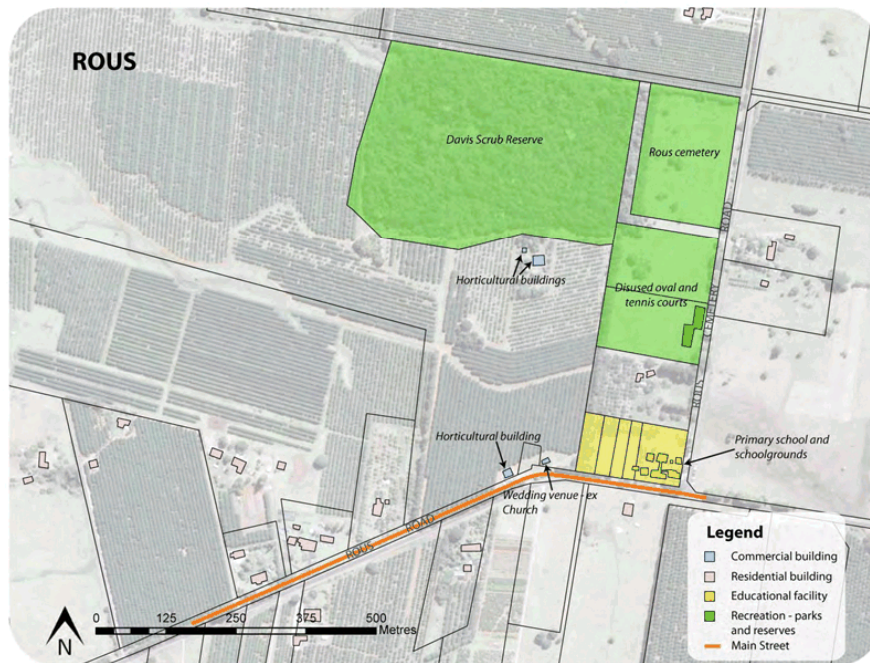


Figure 5: Rous

## Rous Mill

Rous Mill is a small, rural locality with a genuine village feel. Located in elevated red soil country on either side of Youngman Creek in the vicinity of Rous Mill Road, it is characterised by open elevated grazing land, large horticultural areas and pockets of remnant rainforest. The main community focus is the Rous Mill hall which is located opposite an operational Uniting Church. This is one of the last rural churches left in Ballina Shire. Rous Mill is a short drive to Alstonville and relates to this larger community for many services and facilities. Ballina and Lismore are available for higher level service and "off farm" work opportunities. It is a friendly, accepting community that is characterised by dwellings on small village size lots that reflect its past history as a much larger sugar milling town complete with light rail line. Rous Mill retains an emphasis on commercial agriculture based on fertile red soils and reliable rainfall. The residents have close historic links to Rous and the Rous Public School, and feel like they are living in a true community.



Figure 6: Rous Mill

## South Ballina

South Ballina is a small, rural locality at the tip of the South Ballina peninsula with a long history of agriculture and tourism that continues to this day. Located in flat, alluvial, sandy soils its land uses include sugar cane farming, a sand quarry and areas of native vegetation along the river, mainly in the Richmond River Nature Reserve. The main community focus is the two caravan parks along South Ballina Beach Road. It is a short drive and ferry ride to Ballina, which provides the majority of services and facilities, and "off farm" work opportunities. It is characterised by a small number of dwellings either on significant cane farms or on small clusters of concessional lots cut from cane farms in the past. It also encompasses the residents of its two caravan parks. The community has close historic links to Patches Beach, Keith Hall and Empire Vale. It is a community that places a high value on its ferry service. Residents feel like they are living where the Richmond River meets the sea, and they get the best of both those amazing environments including dolphin and whale watching, fishing, surfing and four wheel driving on the beach.

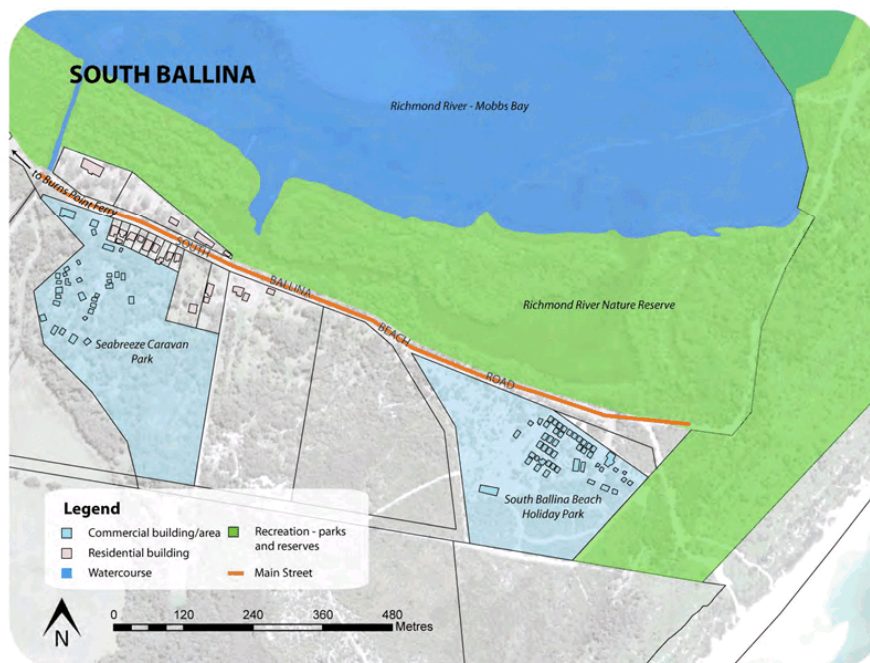


Figure 7: South Ballina



### Empire Vale / Keith Hall

Empire Vale/Keith Hall is a small, rural locality on the South Ballina peninsula with a long history of agriculture that continues to this day. Located in alluvial, sandy soils between East Wardell and South Ballina it is characterised by large areas of open flat sugar cane land with areas of native vegetation along the river. There are also some horticultural and large greenhouse-based hydroponic enterprises. The main community focus is the historic Empire Vale primary school and the unique post office on River Drive. It is a short drive and ferry ride to Ballina, which provides the majority of services and facilities, and “off farm” work opportunities. It is characterised by dwellings either on significant cane farms or on small clusters of concessional lots cut from cane farms in the past. The community has close historic links to Patches Beach and South Ballina. The residents value the tranquillity of the location as well as the proximity of the river and beach for recreation.

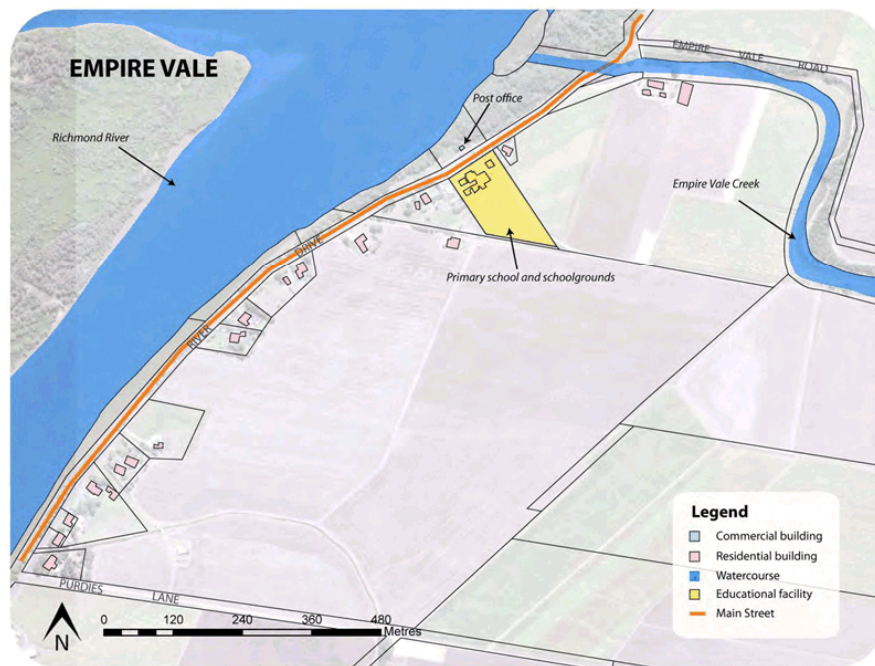


Figure 8: Empire Vale

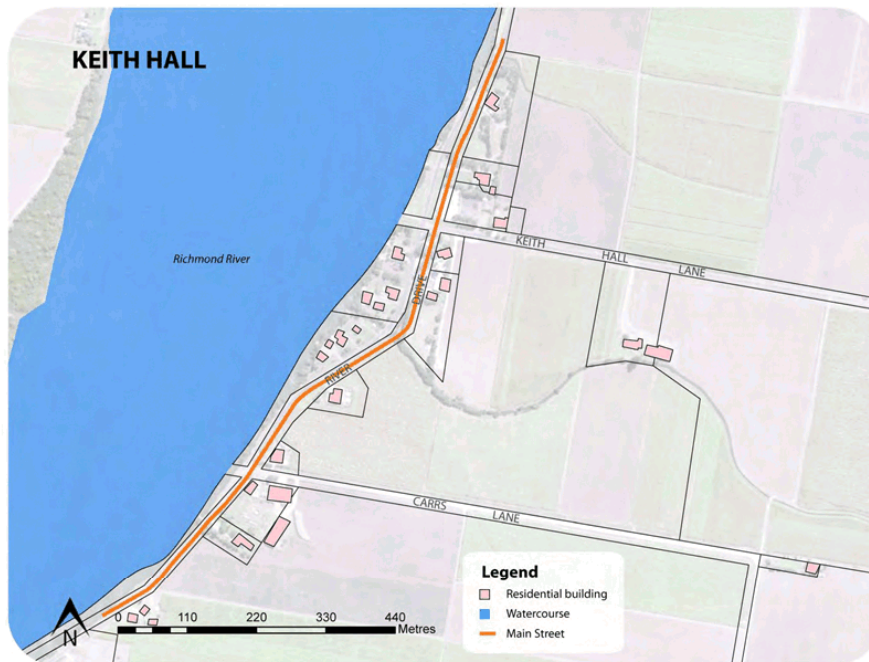


Figure 9: Keith Hall



## Patches Beach

Patches Beach is a compact, rural locality on the beach side of the South Ballina peninsula with a history of agriculture and “weekender” accommodation that continues to this day. Located in alluvial, sandy soils it is characterised by open flat sugar cane land with areas of native vegetation along the beach, some of it on Crown land. The main community focus is the cluster of 17 houses at the end of Patches Beach Road, immediately adjacent to a beach access track for pedestrians and four wheel drives. It is a short drive and ferry ride to Ballina, which provides the majority of services and facilities, and is also a short drive back to Wardell and the Pacific Highway. It is a friendly, accepting community that also provides holiday letting accommodation for tourists during peak season. The community has close historic links to South Ballina, Keith Hall, Empire Vale and Wardell. The residents value their beach access (pedestrian and vehicle) and the opportunity this provides for fishing, surfing and four wheel driving as well as horse riding and exercising dogs. The natural environment is important and the locals value the peace and quiet, and the dark night sky with no street lights.

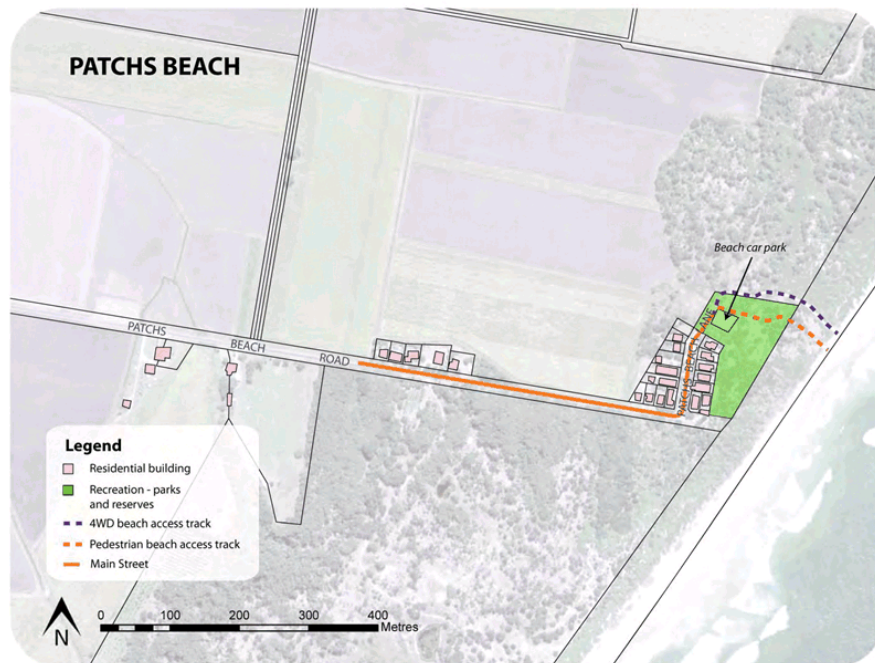


Figure 10: Patches Beach



## Ballina Shire Rural Settlement Character Statements

### Part 2

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Prepared for Ballina Shire Council  
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## Introduction

Part 2 of the project provides a summary of the material that was collected and used to create the rural settlement character statements in Part 1.

The Community *Place Checks* are a summary of the meetings held at Newrybar, Tintenbar, Meerschaum Vale, and Empire Vale. They have been combined with the thirty-three written *Place Checks* received from residents who could not attend the meetings. They are primarily written in the words put forward by the community. In undertaking the *Place Checks*, the community was not required to reach consensus on any issue. All meetings raised issues that went beyond the planning focus of this project, but these were recorded anyway where it was appropriate.

The Consultant *Place Checks* were prepared by Mike Svikis and Tara McGready during and after a field inspection of each of the rural settlement areas on 4 May 2014. Where it was not possible to answer a particular question, it was left blank.

The Issues, Objectives and Strategies Arising from Community Meetings are an amalgamation of the material provided by the community at public meetings and in written *Place Checks* as edited and modified by the consultants (based on our observations and experience) to fit the categories of issues, objectives and strategies. This has been provided for the consideration of Council.

## Community Place Checks

### Newrybar

Public meeting at Newrybar Hall on 14 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Svikis, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty-seven people in attendance.

#### What makes this place special?

- Quiet, rural atmosphere – chose to live here because it's a little country village
- Still quite agricultural and lots of horticulture exists – this creates rural scenery
- No urban sprawl
- Newrybar's location on a plateau makes for slightly cooler weather
- Sense of rural community
- Central location – close to other larger towns with facilities. Close to Byron but we do not have to be a part of it. Close enough to Bangalow to use the courtesy bus
- Newrybar is a centre to come to do things, and use services and facilities
- Views to the ocean and coastal escarpment but also to the western rural hinterland and Richmond Range
- The Emigrant Creek catchment
- There are no gas fields here
- Town water exists within the village
- Very diverse range of land uses – agriculture, art studios, shops
- Safe community – safe for children (apart from the speeding cars)
- Newrybar School has a good reputation for high quality education
- Unique village – it embraces the arts
- Authentic historic look to the village and an old-world charm
- History of the town makes it special – especially the old bakery

#### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Diverse range of people live here, including a diverse age bracket – young families to seniors
- Farmers, horticulturalists, professionals. Newrybar has its own veterinary service
- Shop in Ballina – major services are located there
- Some children living within the locality go to schools other than Newrybar School. Children from outside this area also come to Newrybar School
- School runs its own playgroup
- There is nowhere to play for children – no playground or sports field exists. Children play organised sport in Bangalow and Ballina
- It is a good place for older people to live – services are adequate. However, it is hard to get outside of the locality if you do not have access to a car
- Medical services are accessed in Bangalow, Lennox, and Tintenbar. There is a Newrybar dentist



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**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Authentic historic buildings – would like to retain this look and feel, especially along the old pacific highway (main street) – the village entrance sign states “historic village” and it is
- Really important to preserve the heritage feel of the village. New buildings should be designed in keeping with the heritage style and to ensure that the amenity of the locality is not destroyed
- Older houses are timber – teak, sourced from local rainforests
- Diverse range of buildings throughout the wider locality – old Queenslanders, brick and tile, modern style buildings
- Rents are high, and it is very expensive to buy into Newrybar and surrounding farmland
- Some new buildings have excessive visual impacts and are not always used for the purpose for which they were erected.

**Is it easy to get around? Why?**

- Cars go too fast down the main street. Traffic needs to be slowed to 40 km/hr from 60 km/hr. This is caused by the main street being a thoroughfare from the west, and the popularity of the café and shops, especially on weekends. It is hard to walk down the main road safely on a Saturday morning
- Maybe the main street should become a one-way street once the highway moves
- There is a disconnect between east and west of Newrybar because of the highway. There is a great opportunity for connections to be made between the two sides once the highway is moved to its new route. It will allow pedestrian crossings to be constructed between the two sides
- Consideration needs to be given to cycleways and pedestrian verges to get to Bangalow when the highway is moved
- Would like to ride or walk their horses on the road. It is too unsafe as the roads are too narrow and speed limits too high – provision of green lanes (or large grass verges). Have to wear high visibility vest if you go walking along Brooklet Road. There is not enough of a verge to walk along the side of the road safely
- There are school bus services, but to send a child to Bangalow School they would have to go through Byron first on an hour-long trip. There needs to be a designated bus stop and shelter for school buses. This could happen in front of the hall or down near the northern village entrance
- No public transport services come through the village – transport options are very limited
- Cars go very fast along Brooklet Road, which has a speed limit of 80 km/hr. Lots of people try to walk on it. Why is Old Byron Bay Road 60 km/hr whilst Brooklet Road, on the western side of Newrybar, is a higher speed limit?
- Parking is an issue in the centre of the village – there is a proposal being reported to Council imminently to create a new car park at the northern entrance to Newrybar, which is to be partly funded by Council and partly by donors from the community. It will be a gravel car park for about 20 to 22 cars. RMS is going to donate an old stone wall as entrance beautification to the car park. Comment was received that the car park should not be located at the entrance to Newrybar; it should be located further west of the main street. Landscaping will be a key issue for an entrance car park
- The road surface along Brooklet Road is poor and needs to be resurfaced

**How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?**

- The rural and natural environment is enjoyed including the dams, the creeks and vegetation – would not like to see that ruined



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- Create an entrance to Newrybar for beautification – should celebrate the natural history of the locality (Big Scrub)
- The low density rural-sized lots are valued – do not want to see residential subdivision
- The rural and agricultural land is valued. However, the land is too expensive to run cattle – it is more viable for horticulture. A five acre property will be sold for a similar price to a larger rural-sized lot
- Moved here because of the rural and village atmosphere and the beautiful natural environment
- The locality is within the catchment for Emigrant Creek, which is the local water supply. Want to ensure that any development does not affect the water supply
- The environment is important, don't want the urban sprawl of Cumbalum in Newrybar
- Would like to see reticulated sewerage provided to the village – being in a catchment area, it is important for the runoff to be of a high quality

#### General comments

- Old Byron Bay Road used to be 100 km/hr – the community has always been told that changing speed limits is under the jurisdiction of the RMS
- A traffic and streetscape plan was prepared by Council a couple of years ago. Council, however, has not had the budget to implement here. I would like this to become a priority for Council
- The school used to be at the top of Piccadilly Hill before it was shifted to its current location
- The school used to have 130 students about 30 years ago – these children have grown up and moved away as rents are too high, and the numbers of children attending the school has decreased partly because of this
- There is an opportunity to have a much more intense population around the village to support activity – a number of members in the community opposed this
- Rural workers dwellings should not be allowed to be built if they are not authentic rural workers dwellings. One has been approved in the locality and not built as approved on the DA and very close to neighbouring houses
- Septics in the village would not meet today's standards
- There are complications with the mail delivery as there are two different postcodes for the one locality
- A 35 metre tower is going up on 161 Broken Head Road for the NBN. This is going to have a major impact on the rural landscape
- Feeling that this consultation won't be taken seriously by Council. The community feels a little bit powerless as they feel consultation like this is tokenistic and that the community's desires are not taken on. The people don't really have a say
- Broken Head Road, past the school, is being chewed up by highway construction trucks. There are now big trip hazards caused by this. It needs to be fixed as soon as possible
- Don't want fluoride in the Newrybar water



## Tintenbar

Public meeting at Tintenbar Hall on 12 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Sviki, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty-three people in attendance. Attendees included approximately eight (8) from Fernleigh, two (2) from Teven, with the remainder from Tintenbar. Teven is considered separate from Tintenbar (it is a different valley). Fernleigh is considered separate from Tintenbar.

### What makes this place special?

- Village atmosphere and sense of community. Sense of belonging. The community has strengthened since the upgrade of the hall, which the community manages
- Central core of amenities and facilities, it has all services needed for day-to-day living including a general store, service station, medical centre, restaurant and community hall
- History of Tintenbar – it was the first village established in this area, even before Ballina. It has important historical significance, which goes back over 150 years
- Regard it as a discreet village
- Tintenbar was within its own shire/local government area until it merged in the 1970s with Ballina Shire
- Central location – 8–10 minutes from everywhere, very central; 7–9 minutes' drive from the coast of Lennox; 7–8 minutes from Ballina
- Safe place
- Rural lifestyle and feel, yet only minutes away from services in Ballina
- Geography/topography – its location in a valley. Some hill tops have an ocean glimpse
- The landscape is special – rural, undulating landscape, big old trees, and creeks. Things you don't see in cities and suburbs. Distant ocean views
- Natural environment – lots of birds and fauna, threatened and endangered species, platypus, pockets of natural environment dotted throughout the locality
- The large rural lots. We like the large lots here; we like not having neighbours right next door
- The small, quiet, rural feel of the area and the slow, rural lifestyle are valued. Before the highway cut through, no one knew about Tintenbar, and it was great that way

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Diverse range of people that live here – many young families. A lot of older and aging people, many of them farmers. No seniors living allowed because of the zoning. There are no smaller, age-appropriate dwellings or parcels of land that suit the aging population
- Professionals, doctors, small business owners, affluent community on more recent subdivisions

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- Single storey dwellings. We don't want double storey or more
- The village centre should maintain some sort of rustic character to the buildings as currently exists
- Diverse range of dwellings throughout the wider locality of Tintenbar
- Need more affordable housing to keep the young people in the community



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**Is it easy to get around? Why?**

- Poor pedestrian linkages throughout Tintenbar – there are no pedestrian linkages to the oval from the central area of Tintenbar, nor are there linkages from the Emigrant Creek bridge or Fernleigh Road restaurant to the general store
- There are no signs indicating the location or existence of the tennis courts and oval
- There is apparently a pedestrian path/easement from central Tintenbar to the school but nobody knows about it and it is not formalised
- A community bus runs a service once a fortnight into Ballina. This is not enough. There needs to be a more frequent bus service to get around during the day. Unless you have a car, you are quite isolated. There is a bus that can be caught at the top of the hill but many people can't get to that easily. There need to be more transport options for those that can't drive. Just a couple more services a week would be good
- Traffic on Tintenbar Road seems to have increased since the new section of highway was completed
- The speed limit on Tintenbar Road is too fast. It is hard to get onto it from the side streets. It becomes dangerous because of the speed of vehicles (especially quarry trucks) and also the direction of the sun at certain times of the day. The speed limit should be reduced to 60 km/hr
- Fernleigh Road should have a Give Way sign onto Tintenbar Road. Perhaps an intersection light to make it less dangerous at night

**How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?**

- The quiet rural atmosphere
- Emigrant Creek, kayaking on it. The creek is so degraded it is sometimes impassable. There is no access to the creek. If there was access then it would be used more and therefore maintained more
- The natural environment is still nice here with forest remnants and the riparian land
- Swings and children's play equipment used to exist and should be reinstated

**General comments**

- Tintenbar could be classified as a hamlet. A village has a church and a pub. Tintenbar used to have a church but it has been converted into a restaurant
- Leave George Street the way it is
- Electoral boundary runs through George Street of Tintenbar so political voice is segregated
- Reduced speeds wanted. Many accidents occur between Che Bon (the restaurant) and turn off onto Fernleigh Road from Tintenbar Road
- Create more activity by creating more population. Allow more rural residential subdivision
- The rural zoning is a hindrance to the development of future facilities. The zoning denies any further development (densification). Large rural lot sizes. It should be rural village zoning
- The oval used to be managed by the community trust but now Council looks after it. It is now degraded and the grounds are overgrown. A community member even offered to rebuild the pergola, but Council said no. This area is used mainly for tennis. No real sporting groups use it, however sometimes it is used for children's events. Grass is always overgrown. There might be more planned events there, but people do not want to organise them as it isn't known whether the oval will be overgrown by the time the events come around
- We've got all the facilities that we need; we have an oval, just needs maintenance as well as connections to it to be maintained. Is it possible to link it via a riparian path?



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- Issues with existing zoning where the village exists. Don't want to necessarily subdivide the rural lots surrounding the town, but more so within the village centre
- Worried that there are plans to turn it into a residential suburb
- The state says there is a housing shortage. More housing on farming lots for families is needed. Also want the ability to eventually subdivide. Two separate houses should be allowed under the one title. It is about having families living closer together. There are many advantages to having family living on the same property so parents can "age in place". Many smaller properties that are not big enough for viable farming could be given a dwelling entitlement
- Council stopped rural residential subdivision because it was all too hard. There are many properties along the old highway that aren't big enough to be viable as agricultural lots. Why can't these lots have rural residential subdivision for one acre lots with a rural feel? Rural residential subdivision allows people to have their rural lifestyle without the work that goes along with a large rural lot. More options and diversity are needed. Would like to see rural residential subdivision reintroduced to the area to keep this place going
- Land prices are extremely high here. Young people that grew up here can't afford to buy a residence in the area they grew up in
- Don't want to see it grow out of proportion. Don't want one acre blocks. More traffic would be created
- Would like to see the new Council be more open to the community's comments and wishes
- Many tourists from Brisbane and other shires visit Killen Falls. So many people are now visiting it and the facilities are not adequate. Because there are no toilets, they are knocking on residents' doors to use their toilets. The footpaths are being washed away. Killen Falls is apparently under Rous Water's jurisdiction. Council needs to work with Rous to get basic facilities and access to protect the environment



## Fernleigh

Public meeting at Tintenbar Hall on 12 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Svikis, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty-three people in attendance. Attendees included approximately eight (8) from Fernleigh, two (2) from Teven, with the remainder from Tintenbar. Teven is considered separate from Tintenbar (it's a different valley). Fernleigh is considered separate from Tintenbar.

### What makes this place special?

- The main thing that gives it its identity is the public school on Fernleigh Road
- Tight community. Everyone knows each other. Majority of residents have lived here for a long time, but not for more than a generation. Not too much socialising goes on however
- Atmosphere is beautiful and quiet. Very special feel to the locality. Visitors comment on how special it is
- Special landscape of open rural land and rolling hills. Quite elevated
- Natural areas including creeks
- Tintenbar Falls exist in Fernleigh. Council doesn't even know they exist
- The size of Fernleigh School means opportunities exist for one-on-one teaching, which is special

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Young families
- Fernleigh School is too small for some, so families are sending their kids to Tintenbar-Teven School or Ballina schools
- Many people who live here have grown up in Fernleigh and want to stay living in their family home

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- Mostly farm houses

### Is it easy to get around? Why?

- Traffic is increasing along Fernleigh Road
- Many cyclists use the road and they ride two-abreast, which is very dangerous, especially because Fernleigh Road has many corners
- No pedestrian consideration along the roads

### How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?

- People enjoy what 's on their property, like platypus in the creek or rainforest patches

### General comments

- There used to be a hall where Burnett Park is
- Fernleigh is an example of a locality because there is nothing much there
- Booyong Station used to exist at the end of Kirkland's Lane
- Properties around Fernleigh are too overpriced, that's why they don't sell and new folk are not coming in



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## Meerschaum Vale

Public meeting at Meerschaum Vale Hall on 22 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Svikis, Matt Wood and Tara McGready. Sixty people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 25 from Meerschaum Vale, 14 from Rous Mill, five (5) from Rous; three (3) from Dalwood and two (2) from Alstonville. Meerschaum Vale is considered separate from Rous/Rous Mill. Whilst Rous and Rous Mill are considered separate, there is less of a distinction between them.

### What makes this place special?

- Quiet, peaceful and uncrowded
- Mist in the valley in the morning
- Land has great environmental qualities – wildlife, koala habitat, rainforest, good waterfalls
- Last remaining viable population of koalas live around here. The wildlife seems to be on the increase around here. Lots of threatened species exist around here
- Feels like a nature haven halfway between Alstonville and Wardell. Feels like paradise
- Relatively good water quality
- Village atmosphere – old church beside the road
- Juxtaposition of grassy flats on the floodplain and the escarpment leading up to the red soils
- Proximity to the coast as well as being rural – close to Lismore, close to Pacific Highway and the coast
- No invasive industry around here
- Very tight community. The people that live here make it special. A range of people co-exist here. Eclectic mix of people who all help each other. No radicals on either end of the spectrum
- Good access to good schools and school bus service
- The hall gives a great focus for the community. There is a regular Friday evening get together. It provides a social glue for the community

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Children go to Rous School and Alstonville for primary school, as well as Alstonville and Lismore for high school
- Friendly and warm people – great neighbours
- Retired long-term residents
- Lot of teachers live here – don't know why that is
- Farming is the backbone of the area, so many farmers live here
- Good cross-section of young families with kids, as well as retirees. The majority of newcomers are young families
- People tend to start a young family and because it's so nice here, they never leave
- There is much diversity within the individual groups of people living here – different values, come from different places, different types of employment. There is no class structure here
- Many are self-employed. Sell product at farmers markets or roadside stalls
- A lot of people have to work on their farms, as well as another job
- A lot of commuters go to Ballina and Lismore for work



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- Shopping is done locally in Alstonville mostly, but when in Ballina or Lismore they will shop there too
- A mothers' meeting group has been started in Meerschaum Vale Hall. The community has started up this initiative because it's a rural locality and unlike a bigger town, you can't walk with prams along the roads here and go to a café to catch up

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- The community hall is quite old and in great condition
- There are many older timber houses, as well as some brick and tile houses
- There used to be an old post office, school and church but all have been converted to residences now
- Bush fire brigade building exists to the southern end of Meerschaum Vale – it is still active and has been for the last 30 years

**Is it easy to get around? Why?**

- Wardell Road links the town to other places, eg Alstonville and the Pacific Highway
- You need a car to live here to get around anywhere. That makes it isolating for children and older folk that can't drive
- No public transport is available
- The intersection at Bartlett's Lane and Wardell Road is very dangerous. Bartlett's Lane is still a dirt road and full of potholes
- Bagotville Road is too unsafe for cycling – most roads around here are
- Speed limit on Wardell Road needs to be decreased, especially in the centre of the village – it has become a main route from Alstonville to Wardell. Lots of road kill also exists along this road, and traffic is very fast
- Walking along the roads feels really dangerous because of the speed of vehicles and the lack of a pedestrian path. Broken edges and potholes are bad
- Cyclists on the weekends come in large numbers
- People can get cut off from flash flooding in some areas
- Some older residents can't drive and therefore cannot get into town (Alstonville) for medical facilities. There is no public transport to get older resident to doctors. Some older people have moved out of the area because of this. They could do more volunteer work if they could get around on a bus
- Parking around the hall is lacking. No formalised parking spaces are marked out

**How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?**

- It is an untouched environment and people can enjoy nature
- Love the coming together of the rainforest and the floodplain here
- There are conservation agreements applying to a lot of properties in the area. Lots of bush regeneration going on around here
- A lot flora and fauna exists. Lots of native trees and plants still exist. Very special environment
- No mad greenies live here, but everyone cares about the environment
- Weed control along the sides of the roads is missing

### General comments

- Broadband is very poor here. Hard to run a business at home. Mobile phone is patchy too
- The community is very passionate about opposing CSG. If there could be a shop in Meerschaum Vale they feel they could resist CSG, ie they could get a village status with a shop and the 2 km CSG exclusion ring that goes with that status
- People feel like they live in the "village" of Meerschaum Vale. They would like it to be formalised as a village. It centres around the hall
- Jetstar flight path on approach to Ballina airport seems to be much lower over the area recently
- Like the lack of density in the area. But people have to live somewhere. It would be good to allow second dwellings on rural properties to allow more people to live around here without residential subdivision having to occur. Family could stay on at lower cost. Some of the community was not so sure about this as they thought it would become just as busy if everyone was allowed a second dwelling on their property





## Rous

Public meeting at Meerschaum Vale Hall on 22 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Sviki, Matt Wood and Tara McGready. Sixty people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 25 from Meerschaum Vale, 14 from Rous Mill, five (5) from Rous; three (3) from Dalwood and two (2) from Alstonville. Meerschaum Vale is considered separate from Rous/Rous Mill. Whilst Rous and Rous Mill are considered separate, there is less of a distinction between them.

### What makes this place special?

- Great little Rous School gives a focus to the rural community
- The Rous Mill community hall – it is what keeps the wider community together
- The community and the people make it special
- The natural environment, and the lovely topography of the land around this area. Rainforest remnants with native birds and animals
- Extended views across pasture and horticulture
- Marom Falls and swimming with your children
- The old cemetery in a rural setting
- The fact it has remained a more horticultural area makes it special
- Exceptionally fertile soil with good rainfall and moderate climate
- The area celebrates its agricultural abundance. The community loves the local produce and roadside stalls. Stalls and farmers markets should be encouraged
- Rous Road is the best road around here – great for walking, feels wide and safe
- It makes up part of the main catchment area for Meerschaum Vale
- Davis Scrub Reserve and Victoria Reserve
- It is special because it is not a residential suburb. People live there because of the rural feel and atmosphere, and the community does not want it to change. It's low density living
- The Rous fireworks and bonfire each winter

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Farmers and horticulturalists
- A popular meeting spot is Rous Mill Hall, Alstonville Garden Centre café, and the Garden House at Rous (where the old church exists)
- Rous Mill Hall holds lots of functions
- Seems to be a lot more agricultural land uses in Rous than the surrounding areas
- Children go to Rous Public School or Alstonville primary schools
- Mainly shop at Alstonville but will also shop in Ballina or Lismore if they have to make a trip there

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- A beautiful church that has been restored exists along Rous Road, next to the school – it is becoming an icon in the area



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- The school holds a great bonfire night. Brings 2000 to 3000 people in July
- Most of the old buildings, including an old butcher and other shops, have burnt down
- Fruit and vegetable stalls are very much a part of the character of our roadsides

#### Is it easy to get around? Why?

- People use Ellis Road to get to Alstonville, instead of Wardell Road where the traffic is too fast – the speed limit needs to be reduced along Wardell Road
- Need Stop signs at all intersections onto Wardell Road and Dalwood Road – Give Way signs are not adequate
- There needs to be provision of facilities for cyclists. It would be great to get a bike track to Alstonville that families could use (and not just adult riders). Because nothing like this exists and the community feels that it is often too dangerous to be riding on most of the roads, they take their bikes in their cars to ride in other areas that provide safe cycleways. Some of the community likes that it will attract more tourists, some don't
- Rous Road is great because there are good view lines and it is wide, so it feels safe to ride and walk
- Wardell Road is very dangerous because of the speed vehicles travel along this road, and because it is a major connector road to Alstonville

#### How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?

- There are no parks with facilities for kids to play. Would like to see the sports fields behind the school restored. The tennis courts also need to be revitalised. You would imagine the school wants to use it. There was talk of having working bees to restore it, but it never happened. Too hard basket. The school grounds have enough sport areas. The government reduced funding to maintain the areas

#### General comments

- Do not want to see a new plateau village near Rous
- Because of insurance needed for tennis competitions, the competitions have gone to Alstonville. As a result, tennis has died off. The cost of upgrading the tennis court facilities prevents the use of them. The courts are owned by Crown land trust and only maintained to keep the grass down. It would cost about \$20k to restore properly
- The community feels like Ballina Council has forgotten about them
- But people have to live somewhere. It would be good to allow second dwellings on rural properties to allow more people to live around here without residential subdivision. It would be good for families to live in these second dwellings. They would like to have their children live in the second dwellings. Some feel this would increase the population too much and put too much pressure on existing infrastructure, and it would change the character if every property had a second dwelling



**Rous Mill**

Public meeting at Meerschaum Vale Hall on 22 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Sviki, Matt Wood and Tara McGready. Sixty people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 25 from Meerschaum Vale, 14 from Rous Mill, five (5) from Rous; three (3) from Dalwood and two (2) from Alstonville. Meerschaum Vale is considered separate from Rous/Rous Mill. Whilst Rous and Rous Mill are considered separate, there is less of a distinction between them.

**What makes this place special?**

- It's the centre of the universe – the best place on earth
- Truly a village, even though it doesn't have a shop. People do walk up and down the street and you will run into people. You can get that true community/social feel here
- Big diversity of people
- Having things such as a functional, vibrant hall makes it special – it's simple things like this that bring the community together
- The area just feels good. It's genuine rural with genuine history
- We have everything. Such easy access to Alstonville, doctors, services just up the road
- Access to good school at Rous School. Bus service to the front gate
- You have Lismore and Ballina close by
- Countrified, cattle in the paddocks, quiet at night
- Amazing history with plenty of evidence of past settlement left behind, eg railway mound

**Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- People go to Alstonville for much of their services and shopping
- Many young families
- A mix of professionals and retirees, with farmers on the larger lots
- Some people work from home
- Kids go to Rous School and Alstonville schools too. Older kids go to private schools too. Buses are okay for schools

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Plenty of timber and tin buildings. Many are original from the boom time when sugar was milled here. Small lots left over from a past, much larger town
- The church is still functioning here
- The community hall is a highlight – they have a fundraising talent show "Rous Unplugged" there once a month to raise fund for an Alstonville preschool. Good social event. Physical culture, dancing and many other classes use that hall. Also there are always community working bees at the hall
- The old school house
- The old shop which used to be a service station. There was also an old bake house, which is now a residence
- There are great number of older buildings that have been restored and still exist



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- There are unused tennis courts opposite that hall that are privately owned and could become a real community asset

#### Is it easy to get around? Why?

- Some kids ride on Rous Road to school. However, it can be dangerous. The most dangerous point for kids on bikes going to school is crossing from Rous Mill Road to Rous Road across Dalwood Road
- Speeding is an issue. Children wait to get on the school bus on Rous Mill Road
- It would be great to have more cycling access to Alstonville
- Rous Mill Road is very narrow in parts, and you have to walk off the road when cars come by
- Council has already asked the RMS to reduce speed to 50 km/hr
- The roads really need attending to. They are too narrow. People speed through. They are scared about major accidents
- There has been excellent upgrading along Wardell Road; this needs to keep occurring throughout the area
- It is often hard to see people walking along Dalwood Road at certain times of the day
- They get many visitors to the falls. People park along the side of the road and stand out on the road, which creates a safety issue

#### How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?

- Youngman Creek is enjoyed – it has really good quality water and riparian edges. Platypus is often seen in the creek. Marom Creek marks the western edge of Rous Mill
- People enjoy rural environment mixed with natural environment
- A koala corridor exists through the area
- Very fertile land exists. Anything can be grown on it. Prime agricultural land
- Must be nice to look at from hot air balloons. They get lots of them flying over all the time

#### General comments

- The old tennis courts are privately owned. They will only become used if Council buys the courts off the owner. The owner couldn't insure them at a reasonable cost so has let them go to ruin a bit. You can't build a house on that lot so no one else wants to buy it. Everyone seems to want Council to buy it and maintain it. Would need lights to be really well used
- Would hate to see it become subdivided for residential subdivision. Majority do not want this at all
- Ballina Council has a bad record of allowing residential subdivision on prime agricultural land. Community does not want to see this happen here
- However, it would be good to allow second dwellings on rural properties to allow more people to live around here without residential subdivision. Again, not everyone agreed with this
- Lousy mobile and broadband could really be improved
- Street signage could really be improved. There is a Rous Road at Rous, Rous Road at Tregagle and Rous Mill Road at Rous Mill



## South Ballina

Public meeting at Empire Vale Public School Library on 26 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Sviki, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty seven people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 12 from Empire Vale, 11 from Keith Hall, one (1) from Patchs Beach and five (5) from South Ballina. Patchs Beach is considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina. Empire Vale and Keith Hall were generally considered to be part of the same locality by most. South Ballina was generally considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and Patchs Beach. However, one attendee considered that Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina were part of the same locality.

### What makes this place special?

- It is paradise
- The incredible outdoor environment
- Includes the Richmond River Nature Reserve
- It's where the river meets the beach
- Great community spirit here – everyone knows one another
- The community runs the Rural Fire Service here
- Lots of fundraisers always occurring
- Popular surfing spot, fishing, cycling, kayaking, 4wd driving
- Mobbs Bay is special
- Whale and dolphin watching along the wall
- Two caravan parks within close proximity of one another. One mostly tourism and one has permanents as well
- It has become a tourist mecca (but there is a distinct lack of facilities)
- South Ballina surfing spots
- Excellent fishing on wall, in river and off beach
- Huge beach (30 km) with 4wd access

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? ,Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Majority of land used for agricultural pursuits – sugar, beef, macadamias
- Some recent newcomers have failed to acknowledge the agricultural pursuits that have existed for years
- Many of our residents are multi-generational – grandchildren, parents and grandparents
- Mixed population – families to retirees
- Have a large sand quarry
- Hard working community – work over the whole shire, Lismore, Ballina. The majority are cane farmers. Over 60 different active cane farmers from South Ballina to Wardell. One in three houses are occupied by farmers
- South Ballina was marketed as a cheaper source of housing, so demographic has changed with a few young families moving in

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Not really. There is no one style that dominates
- Fill levels above floods are too high. Need to be able to have a non-habitable lower storey instead

**Is it easy to get around? Why?**

- Speed limit needs to be reduced along South Ballina Beach Road
- The ferry is a great asset – it is a lifeline for the community as it cuts out so much driving time to Ballina. They feel that they should not have to pay charges to cross the ferry when it is their main access to their place of work and to their main facilities. The ferry is often out of action. There is no promotion of the ferry. The ferry building is a shabby-looking shed. The boom gate hardly works. Plenty of other places don't pay for ferries. Ballina residents don't pay a toll for bridges

**How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?**

- Best air quality around
- Massive variety of wildlife – great diversity of birds, echidnas, foxes, pythons, etc
- Many pet dogs exist there – (the DCP seems to have many provisions against having dogs)
- Lacking in picnic facilities at South Wall
- There are no public toilets and facilities for visitors to the area to use. The privately owned holiday park provides the only toilets and facilities

#### **General comments**

- South Ballina has become separate from the rest of the peninsula
- Without rezoning away from agriculture it is hard to develop any other types of land uses
- Many different types of activities can co-exist here
- E2 zoning was proposed in the new LEP to zone agricultural land before it was pulled out by the state government. This should not have been proposed in the first place
- The character, in a way, is shaped by land zoning
- Would like the DCP seriously revisited, particularly as it relates to this area
- South Ballina Beach Road is not featured on the tourist route map in the Ballina brochure
- Section 94 contributions that have been taken from the area have not ever been spent back on the locality. They used to have a one-day surf life saving patrol over on the beach here, but now that has stopped
- Mobbs Bay has been identified in the past as a spot for a marina
- The Council needs to dredge from the ferry to the mouth to allow salt and freshwater mix for the health of the river environment
- There needs to be a proper sealed track along South Wall so people can walk, push a pram or use a wheelchair here

These general comments apply to all four of the localities: Empire Vale, Patchs Beach, Keith Hall and South Ballina.

- Amongst all localities in this region, bike riders have no access to public toilets. Some use the school grounds when they ride past (it's disgusting)



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- There are no public bins on the south side of the river
- No parks or recreation areas provided
- Sporting facilities are centred in Alstonville and Ballina. Wardell is barely maintained
- We do not want a building style or theme imposed on this area
- Why does Council require dwelling sites to be filled to 300 mm when other flood prone areas can have double storey with no habitable areas on the ground floor?
- 1 in 100 year flood maps are affecting insurance. Some areas cannot get flood insurance because of this. Flood study has been revisited three times in the last seven years. Ridiculous situations have arisen where someone's new pool has had to be built higher than the level of the existing dwelling's windows
- The community asked Council if the ferry was ever wiped out, would it be replaced. Council said it wouldn't. Community asked if they could form a ferry trust. They believe from financial modeling they have done, that the revenue from the ferry matched the Council's records. But the cost of running did not match up.
- The cost of using the ferry is too high for residents when you have a trailer that has to be paid for. A different resident's pass is needed for each car in the family. Also, operation hours need to be extended due to the nature of changing working hours (meaning shift work around the clock)
- There is no turning bay on the southern side of the ferry for when vehicles need to turn around if the ferry isn't working. It becomes dangerous because you can't make a u-turn. The road is too narrow leading up to the ferry ramp. There are no warning signs to let people know when the ferry is out of order. The community asked for a ferry Twitter account to be set up so that the ferry operator could easily let people know when the ferry is out of order, but Council refused to do this
- There needs to be a community emergency plan put into action when the ferry is not operating and an incident occurs
- We need to look after the river environment and fish nurseries and reefs. The fish populations are just about gone
- We want the roads coming off the main road to be sealed and not to be just dirt tracks
- There are a number of ditches and drains off the side of the road that would be quite easy to slide into during wet weather. This needs to be addressed
- The locality needs to be zoned appropriately as an RU5 Village zone. It would be a long, skinny zone along River Drive stretching from Empire Vale to South Ballina. There was some disagreement on this within the attendees because there are big stretches of cane farm between the clusters of smaller lots with dwellings. Keith Hall and River Drive would be a good spot for the zoning. Empire Vale, around the school, is another spot for village zoning. Some members of the community disagreed with this point of view and asked that the whole community be consulted before a village rezoning occurred
- There are very little authorised pedestrian and vehicle access points to the beach throughout the localities. This is probably purposely done to limit the impact on Pied Oyster Catchers and their nesting areas in the dunes. Members of the community said they have never seen the Pied Oyster Catchers hurt by people using the beach. The birds nest in the dunes so if you have a 4wd you wouldn't go anywhere near them as you wouldn't want to drive in the soft sand where they nest
- The public road out to Empire Vale Beach is controlled by the Lands Department. Part of this road is an easement over private property that the public is meant to use. How can public access such as this occur on an easement through private property?



## Empire Vale

Public meeting at Empire Vale Public School Library on 26 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Svikis, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty seven people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 12 from Empire Vale, 11 from Keith Hall, one (1) from Patchs Beach and five (5) from South Ballina. Patchs Beach is considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina. Empire Vale and Keith Hall were generally considered to be part of the same locality by most. South Ballina was generally considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and Patchs Beach. However, one attendee considered that Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina were part of the same locality.

### What makes this place special?

- We know most of our neighbours – great people
- The primary school
- The post office – it's historical and a bit of a tourist attraction
- Feel of history to the locality
- Great place to live – tranquil and quiet
- Close to beach and river
- Wonderful family environment – but no parks or facilities for children to play
- Still a farming community

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Farmers – cane farmers, macadamia farmers, hydroponic farmers
- Horse riding facility
- Home-based businesses
- There are not too many "weekend" home owners here
- Children go mostly to school at Empire Vale for primary school, although some new families to the area send them to Ballina. Depends on where people work as well. There is a school bus service that goes to the Ballina and Alstonville schools, but it is mainly for secondary school kids
- Kids play sport in Ballina. A touch team was formed from Empire Vale but there was nowhere to train so they had to go to Ballina or Walsh Park
- Wardell sports facilities should be better
- Everyone shops at Ballina, even for small things, unless the ferry isn't working

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- All the old original houses have remained
- New houses are all their own style. No one style dominates the newer homes
- No real consistent character of buildings – cosmopolitan was a word used to describe it
- The only community buildings that exist are the school and the post office – the post office is incrementally getting restored
- We would like a tavern



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**Is it easy to get around? Why?**

- It has great topography for riding bikes, but it is not safe to ride bikes due to the speed of vehicles on the roads and the lack of a dedicated cycle path. Recreational cyclists have created a bad feeling towards cyclists who try to race at 30 to 40 km/hr. It is hard for vehicles to get around them, and as a result it is becoming dangerous because cars are trying to overtake them when it's not safe. The Australian Institute of Sport is now using River Drive as a training route, with a pace car and cyclists behind
- Over 150 cyclists come over on the ferry every Saturday, yet they do not have to pay a fee for the ferry
- It's too dangerous for kids to ride to school around here
- Motor vehicles are the main form of transport
- Walkers have to walk on gravel road as there is no footpath or grass verge. Pedestrians have to constantly look out for cars. The road out to Empire Vale Beach is rough and narrow, with no grass verge. All walking is done on the roads
- South Beach Road is used by local walkers

**How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?**

- There is a fox problem throughout the locality, and wild pigs from time to time. The environment would be better if they were not here
- Many people own boats, kayaks and canoes; it's just hard to get them into the river. We need public boat ramps
- Many tourists and families come to fish but they don't know where to go along the river or park to access the river. Council does not slash public land alongside the river for people to park next to the river. Verge maintenance is very sporadic
- There need to be more public recreation facilities along the river like toilets, picnic tables and barbecues
- A public reserve and parking area at the end of Empire Vale Road for the public to use was placed on the map, but it has never been formalised
- One-hundred years ago, the beach was used for community horse racing

**General comments**

These general comments apply to all four of the localities: Empire Vale, Patches Beach, Keith Hall and South Ballina.

- Amongst all localities in this region, bike riders have no access to public toilets. Some use the school grounds when they ride past (it's disgusting)
- There are no public bins on the south side of the river
- No parks or recreation areas provided
- Sporting facilities are centred in Alstonville and Ballina. Wardell is barely maintained
- We do not want a building style or theme imposed on this area
- Why does Council require dwelling sites to be filled to 300 mm when other flood prone areas can have double storey with no habitable areas on the ground floor?
- One in 100 year flood maps are affecting insurance. Some areas cannot get flood insurance because of this. Flood study has been revisited three times in the last seven years. Ridiculous situations have arisen where someone's new pool has had to be built higher than the level of the existing dwelling's windows



- The community asked Council if the ferry was ever wiped out, would it be replaced. Council said it wouldn't. Community asked if they could form a ferry trust. They believe from financial modeling they have done, that the revenue from the ferry matched the Council's records. But the cost of running did not match up.
- The cost of using the ferry is too high for residents when you have a trailer that has to be paid for. A different resident's pass is needed for each car in the family. Also, operation hours need to be extended due to the nature of changing working hours (meaning shift work around the clock)
- There is no turning bay on the southern side of the ferry for when vehicles need to turn around if the ferry isn't working. It becomes dangerous because you can't make a u-turn. The road is too narrow leading up to the ferry ramp. There are no warning signs to let people know when the ferry is out of order. The community asked for a ferry Twitter account to be set up so that the ferry operator could easily let people know when the ferry is out of order, but Council refused to do this
- There needs to be a community emergency plan put into action when the ferry is not operating and an incident occurs
- We need to look after the river environment and fish nurseries and reefs. The fish populations are just about gone
- We want the roads coming off the main road to be sealed and not to be just dirt tracks
- There are a number of ditches and drains off the side of the road that would be quite easy to slide into during wet weather. This needs to be addressed
- The locality needs to be zoned appropriately as an RU5 Village zone. It would be a long, skinny zone along River Drive stretching from Empire Vale to South Ballina. There was some disagreement on this within the attendees because there are big stretches of cane farm between the clusters of smaller lots with dwellings. Keith Hall and River Drive would be a good spot for the zoning. Empire Vale, around the school, is another spot for village zoning. Some members of the community disagreed with this point of view and asked that the whole community be consulted before a village rezoning occurred
- There are very little authorised pedestrian and vehicle access points to the beach throughout the localities. This is probably purposely done to limit the impact on Pied Oyster Catchers and their nesting areas in the dunes. Members of the community said they have never seen the Pied Oyster Catchers hurt by people using the beach. The birds nest in the dunes so if you have a 4wd you wouldn't go anywhere near them as you wouldn't want to drive in the soft sand where they nest
- The public road out to Empire Vale Beach is controlled by the Lands Department. Part of this road is an easement over private property that the public is meant to use. How can public access such as this occur on an easement through private property?



## Keith Hall

Public meeting at Empire Vale Public School Library on 26 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Sviki, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty seven people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 12 from Empire Vale, 11 from Keith Hall, one (1) from Patchs Beach and five (5) from South Ballina. Patchs Beach is considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina. Empire Vale and Keith Hall were generally considered to be part of the same locality by most. South Ballina was generally considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and Patchs Beach. However, one attendee considered that Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina were part of the same locality.

### What makes this place special?

- Having Empire Vale so close by
- Community spirit
- Great fishing
- Low crime rate – feel safe
- Everyone knows the ferryman
- The existence of an almost usable boat ramp into the river
- Lots of tourists – fishing on beach and in the river

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Farmers – cane farmers, macadamia farmers
- Home-based businesses
- There are not too many "weekend" home owners here
- Children go mostly to school at Empire Vale for primary school, although some new families to the area send them to Ballina. Depends on where people work as well. There is a school bus service that goes to the Ballina and Alstonville schools, but it is mainly for secondary school kids
- Kids play sport in Ballina. A touch team was formed from Empire Vale, but there was nowhere to train so they had to go to Ballina or Walsh Park
- Wardell sports facilities should be better
- Everyone shops at Ballina, even for small things, unless the ferry isn't working

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- No consistency in building types – don't want any standards forced on us

### Is it easy to get around? Why?

- It has great for topography for riding bikes, but it is not safe to ride bikes due to the speed of vehicles on the roads and the lack of a dedicated cycle path. Recreational cyclists have created a bad feeling towards cyclists who try to race at 30 to 40 km/hr. It is hard for vehicles to get around them and as a result it is becoming dangerous because cars are trying to overtake them when it's not safe. The Australian Institute of Sport is now using River Drive as a training route, with a pace car and cyclists behind
- Over 150 cyclists come over on the ferry every Saturday, yet they do not have to pay a fee for the ferry



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- It's too dangerous for kids to ride to school around here
- Motor vehicles are the main form of transport
- Walkers have to walk on gravel road as there is no footpath or grass verge. Pedestrians have to constantly look out for cars. The road out to Empire Vale Beach is rough and narrow, with no grass verge. All walking is done on the roads
- South Beach Road is used by local walkers

#### How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?

- Community facilities – a private property opposite the "almost boat ramp" has been identified by the community as a good site for a hall and community facilities
- Fresh air and great sunsets are part of life at Keith Hall
- Our great river is the best thing
- There is a fox problem throughout the locality, and wild pigs from time to time. The environment would be better if they were not here
- Many people own boats, kayaks and canoes; it's just hard to get them into the river. We need public boat ramps
- Many tourists and families come to fish but they don't know where to go along the river or park to access the river. Council does not slash public land alongside the river for people to park next to the river. Verge maintenance is very sporadic
- There need to be more public recreation facilities along the river like toilets, picnic tables and barbecues
- A public reserve and parking area at the end of Empire Vale Road for the public to use was placed on the map, but it has never been formalised
- One-hundred years ago, the beach was used for community horse racing

#### General comments

These general comments apply to all four of the localities: Empire Vale, Patchs Beach, Keith Hall and South Ballina.

- Amongst all localities in this region, bike riders have no access to public toilets. Some use the school grounds when they ride past (it's disgusting)
- There are no public bins on the south side of the river
- No parks or recreation areas provided
- Sporting facilities are centred in Alstonville and Ballina. Wardell is barely maintained
- We do not want a building style or theme imposed on this area
- Why does Council require dwelling sites to be filled to 300 mm when other flood prone areas can have double storey with no habitable areas on the ground floor?
- 1 in 100 year flood maps are affecting insurance. Some areas cannot get flood insurance because of this. Flood study has been revisited three times in the last seven years. Ridiculous situations have arisen where someone's new pool has had to be built higher than the level of the existing dwelling's windows
- The community asked Council if the ferry was ever wiped out, would it be replaced. Council said it wouldn't. Community asked if they could form a ferry trust. They believe from financial modeling they have done, that the revenue from the ferry matched the Council's records. But the cost of running did not match up.



- The cost of using the ferry is too high for residents when you have a trailer that has to be paid for. A different resident's pass is needed for each car in the family. Also, operation hours need to be extended due to the nature of changing working hours (meaning shift work around the clock)
- There is no turning bay on the southern side of the ferry for when vehicles need to turn around if the ferry isn't working. It becomes dangerous because you can't make a u-turn. The road is too narrow leading up to the ferry ramp. There are no warning signs to let people know when the ferry is out of order. The community asked for a ferry Twitter account to be set up so that the ferry operator could easily let people know when the ferry is out of order, but Council refused to do this
- There needs to be a community emergency plan put into action when the ferry is not operating and an incident occurs
- We need to look after the river environment and fish nurseries and reefs. The fish populations are just about gone
- We want the roads coming off the main road to be sealed and not to be just dirt tracks
- There are a number of ditches and drains off the side of the road that would be quite easy to slide into during wet weather. This needs to be addressed
- The locality needs to be zoned appropriately as an RU5 Village zone. It would be a long, skinny zone along River Drive stretching from Empire Vale to South Ballina. There was some disagreement on this within the attendees because there are big stretches of cane farm between the clusters of smaller lots with dwellings. Keith Hall and River Drive would be a good spot for the zoning. Empire Vale, around the school, is another spot for village zoning. Some members of the community disagreed with this point of view and asked that the whole community be consulted before a village rezoning occurred
- There are very little authorised pedestrian and vehicle access points to the beach throughout the localities. This is probably purposely done to limit the impact on Pied Oyster Catchers and their nesting areas in the dunes. Members of the community said they have never seen the Pied Oyster Catchers hurt by people using the beach. The birds nest in the dunes so if you have a 4wd you wouldn't go anywhere near them as you wouldn't want to drive in the soft sand where they nest
- The public road out to Empire Vale Beach is controlled by the Lands Department. Part of this road is an easement over private property that the public is meant to use. How can public access such as this occur on an easement through private property?



## Patches Beach

Public meeting at Empire Vale Public School Library on 26 May 2014 (6:30 till 8:00 pm). Chaired by Mike Svikis, Suzanne Acret and Tara McGready. Thirty seven people in attendance. Attendees included approximately 12 from Empire Vale, 11 from Keith Hall, one (1) from Patches Beach and five (5) from South Ballina. Patches Beach is considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina. Empire Vale and Keith Hall were generally considered to be part of the same locality by most. South Ballina was generally considered separate to Empire Vale, Keith Hall and Patches Beach. However, one attendee considered that Empire Vale, Keith Hall and South Ballina were part of the same locality.

### What makes this place special?

- Part of the beach is a formalised dog exercise area. It's the only dog walking spot south of the river in Ballina Shire
- Nature – including the Pied Oyster Catchers
- Horse riding
- Easy beach access for pedestrians and 4wd vehicles – but you have to drive a distance to get there from surrounding localities. The car park is always full on weekends. There is a lack of public toilets, water and facilities there – closest public toilets are 10 km away
- No street lights and very quiet at night

### Who lives here? That is, young families, older people, weekend residents, farmers, etc? Where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Retirees
- There are some holiday-let dwellings at Patches Beach but also permanent families. Holiday houses do not make up the majority. It is mix of permanent residents and holiday-let homes
- Some are long-term rented dwellings like anywhere else
- People commute by car to get to work in Ballina
- Kids go to school at Empire Vale or high schools at Ballina or Alstonville. Has a bus service
- Kids go to Ballina for sport

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- Mix of older simple cottages of fibro and tin with newer brick and rendered homes. No particular style
- Streets have no kerb and gutter, and are narrow and quiet

### Is it easy to get around? Why?

- People walk to beach and to get around, but need a car to get there in the first place
- Roads are okay to walk on in the "village"

### How do people enjoy the environment here? Is there anything else missing?

- The beach is the main feature of the environment here
- Beach fishing, four wheel driving, swimming, surfing, walking



**General comments**

- There is a run-down picnic area at Patchs Beach that really needs to be upgraded. Only one or two tables exist. Lacking in any other public facilities. No water, no garbage, no toilets
- The original owner of the now residential subdivision was a farmer

These general comments apply to all four of the localities: Empire Vale, Patchs Beach, Keith Hall and South Ballina.

- Amongst all localities in this region, bike riders have no access to public toilets. Some use the school grounds when they ride past (it's disgusting)
- There are no public bins on the south side of the river
- No parks or recreation areas provided
- Sporting facilities are centred in Alstonville and Ballina. Wardell is barely maintained
- We do not want a building style or theme imposed on this area
- Why does Council require dwelling sites to be filled to 300 mm when other flood prone areas can have double storey with no habitable areas on the ground floor?
- 1 in 100 year flood maps are affecting insurance. Some areas cannot get flood insurance because of this. Flood study has been revisited three times in the last seven years. Ridiculous situations have arisen where someone's new pool has had to be built higher than the level of the existing dwelling's windows
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- The locality needs to be zoned appropriately as an RU5 Village zone. It would be a long, skinny zone along River Drive stretching from Empire Vale to South Ballina. There was some disagreement on this within the attendees because there are big stretches of cane farm between the clusters of smaller lots with dwellings. Keith Hall and River Drive would be a good spot for the zoning. Empire Vale, around the school, is another spot for village zoning. Some members of the community disagreed with this point of view and asked that the whole community be consulted before a village rezoning occurred





- There are very little authorised pedestrian and vehicle access points to the beach throughout the localities. This is probably purposely done to limit the impact on Pied Oyster Catchers and their nesting areas in the dunes. Members of the community said they have never seen the Pied Oyster Catchers hurt by people using the beach. The birds nest in the dunes so if you have a 4wd you wouldn't go anywhere near them as you wouldn't want to drive in the soft sand where they nest
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## Consultant Place Checks

### Newrybar

**What makes this place special?**

- Its heritage character
- Open main street
- The businesses which have located there
- Gentrified

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- Older heritage buildings – weatherboard and high gabled tin roofs
- Kerb and gutters on northern side of main street
- Community hall and Rural Fire Brigade building are positioned centrally along the main street
- Commercial businesses located in the village include:
  - Restaurant
  - Delicatessen
  - Clothing store
  - General store and bottle shop
  - Produce and farm supplies store
  - Antiques store

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Long-term residents
- Retirees
- Tree changers?

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Early 20th Century rural weatherboard dwellings
- Some more recent dwellings in different styles

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on the eastern side of the main street
- The street would be difficult for disabled people to manoeuvre
- Much of the pedestrian activity occurs on the road
- Western verge is not flat and has no defined footpath

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Dwellings on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway will become better connected once the new highway route opens



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- Newrybar School along Broken Head Road needs to be reconnected to its community
- Provision of footpaths that are exclusive to pedestrian activity
- A defined pedestrian crossing point in the main street

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- The main street functions relatively successfully due to the commercial and public land uses being concentrated in one part of the main street, within short walking distance of one another

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- Strong café culture – the village seems centrally focused on the Harvest Café
- Missing – places for children, outdoor public recreation areas

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Traffic calming structures installed on the main street or clear reduced speed area using road texture to create a shared pedestrian and vehicle space
- Connect the main hamlet area with the Newrybar Public School via a safe shared path with defined crossing point along old Pacific Highway (once new highway is opened)



**Tintenbar****What makes this place special?**

- Heavily vegetated mature vegetation throughout the centre
- Situated in a small valley, which feels steep sided

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- A number of commercial businesses are located in the hamlet including:
  - Restaurant
  - General store
  - Petrol station
  - Mechanics/Garage
  - Offices
- Recently refurbished community hall
- Much-loved tennis courts and public oval
- A small number of small rural residential lots exist close to the general store

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Young families, rural lifestyle retirees
- Cattle grazing and horticulture are dominant land uses
- Tintenbar/Teven public school is located west of Tintenbar, off Fredericks Lane

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Older weatherboard cottages and farm houses
- Hall is weatherboard and tin

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- No formal footpath and not much grass verge to walk on
- Tintenbar Road separates the northern part of the village from the southern. Traffic along this road travels fast (80 km/hr speed limit)
- Very steep hill between Tintenbar and its school
- No shared path to connect sports area to the main hamlet

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Connection of pedestrians between the southern and northern sides of the town
- Pedestrian connection of the tennis courts and public oval to Tintenbar Road (perhaps via a riparian path)

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- There is a disconnect between the northern and southern sides of the village – a vehicle is needed to get to the restaurant and tennis courts/oval. Pedestrian connections are not encouraged



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- No signage exists to direct people to the tennis courts and oval. It is not obvious to visitors that these areas exist because they are well hidden away from the centre of the hamlet

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- Tennis courts/oval and surrounding recreation areas were observed to be used
- Access to Emigrant Creek riparian area is missing

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Provision of pedestrian connections
- Better connections for children with their school (difficult with the terrain)



**Fernleigh****What makes this place special?**

- Topography – rolling hills and undulating paddocks at a high elevation
- Characterised by mature tree-lined rural road with cleared paddocks beyond the lined trees

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- Farm houses on rural lots
- Public school on an elevated ridge fronting Fernleigh Road
- Small park with shaded picnic table (Burnett Park) at intersection with Nashua Road
- Large rural lots dominate

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Farmers – horticulture (coffee and macadamias) and cattle grazing
- Families seeking a rural lifestyle
- A number of home-based occupations such as an electrician and craft pottery studio

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Mixture of new dwellings, old original weatherboard farm houses and 1970s/80s brick and tile farm houses

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- There are scattered clusters of larger rural residential lots amongst large rural farm lots. Distances between clusters are too large for pedestrian activity
- Undulating topography and corners along Fernleigh Road, combined with narrow grass verges do not encourage pedestrian activity
- Fernleigh Road is speed limited at 100 km/hr

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Difficult to achieve with very low density living. Car dependence is likely

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- Typical rural road, does not cater to a pedestrian environment
- Burnett Park is located over a rise around 200-300 metres from the school. No good pedestrian connection exists between the rural residential lots and the park. Its location at a T-intersection makes the pedestrian connection a little more dangerous

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- Possible enjoyment of Burnett Park at the intersection of Nashua and Fernleigh Roads. It looks well-maintained, even though it's old and infrastructure such as swings are missing
- Pleasant rural outlook and feel



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How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?

- Connecting the children to their school

**Meerschaum Vale****What makes this place special?**

- Remnant vegetation
- Very quiet, great dark night sky

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- The very sparse settlement is physically located at a lower elevation (than say Rous Mill), on the edge of a floodplain (Tuckean Swamp)
- Scattered smaller rural residential lots with varying styles of dwellings
- Rural Fire Brigade shed exists at the southern extent of “central” Meerschaum Vale

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Cattle grazing is the dominant land use
- Lifestyle and tree changers
- Approximately 4 km to Wardell to the nearest school or 7 km to Alstonville, which also has a high school

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Old early 20th Century weatherboard houses, some restored more than others
- An old church has been converted into a dwelling
- Lovely old hall (1906) on the intersection of Marom Creek Road and Wardell Road

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- Wardell Road has an 80 km/hr speed limit and holds a fair volume of traffic
- Reasonable width of grass verge for pedestrians to use

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Better parking and safer access to the hall

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- Clusters of rural residential lots exist along Wardell Road, between large rural lots. Density within the settlement is scattered

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- Very low density of dwellings makes it difficult to service

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Make better use of the hall site as a community focus. Does it need more parking?

### Rous

#### What makes this place special?

- Tree-lined lanes and main road
- Preservation of heritage buildings such as the old church and the primary school
- Well maintained cemetery

#### What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?

- Preserved old church building – still being used for weddings but no longer functioning as a church
- Primary school (established 1881)
- Absence of kerb and guttering and street lights
- Public tennis courts (Arcadia) and old public oval, now neglected and abandoned. A sign stating the tennis courts were re-opened in 1992 suggests they have been revived before
- Large rural farming lots and rural lifestyle lots

#### Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Farmers – commercial horticulture (macadamias and avocados) and cattle grazing
- A number of organic farms
- Wholesale nurseries
- Rous Public School is on the corner of Rous Cemetery Road and Rous Road

#### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- A mix of modern homes and old weatherboard farm houses on large rural lots

#### What limits how easy it is to get around?

- Distances between lots, typical of rural settlements. Dwellings are very spread out as they all exist on larger rural lots
- Large grass verges exist on the sides of the main road (Rous Road) for pedestrians

#### How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?

- A possible future connection between Rous and Rous Mill could be made due to the relatively short distance between the two settlements. Currently there is a distinct separation between the two localities, mainly due to Dalwood Road (which is an 80 km/hr road and holds a fair volume of traffic) and a number of larger rural lots on the eastern side of Dalwood Road separating the two localities

#### How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?

- The settlement is centred around the public school

#### How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?

- Pleasant rural outlook and feel to the settlement
- Reinvigorate the sports area and tennis courts to provide a focus for locals and children



**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Traffic slowing devices could be installed around the school as Rous Road is a 80 km/hr speed limited road

## Rous Mill

### What makes this place special?

- Interesting history – with a once much larger community

### What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?

- Well-maintained community hall
- Privately owned old tennis courts along the main street
- Old church still in use (Uniting Church)
- Residential dwellings on concessional lots in the centre of the settlement, and a cluster of rural residential lots exist to the western extent of Rous Mill Road
- A couple of old shops in the main street that have been converted to dwellings

### Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Farmers – horticulture (macadamias and avocados) and cattle grazing
- Young families living there for the lifestyle
- Retirees?

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- Old restored weatherboard farm houses are dominant
- 41 Rous Mill Road was converted to a dwelling from a general store which included a petrol pump. The dwelling next door at 43 Rous Mill Road used to be a bakery

### What limits how easy it is to get around?

- Distances between lots, typical of rural settlements. There is, however, a cluster of smaller lots along the main street

### How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?

- A possible future connection between Rous and Rous Mill could be made due to the relatively short distance between the two settlements. Currently there is a distinct separation between the two localities, mainly due to Dalwood Road (which is an 80 km/hr road and holds a fair volume of traffic) and a number of larger rural lots on the eastern side of Dalwood Road separating the two localities

### How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?

- Rous Mill Road (main street) has a narrower feel to it due to the rising topography on either side of the road

### How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?

- A connection for school kids from Rous Mill to the Rous School – shared path
- A usable sporting facility such as the old tennis courts. It could be managed by the Hall Trust



**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- A hand written "Slow Down" sign was observed underneath a formal "Children Crossing" sign. The speed of traffic is obviously an issue along the main street
- Traffic slowing devices could be installed along the main street. Textured road surfaces



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**South Ballina**

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**What makes this place special?**

- Location alongside Richmond River
- Proximity to the South Wall of the river and the beach
- Ferry connection to West Ballina
- Public boat ramps
- Richmond River Nature Reserve

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- Older residential dwellings
- Two large caravan/holiday parks
- Cluster of small residential lots next to southern-most caravan park

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Employment generated by the South Ballina Sand Quarry, the two caravan parks and the cane farms
- Small areas of horticulture, eg macadamias

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- There is a mix of older fibro, concrete block, brick and weatherboard dwellings. Single and double storey

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- No formal footpath
- Area is generally flood prone

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Pedestrian and vehicular bridge connecting to Ballina
- Better signage at Wardell

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- Only one street exists through South Ballina (South Ballina Beach Road)
- Concentration of small residential lots flanked by larger vegetated rural lots and the two caravan parks

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- The river, Richmond River Nature Reserve and the beach are the attractors to the environment here
- Popular with early morning bike riders coming across the ferry and heading south
- Missing – no commercial or community facilities exist (aside from the private caravan parks). No clear focal point or arrival point

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Better defined river access points for recreation



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**Empire Vale**

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**What makes this place special?**

- Location alongside Richmond River
- Private river frontage for some
- Very flat country

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- Cane farms and farm dwellings
- Primary school (established 1891)
- One of Australia's smallest post office buildings

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Active retirees, young families, cane farmers
- A horse ranch/horse hotel exists on the eastern end of Moylans Lane

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Many buildings (school and dwellings) look to have been constructed in the early 20th Century
- Original weatherboard cottages, 1980s brick and tile dwellings

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- No formal footpath
- River Drive is a 80 km/hr road, however speed limit is reduced to 40 km/hr during school hours. Volume of traffic along River Drive is low

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Dedicated bike lane could assist (difficult with narrow pavement width)

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- Scattered clusters of smaller concessional residential lots fall in between large rural lots

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- The river is a focal recreational point, ideal for boating
- There is limited access to the river and it's not well signposted
- No public recreational areas or focal points, other than the school

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- More facilities for visitors

### Keith Hall

**What makes this place special?**

- Richmond River frontage

**What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?**

- Older residential dwellings
- Larger rural residential lots exist alongside River Drive (main street), majority of lots are large rural lots being used for cane growing
- Private tennis courts exist on a rural residential property on the corner of River Drive

**Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?**

- Cane farmers

**Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?**

- Weatherboard cottages, 1980s brick and tile dwellings, both single and double storey

**What limits how easy it is to get around?**

- River Drive is 80 km/hr road, however the volume of traffic is low

**How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?**

- Safer road shoulders for bikes and walkers

**How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?**

- Rural residential lots around 5000 m<sup>2</sup> are clustered side-by-side alongside River Drive. Beyond, surrounding this, are large cane farms
- Activity is focused along River Drive

**How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?**

- The river is the focus of this locality
- There are no discernable public recreation areas or marked river access sites

**How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?**

- Connectivity back to Empire Vale School



## Patchs Beach

### What makes this place special?

- Location behind foredune of a very long beach
- Beach and 4wd beach access readily available

### What characterises the built environment and could it be enhanced?

- Cluster of 17 residential lots and dwellings on the edge of South Ballina Beach
- Plus a small cluster of concessional lots along Patchs Beach Road
- Vegetation characterised by Banksias, Tuckeroos, She-Oaks, Pandanus and Fig trees
- No kerb and gutter – single street is a narrow bitumen seal

### Who lives here and where do they work, shop, play or go to school?

- Dwellings in the residential cluster look to be holiday homes mixed with permanent residents. Probably retirees mostly
- The main land use surrounding Patchs Beach is cane farms as well as a couple of large hydroponic farms
- Small wholesale citrus nursery along Patchs Beach Road (200 m west of the residential cluster)

### Are the buildings around here of a certain type? Is there a particular feel to how homes and buildings are built? If so, would you encourage that to continue?

- Old 1970s fibro beach cottages, 1980s brick and tile dwellings

### What limits how easy it is to get around?

- The settlement is very compact and clustered with the “centre” of Patchs Beach being located at the end of a dead end road
- Patchs Beach is isolated from other settlements due to its location between the Pacific Ocean on one side and large rural cane farms dominating the landscape between the settlement and the town of Wardell on its western side
- You cannot easily walk to a shop or service area. It is a car orientated place

### How can the place be made better-connected, more accessible and more welcoming?

- Could have a clear entry statement and pavement treatment to create a sense of arrival

### How successful are the streets and spaces between land uses? What could be improved?

- Street is also the footpath, but this would be difficult for aged or disabled. Path could be created easily on one side

### How do people enjoy the environment here? What is missing?

- The focus of enjoyment in this area is the beach – fishing, swimming, walking
- No community focal point, eg notice board, bushfire shed

### How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?

- Bushfire may be an issue of concern. Active management of buffers would be required



**MikeSvikisPlanning**  
Experience/Commitment/Quality

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## Issues, Objectives and Strategies Arising from Community Meetings

### Newrybar

#### Main Features:

- Older heritage buildings – weatherboard and high gabled tin roofs
- Kerb and gutter on northern side of a short, but structured main street. Reticulated water with on-site disposal
- Community hall and Rural Fire Brigade building are positioned centrally along the main street
- Surrounded by open elevated, red soil farm land and horticultural areas, serviced by narrow rural roads
- Commercial businesses located in the village include:
  - Restaurant
  - Deli
  - Clothing store
  - General store and bottle shop
  - Produce and farm supplies store
  - Antique store

#### Key Issues:

- The character of the village is likely to be significantly altered following the relocation of the Pacific Highway further to the east by the end of 2015. However, it will remain a thoroughfare for traffic from the west to get to the coast
- Lack of a footpath or grass verge of the eastern side of the main street
- The street is difficult to manoeuvre by people with disabilities. Much of the pedestrian activity occurs on the road. Lack of a footpath or grass verge on the eastern side of the main street. Western road verge is not flat and has no defined footpath
- Bus pick up and drop off in main street is often dangerous
- No place for horses to ride on what should be quiet country roads
- 35 metre NBN tower on Broken Head Road will be a major visual impact
- Parts of the streetscape need improvement
- Rents are high, and land and housing are expensive to buy
- Nowhere for children to play locally
- No regular public transport creates car dependency
- Concerned about overdevelopment and protecting the Emigrant Creek water catchment

#### Locality Objectives:

- Retain active street frontages to keep life on the street
- Keep the heritage and small village feel of the place
- Use landscaping for privacy rather than high fences, and implement streetscape improvement



- Create a stronger connection to the Newrybar School along Broken Head Road, as well as reconnecting the dwellings located east of the current highway
- Make Newrybar a safer place to walk, ride a horse or a bike
- Improve the appearance of the main street while providing for parking and bus movements
- Protect the water quality of the Emigrant Creek catchment, and preserve the remnant natural areas

**Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Maintain the heritage and low-scale character of the village with simple and fair planning controls
- Install traffic calming structures on the main street or a reduced speed area using road texture to create a shared pedestrian and vehicle space. Consider a one-way street for the whole or part of the main street
- Provide a shared path connecting the village to the school for safe access for kids
- Reduce the road speeds on Brooklet Road and Broken Head Road
- Construct a landscaped overflow car park at the northern town entrance for busy times, combined with an entrance statement and bus stop
- Implement street beautification in line with existing community plans
- Investigate reticulated sewerage for the main urban area





**Tintenbar****Main Features:**

- Mix of older buildings with newer styles on the larger lots in more recent subdivisions
- Tree-lined roads designed for low speed traffic
- Vibrant rural primary school built relatively recently
- Commercial businesses located in the hamlet that not only serve the hamlet but surrounding localities and passing travellers/commuters, including:
  - General store and bottle shop
  - Medical centre
  - Mechanics and petrol station
  - Offices
  - Restaurant (Fernleigh Road)

**Key Issues:**

- The steepness of the land surrounding the hamlet makes it hard to walk or ride a bike
- Lack of a footpath, formed shoulders or a grass verge on many of the roads means it's not safe to walk or ride or even cross the Emigrant Creek bridge
- The rural roads are difficult to manoeuvre by people with disabilities
- No safe link back to Ballina for bike riders
- No safe path for children to the school or sports fields
- Need to retain the rural feel of the locality
- Need to maintain a community focus
- Lack of public transport makes everyone car dependent
- Lack of affordable housing for young people to stay on in the locality
- Dangerous intersections along Tintenbar Road where local traffic meets high speed through traffic. This will only get worse as Cumbalum is developed
- Biodiversity of the locality, including Emigrant Creek, needs to be preserved and improved. It still retains a platypus population

**Locality Objectives:**

- Provide improved rural housing options to retain population
- Keep the Tintenbar hall as a community focus and under community management
- Retain native vegetation cover as part of the streetscape
- Improve access to Emigrant Creek to create community ownership and improve its biodiversity, and allow it to be a recreation resource
- Build on community managed and owned public facilities
- Provide a shared path connection between George Street and the sports fields – perhaps a riparian connection
- Provide a shared path connection to the school
- Keep the locality low density and low rise to retain its rural charm, but reconsider dwellings on rural lots close to the hamlet centre to support the level of services
- Improve facilities at Killen Falls with Council and Rous working together



#### Potential Strategic Actions:

- Manage the speed of through traffic on Tintenbar Road by implementing traffic calming methods to ensure it does not ruin the rural ambience of Tintenbar and provides a safer road environment
- Apply intersection treatments at Fernleigh Road, George Street, hall access and Friday Hut Road to ensure safer merging onto Tintenbar Road
- Create a better shared path connection between George Street and the sports fields – perhaps a riparian connection
- Permit detached rural dual occupancy where access and services are appropriate
- Consider dwelling entitlements on existing small lots where access and services are appropriate
- Provide facilities for children at the sports oval and ensure better maintenance of the oval. Consider a Trust and revised maintenance regime for the sports fields so locals are more “hands on” and empowered
- Consider a twice-daily bus service to Ballina
- Control cats and dogs to better protect wildlife
- Investigate compost toilets at Killen Falls, and a properly formed access path

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## Fernleigh

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**Main Features:**

- Rolling farm land used mainly for horticulture and cattle
- Mix of older buildings with newer styles on more recent subdivisions
- Businesses are limited home-based businesses such as a pottery studio

**Key Issues:**

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads makes it difficult to walk or ride
- The rural roads are difficult to manoeuvre by people with disabilities
- No safe links to the Fernleigh School for bike riders
- Need to retain the rural feel of the locality
- Needs a community focus in addition to the school

**Locality Objectives:**

- Keep the locality low density to retain its rural charm
- Ensure agricultural focus is retained
- Keep local roads in good condition
- Retain the Fernleigh Public School

**Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Consider a shared path along Fernleigh Road to link the school with surrounding farms
- Make Burnett Park a community focus by upgrading its facilities, if there is community support



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**Meerschaum Vale**

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**Main Features:**

- Mix of older buildings with newer styles on more recent subdivisions
- Reuse of older buildings for housing has allowed them to be retained on small rural lots (eg church and post office)
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- Restored community hall is a key meeting place for the locals. The strong Rural Fire Service brigade is also a key community connector, with its station located to the southern part of central Meerschaum Vale

**Key Issues:**

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads means it's not safe to walk or ride along Wardell Road or Bagotville Road
- The rural roads are difficult to manoeuvre by people with disabilities
- Need to retain the rural feel of the locality
- Poor broadband and mobile reception makes a lot of communication unreliable
- Retired residents and families with young children have minimal access to services and are heavily car dependent
- Farm incomes are assisted by farmers markets and roadside stalls, which provide direct sales opportunities

**Locality Objectives:**

- Retain the historic hall as a community focus and create connectivity to it where possible
- Make Meerschaum Vale a safer community for kids, walkers and bike riders
- Protect and preserve the remnant natural areas of the locality
- Improve broadband and telephone reception
- Maintain regular farmers markets and local produce sale opportunities

**Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Generate further regular use of the hall by mothers groups, play groups or the like
- Provide some marked car parking for the hall to make access safer
- Reduce vehicle speeds along Wardell Road in the vicinity of Meerschaum Vale
- Consider a small-scale public bus system to service the locality
- Maintain public assets, including road verges, for safety and functionality
- Work with local land owners and land care groups on vegetation restoration and protection
- Improve broadband and telephone reception in consultation with the community to ensure any towers do not cause disruption and excessive visual impact
- Permit farmers markets on community land and roadside stalls on private land on a merit basis

### Rous

#### Main Features:

- Mix of older buildings with newer styles on more recent subdivisions. Some of the older buildings are substantial original farm houses with established landscaping
- Reuse of older public buildings, such as the church for a wedding location, has allowed it to be retained on a small lot and continue to give character to the locality
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- Rous School is a key meeting place for the locals, especially those with children

#### Key Issues:

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads means it's not really safe to walk or ride along Rous Road, although it is one of the better rural roads in the area
- The rural roads generate high speed traffic and need to be slowed, particularly around the school and the cluster of houses
- Need to retain the rural feel of the locality and avoid a third plateau village
- Viability of farming in the face of change
- Farm incomes are assisted by farmers markets and roadside stalls, which provide direct sales opportunities

#### Locality Objectives:

- Retain the Rous School as a community focus and create connectivity to it from Rous Mill
- Make Rous a safer community for kids, walkers and bike riders
- Protect and preserve the remnant natural areas of the locality
- Provide additional options for the community to play and interact
- Ensure traditional farming practices and horticultural enterprises can continue
- Maintain regular farmers markets and local produce sale opportunities

#### Potential Strategic Actions:

- Create a safe, shared path between the Rous School and the Rous Mill hall to increase community connectivity
- Restore the sports fields and tennis courts behind the school as a genuine community asset
- Protect viable and important agriculture and horticulture from encroachment by "lifestyle lots"
- Reduce vehicle speeds along Rous Road in the vicinity of the school and houses
- Consider a small-scale public bus system to service the locality
- Permit farmers markets on community land and roadside stalls on private land on a merit basis



**Rous Mill****Main Features:**

- Mix of older buildings with newer styles on more recent subdivisions. Some of the older buildings include a shop, service station and bakery that are all now residences, and a church that is still functioning
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- Rous Mill hall is a key meeting place for the locals of all ages and is well used
- Has significant heritage value as a once-booming sugar mill town

**Key Issues:**

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads means it's not really safe to walk or ride along Rous Mill Road, although it is not as busy as some because it is not a popular through road
- The rural roads generate high speed traffic and need to be slowed, particularly around the hall and the clusters of houses
- Need to retain the rural feel of the locality and avoid a third plateau village
- Viability of farming in the face of change
- Farm incomes are assisted by farmers markets and roadside stalls, which provide direct sales opportunities
- Recognise the remnants of its past sugar mill history

**Locality Objectives:**

- Retain the Rous Mill hall as a community focus and create connectivity to it from Rous
- Make Rous Mill a safer community for kids, walkers and bike riders
- Protect and preserve the remnant natural areas of the locality, including Youngman Creek
- Provide additional options for the community to play and interact
- Ensure traditional farming practices and horticultural enterprises can continue
- Maintain regular farmers markets and local produce sale opportunities
- Protect and preserve remnants of its past sugar mill history

**Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Create a safe, shared path between the Rous School and the Rous Mill hall to increase community connectivity. Particular attention to the intersection with Dalwood Road
- Purchase and restore the private tennis courts along Rous Mill Road, near the church, as a genuine community asset and manage in conjunction with the hall
- Protect viable and important agriculture and horticulture from encroachment by "lifestyle lots"
- Reduce vehicle speeds along Rous Mill Road in the vicinity of the hall and houses
- Consider a small-scale public bus system to service the locality
- Permit farmers markets on community land and roadside stalls on private land on a merit basis
- Work with land owners to ensure the sugar mill heritage is protected
- Work with land owners and land care to protect riparian areas along Youngman Creek
- Consider secondary dwellings on land for families, and affordable housing
- Improve street signage
- Improve broadband and mobile reception, but locate towers with full community consultation

### South Ballina

#### Main Features:

- Has a tourist feel to the locality with two caravan parks
- Mix of older buildings made from timber and fibro, with newer styles on more recent subdivisions
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- The Empire Vale School is a key meeting place for the locals of all ages and is well used, but facilities are basic and it's small
- It remains a sugar cane farming area that contributes a lot of product to the sugar industry
- The sand quarry generates heavy vehicle movements on local roads
- The community relates strongly to the river and the beach
- The community relies heavily on its ferry service to Ballina

#### Key Issues:

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads means it's not really safe to walk or ride, although the less busy roads are not as bad
- The rural roads generate high speed and high volume cycle traffic, particularly on weekends, and it does not always mix well
- Need to retain the agricultural industry of the locality and not grow more houses
- Viability of farming is important
- Keep the local school open
- Access to the beach and river from public land is important
- Guaranteed access to Ballina, via the ferry, is important
- Need to recognise it as a place for family tourism, fishing and boating

#### Locality Objectives:

- Establish a community focus such as a hall and park that are accessible to all
- Make South Ballina a safer community for kids, walkers and bike riders
- Protect and preserve the agricultural industry that is the dominant land use
- Provide additional access to the river (for boats and fishers) and the beach (for walkers)
- Ensure traditional farming practices and horticultural enterprises can continue
- Encourage with promotion and additional facilities, the family tourism aspects of the locality
- Improve the ferry service to Ballina

#### Potential Strategic Actions:

- Create safer road edges, such as an extended shoulder on one or more sides of South Ballina Beach Road. Eliminate dangerous deep roadside drains and review speed limits
- Purchase land at Keith Hall or Empire Vale and construct a hall and associated river access and park. This could be a genuine community asset that can also provide toilets and drinking water for cyclists and visitors
- Protect viable and important agriculture and horticulture from encroachment by "lifestyle lots"





- Work with land owners and land care to protect riparian areas along the river
- Work with NPWS to promote sustainable use of the Richmond River Nature Reserve
- Improve broadband and mobile reception, but locate towers with full community consultation
- Budget for ferry replacement and improvement, and give better value to all users including signage and SMS warnings on ferry outages
- Create a vehicle turning area on southern ferry approach to allow vehicles that can't get on the ferry to get back out in a forward direction (even if they are towing a caravan)
- Promote the family tourism aspects of South Ballina at all opportunities
- Make reasonable provision for dog exercise areas in some public places

**Empire Vale / Keith Hall****Main Features:**

- Mix of older buildings, such as the original school structures and the post office, with newer styles on more recent subdivisions
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- The school is a key meeting place for the locals of all ages and is well used, but facilities are basic and it's small
- It remains a sugar cane farming area that contributes a lot of product to the sugar industry
- Everyone lives on or near a sugar cane farm
- The community relates strongly to the river and the beach
- The community relies heavily on its ferry service to Ballina

**Key Issues:**

- Lack of a footpath or grass verge on any of the rural roads means it's not really safe to walk or ride, although the less busy roads are not as bad
- The rural roads generate high speed and high volume cycle traffic, particularly on weekends, and it does not always mix well
- Need to retain the agricultural industry of the locality and not grow more houses
- Viability of farming is important
- Keep the local school open
- Access to the beach and river from public land is important
- Guaranteed access to Ballina, via the ferry, is important

**Locality Objectives:**

- Establish a community focus such as a hall and park that are accessible to all
- Make Empire Vale and Keith Hall a safer community for kids, walkers and bike riders
- Protect and preserve the agricultural industry that is the dominant land use
- Provide additional access to the river (for boats and fishers) and the beach (for walkers)
- Ensure traditional farming practices and horticultural enterprises can continue
- Protect and preserve remnants of its past sugar history, such as the light rail tracks at Keith Hall
- Improve the ferry service to Ballina

**Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Create safer road edges such as an extended shoulder on one or more sides of River Drive. Eliminate dangerous deep roadside drains
- Purchase land at Keith Hall or Empire Vale and construct a hall and associated river access and park. This could be a genuine community asset that can also provide toilets and drinking water for cyclists
- Protect viable and important agriculture and horticulture from encroachment by "lifestyle lots"
- Work with land owners to ensure the sugar heritage of the locality is protected
- Work with land owners and land care to protect riparian areas along the river
- Improve broadband and mobile reception, but locate towers with full community consultation
- Budget for ferry replacement and improvement, and give better value to all users



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## **Patchs Beach**

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### **Main Features:**

- Has a tourist feel to the locality with multiple dwellings available for holiday rental
- Mix of older buildings made from timber and fibro, with newer styles on some lots
- Commercial businesses are home-based
- It remains a sugar cane farming area that contributes a lot of product to the sugar industry
- The community relates strongly to the beach
- The community relies heavily on its ferry service to Ballina

### **Key Issues:**

- Need to retain the agricultural industry of the locality and not grow more houses
- Viability of farming is important
- Access to the beach from public land is important
- Guaranteed access to Ballina, via the ferry, is important
- Need to recognise it as a place for family tourism, fishing and four wheel driving

### **Locality Objectives:**

- Protect and preserve the agricultural industry that is the dominant land use
- Ensure traditional farming practices and horticultural enterprises can continue
- Provide additional facilities in the beach reserve such as toilets, clean water and a garbage bin
- Encourage with promotion and additional facilities, the family tourism aspects of the locality
- Improve the ferry service to Ballina

### **Potential Strategic Actions:**

- Make the beach reserve a genuine community asset by providing toilets and drinking water for visitors
- Protect viable and important agriculture and horticulture from encroachment by "lifestyle lots"
- Work with land owners and land care to protect vegetation areas along the beach
- Work with NPWS and Crown Lands to promote sustainable use of the beach
- Improve broadband and mobile reception, but locate towers with full community consultation
- Budget for ferry replacement and improvement, and give better value to all users including signage and SMS warnings on ferry outages
- Promote the family tourism aspects of Patchs Beach at all opportunities
- Make reasonable provision for dog exercise areas in some public places