



## **Notice of Environmental & Sustainability Committee Meeting**

An Environmental & Sustainability Committee Meeting will be held in the Ballina Shire Council Chambers, 40 Cherry Street, Ballina on **Wednesday 2 December 2015 commencing at 4.30 pm.**

### **Business**

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputations
4. Committee Reports

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hickey', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Paul Hickey  
**General Manager**

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1. Apologies
  2. Declarations of Interest
  3. Deputations
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**1. Apologies**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

**3. Deputations**

## **4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy**

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### **4. Committee Reports**

#### **4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy**

**Delivery Program** Strategic Planning

**Objective** To provide information and to seek direction from the Council concerning the preparation of the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy, including its exhibition for community feedback.

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#### **Background**

Ballina has been identified as a 'Developing Major Regional Centre' in the NSW Government's Far North Coast Regional Strategy. This reflects the increasing status of Ballina within the region, due to a range of factors including: the growth of the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport; enhanced road connections to south-east Queensland; ongoing development of employment lands; and the shire's capacity (including infrastructure availability) to accommodate projected increases in population through significant greenfield development areas in Cumbalum, Lennox Head, Skennars Head and Wollongbar.

In February 2014, Council was successful in receiving a NSW Planning Reform Fund Grant of \$200,000 towards the development of a strategic plan for Ballina, to guide the development of Ballina as a 'Major Regional Centre' over the next 20 years. Council has contributed a further \$50,000 towards the project. The Council endorsed the preparation of the new strategic plan at its Ordinary Meeting held on 27 February 2014 (Minute No. 270214/16).

The project aligns with several actions in the State and regional planning framework that applies to Ballina as set out in the Far North Coast Regional Strategy, the Ballina Shire Growth Management Strategy, and the Council-adopted 2014/15 Operational Plan and Delivery Program for the shire.

In context, if and when adopted, the new strategy differs from the Council's other principal planning documents, being the Ballina Local Environmental Plans 1987 and 2012 respectively. These planning instruments are, in a sense, the "rules" for the spacial allocation of a range of urban and rural land uses, and which also recognize areas which have been identified as having important environmental values. The new strategy will operate at a different, strategic level, providing guidance toward achieving broad social, economic and environmental outcomes.

A key aspect of the project, and one which aligns it with the State Government's recent planning reform agenda, is an emphasis on up-front community engagement as the basis for the formulation of the strategic plan. Reflecting this, Council has undertaken a considerable amount of community engagement in the preparation of the draft strategy that is the subject of this report.

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The project is founded on two key stages of public engagement. The first of these has involved the sharing of community ideas and identification of core community values and aspirations for Ballina's future, as determined through community consultation. This first stage of community engagement occurred between May 2014 and September 2015 and culminated in the preparation of a public exhibition package. The Council endorsed exhibition of the package at its Ordinary Meeting held on 25 June 2015. The material was exhibited for public comment for a period of six weeks from 29 July 2015 to 11 September 2015. An outline of the engagement activities and feedback received during this period is provided in the body of this report.

The second (and final) stage of the project involves the formulation of these ideas, values and aspirations into an action-oriented strategic plan that will form the basis for incorporation of deliverables into Council's operational plans and delivery programs. A draft strategy has been prepared on the basis of community engagement undertaken since May 2014. That is, the plan is a product of the input, ideas, values and aspirations shared by the community with Council.

The purpose of this report is two-fold:

1. To present feedback received regarding the first stage of public exhibition, relating to the testing of "key ideas" and aspirations for Ballina's future.
2. To present the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy to the Committee and invite the Committee to endorse the exhibition of the draft strategy.

This report is supported by a short presentation which will be provided to the Committee during its meeting.

### **Key Issues**

- Strategic planning.
- Community engagement and consultation.
- Long term direction and outcomes for Ballina.

### **Information**

#### *Preliminary Community Engagement*

As outlined above, a key aspect of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy project is an emphasis on up-front community engagement as the basis for the formulation of the strategic plan. Reflecting this, the community engagement activities Council has undertaken to date in relation to this project include the following:

- Futures Forum - Council held an evening discussion forum at the commencement of the project, involving 47 randomly selected members of the community. The forum sought to establish community views regarding: What does Ballina becoming a major regional centre mean for our community? What are the opportunities it could create? What are the challenges which need to be considered?

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- Civic Panel - The Civic Panel, comprising 14 community members from the Futures Forum participants, has met at key stages during the project to provide feedback and act as a community “sounding board” to the project’s progress. Five meetings have been held to date, with a final meeting planned following the public exhibition of the draft strategy.
- Staff Forum – 18 Council staff members representing all divisions within Council participated in a discussion forum where the same questions from the Futures Forum were considered.
- Interagency Government Forum - Council held a Forum for representatives of other Government Departments which saw 21 representatives from State Government departments meet at the first gathering to discuss the views of various government agencies within the context of a strategic plan for the future of Ballina. Three meetings have been held to date, with a final meeting planned in early 2016.
- Presentations to Community Groups – Council invited 24 community groups to engage with members of the project team via various means. Eleven of these groups have participated in the project to date. Project team members gave a presentation and invited open discussion and mapping of concerns, experiences and aspirations to directly feed into the project.
- Presentations to schools - In an attempt to gain youth input into the project, local schools were offered a brief presentation from the project team to facilitate student input in terms of their experiences and thoughts for the future of Ballina. Three schools participated, with students from years six and ten engaged in an interactive workshop. A series of maps were made using the sMap social mapping tool through this process.
- Newspaper Articles - Articles (six in total) which gave the community background to the project’s progress and invited thought on key issues were written and published over a six week period in the Ballina Advocate in 2014. The process instigated further letters and emails to Council, and stimulated the use of the sMap and Instagram tools.
- Creative Workshops - There were four workshops of 2.5 hours each held, targeted at grandparents and grandchildren or older residents and their younger friends or relatives, which were designed to bring generations together to share experiences of the Ballina community and what participants like about living in Ballina, through paver-based art. Following the workshops, the pavers were fired and are now incorporated into the Wigmore Arcade redevelopment. Approximately 60 people were involved in these workshops.
- sMap – Ballina Shire Council is the first organisation to use sMap in Australia. It is an interactive online mapping tool which is being used to map various visions for Ballina’s future. 55 maps have been produced with a total of 448 points of interest plotted.

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- Instagram - Council set up Instagram hashtag - #ballinafuture and asked that people tag photos they have of what they like, or dislike about Ballina, or tag photos of what they would like to see in Ballina in the future. In total, 96 photos have been shared on the Instagram using the #ballinafuture hashtag.

Overall, the community engagement undertaken before the first stage public exhibition resulted in many hundreds of ideas for the future of Ballina.

Core messages coming out of the engagement centered on:

- High value placed on open space and public domain and the environment as key attributes of Ballina and fundamental to Ballina's identity.
- People and lifestyle are key contributors to the reasons why many seek to live in Ballina.
- Economic and employment opportunities and making the most of these are important to people.
- Activity and vibrancy in the Ballina CBD is seen as an important area for improvement.

Overall, the engagement identified community support for Ballina to progress as a major regional centre. Fundamentally, much of the feedback received was about making the most of Ballina's natural environment, lifestyle, friendly nature and local infrastructure (such as the airport).

### *First Stage Public Exhibition Package*

The information obtained from the above community engagement activities was analysed and incorporated into a community engagement/exhibition package. The primary elements of the community engagement package were:

- Covering Information
- Strategic Question Sheets
- Context, Ideas and Possible Futures Report (Background Report)
- Technical/Specialist Studies

Through the community engagement processes and input outlined above, Council staff identified a series of 'strategic questions' which reflect the recorded priorities and concerns of our community, relating to Ballina's emergence as a major regional centre. These questions are:

*How can we...*

- *Grow local jobs?*
- *Keep Ballina beautiful?*
- *Be more sustainable?*
- *Have suitable housing?*
- *Deal with climate change?*

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- *Respect our history and heritage?*
- *Enjoy and care for the coast?*
- *Support our sense of community?*
- *Get the infrastructure we need?*
- *Live active healthy lives?*
- *Support older residents?*
- *Bring more life to the CBD?*
- *Encourage creativity and innovation?*
- *Cater for Youth and Families?*

Each of the above strategic questions was set out in the following format:

- *Introduction* – An outline of the question and why it is considered important.
- *Community Viewpoint* – An expression of the community's views on the question, identified through community engagement undertaken to date.
- *Drivers & Influences* – A list of key drivers and influences of change that are relevant to the question.
- *Ideas* – Initial ideas for responding to the question that lie within the scope of Council's influence, identified through the community engagement processes undertaken to date.

Council staff also prepared a background report to provide detailed information on the strategy's development, including planning context, community engagement techniques employed and planned, alignment with NSW planning reform objectives, and information regarding key trends, issues, aspirations, ideas and outcomes associated with the delivery of the project.

To support and inform the preparation of the strategy, Council staff also prepared, or engaged consultants to prepare, a suite of technical studies relating to a number of key topic areas. These studies include:

- Housing resilience investigation and options study.
- Housing needs and opportunities analysis
- Development feasibility analysis.
- Urban & landscape design ideas.
- Industrial & commercial land audit update.
- Historic influences & elements.
- Multi-purpose sports facility investigation.



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Relevant aspects of these technical and specialist studies were incorporated into the strategic question sheets and background paper that form the core of the first phase engagement package. The urban and landscape design plans, which express a variety of ideas for the future, formed part of the exhibition package as a means of encouraging public interest in the project and feedback from the community.

### *First Stage Public Exhibition Activities and Feedback*

As mentioned above, the public exhibition package was authorized by the Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 25 June 2015. The authorized material was publicly exhibited for a period of six weeks from 29 July 2015 until 11 September 2015.

During this first stage public exhibition, Council sought feedback with respect to the following:

- Do the strategic questions accurately reflect the community's priorities for addressing change over the next twenty years?
- Do the ideas proposed in the strategic question sheets reflect the community's values, aspirations and priorities?
- Is there anything in the exhibition material that has been understated, overstated or is missing?

Additional to the traditional exhibition practice (material made available in hard copy and online, and promotion through conventional media), staff undertook a number of community engagement activities, including:

- Face-to-face street engagements;
- Online survey; and
- Facebook.

### Written Submissions

Seven written submissions were received during the public exhibition period. A summary of this feedback and Council staff response are provided in the table below. Copies of the submissions received during the public exhibition period are provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

It is noted that a number of additional written submissions were received prior to the first stage public exhibition. These submissions were considered in the preparation of the exhibition package and so are not reproduced or included in the analysis below. Copies of all submissions received in relation to the project can be provided to Councillors on request.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Submission	Council Staff Response
<i>Del Nevins</i>	
<p>Recommends the widening of South Ballina Beach Road to facilitate safer cycling, noting the value of the cycle route from the Ferry to South Wall for tourists and locals.</p>	<p>The study area of the project does not include South Ballina, other than the visual significance of the South Ballina Nature Reserve and issues relating to the Richmond River. Nevertheless, this recommendation has been referred to Council's Civil Services Group for consideration of undertaking opportunistic road widening in association with road resurfacing of South Ballina Beach Road, to facilitate improved tourist and recreational opportunities.</p>
<i>Mandy Lisson</i>	
<p>Concerns with plans for 'beach shacks' and lighting of the pathways and foreshore at the Serpentine Beach, due to potential impact on migratory shore bird habitat.</p>	<p>The lighting of the foreshore and pathways could be minimised or avoided altogether if it is deemed likely to have an adverse impact on night-time migratory bird use of Serpentine Beach.</p> <p>With respect to the proposed 'beach shacks', it is noted that due to their proposed design and the topography of the site, these structures would have only a relatively small footprint on the beach itself, outside of the intertidal zone. The majority of the structure would be located on elevated parts of the site adjacent to the pathway. Due to the popularity of Serpentine Beach for recreation, the level of disturbance for bird species in this area is already high within proximity of the pathway network and beach areas (as opposed to more inter-tidal parts of the sandbar within North Creek). These matters could be considered and addressed at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Further, rather than facilitating higher levels of visitation and use, improved facilities are proposed to better service the recreational needs associated with this already popular area.</p>
<p>Concerns over potential impact of proposed dredging of North Creek on migratory bird habitat.</p>	<p>The dredging of North Creek is not a matter addressed in the BMRCS. It is understood that assessments of potential impacts associated with this project are being undertaken separately.</p>
<i>Kathrina Southwell, Australian Seabird Rescue Inc.</i>	
<p>Concerns with plans for 'beach shacks' and lighting of the pathways and foreshore at the Serpentine Beach, due to potential impact on migratory shore bird habitat.</p>	<p>Refer to corresponding response above.</p>

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Submission	Council Staff Response
<i>Marelle Lee</i>	
<p>Submission raises a number of points in support of actions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved public transport, particularly for the elderly,</li> <li>- Respect for history and heritage,</li> <li>- Maintaining a predominance of low density residential development forms,</li> <li>- Growing local employment and encouraging creativity and innovation,</li> <li>- Supporting the provision of affordable housing,</li> <li>- Obtaining and maintaining appropriate infrastructure</li> <li>- Catering to youth and families through the provision of facilities for sport and entertainment,</li> <li>- Enjoying and protecting the coastal environment.</li> </ul>	<p>The draft strategy includes a number of actions addressing the matters cited in the submission. The comments are taken as an indication of support for these actions.</p>
<p>Concerns over potential impact of sea level rise, particularly on the CBD.</p>	<p>The draft strategy includes actions to progress the detailed assessment of climate change responses to potential sea level rise and coastal erosion hazards, on Ballina. With respect to this, the aim of the strategy is to leave future decision makers in a reasonable position and keep options open in relation to climate change.</p>
<p>Argues for the retention of public land in public ownership.</p>	<p>The sale of publicly owned land is not directly the subject of the strategy. However, the disposal of certain public land that is identified as being surplus to need could be considered by the Council as a means of funding actions from the strategy. A number of the actions relate to the proposed embellishment of key public open space areas, in respect to adding to their value as important community assets.</p>

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Submission	Council Staff Response
<i>Nathan Cooper</i>	
<p>Suggests that Council should facilitate a broader range of housing types in rural areas, to provide for affordable housing and broaden rural lifestyle opportunities.</p>	<p>Rural housing is not a subject addressed directly in the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy, as the strategy applies only to Ballina itself. Ballina Shire currently has sufficient housing supply (gross) to provide for the anticipated level of demand for at least 30 years. It is acknowledged, however that this housing supply is located within existing and future serviced urban communities.</p> <p>Council's current (and long-standing) policy position with respect to rural housing focusses on not compromising the agricultural viability of rural areas through the proliferation of rural residential development. Council's previous experience with permitting rural residential development, formerly under clause 13 of the Ballina LEP 1987, was associated with a number of negative impacts associated with land use conflict and increased infrastructure burden on Council and other service providers. This led to the Council of the time repealing clause 13, in the mid-1990s. This approach was maintained under Council's new LEP (LEP 2012).</p>
<p>Suggests that Council should support innovation and diversification of rural land use in the shire, through a number of suggested initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landsharing</li> <li>- Reforestation</li> <li>- Street side stalls</li> <li>- Ballina fresh food forest</li> <li>- Rural landholder stewardship.</li> </ul>	<p>The draft strategy includes a number of actions relating to the protection of agricultural land values and promoting local food culture and tourism. A number of the suggested initiatives may fit within these broader actions or other Council initiatives.</p> <p>The Council has agreed to the preparation of a shire-wide economic development strategy, and the types of initiatives identified may well be considered as part of this process.</p>
<i>Glen Hewett</i>	
<p>Supports measures to embellish and improve the amenity of Black Head.</p>	<p>The landscape plans which accompany the draft strategy include a proposal for the embellishment of Black Head. The delivery of this project, if supported, would be subject to the identification of funding and authorization by public authorities. However, its inclusion in the strategy provides leverage for Council to seek grant funding.</p>

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Submission	Council Staff Response
<i>Jack Trevan</i>	
Supports the provision of a sea pool, with Black Head the preferred location.	The landscape plans which accompany the draft strategy include a proposal for the embellishment of Black Head, incorporating an option for a sea pool. The preferred siting of a sea pool is a matter for detailed consideration as a separate exercise currently being undertaken.

### Face-To-Face Engagement

A street stall was attended by Council staff during the exhibition period on 3 days, for up to 4 hours each day. Approximately 107 people were engaged via the stall to discuss the project and inspect the strategic question sheets, landscape plans and other exhibition material on display.

Key feedback received through these face-to-face engagements included:

- Generally a very strong level of support for the community generated 'ideas', particularly the proposed open space embellishments, extensions to the pathway network and other infrastructure works, providing affordable housing and for measures to bring more life to the CBD;
- Concern that rates not be raised to pay for public works; and
- Some concern that public works should not increase the attractiveness of the area to the extent that the 'low-key' character or environmental qualities of Ballina become eroded.

### Website and Online Survey

There were 623 page views to the BMRCS page on the Council website during the exhibition period. Of those, there were 435 unique page views. The average time each viewer spent on the page was 3 minutes 19 seconds.

12 surveys were completed. The community members that filled out the online survey rated the following strategic ideas as having the highest priority: Keeping Ballina beautiful; Bringing more life to the CBD; Getting the infrastructure we need; Having diversity and affordability in our housing; Growing local employment; and caring for and enjoying the coast.

Specific feedback made through the online survey included: Encouraging creative and entrepreneurial small businesses in the CBD; Improve our identity and character; Planting more street trees; Improve pedestrian connectivity and ease of movement; Facilitating more water-based activities in the Richmond River; Not wanting to focus on being either a retirement haven or a family oriented place, but rather both; Improving internet speeds and access needs improvement as it inhibits business viability at present; and Resistance to allowing tall buildings adjacent to the waterways that impact on public access and detract from the amenity of those areas.

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### Facebook

The social networking platform Facebook was utilised by Council as a community engagement tool for the first time as a part of this project.

Content was posted to the page (“Ballina2035”) which highlighted key ideas identified through earlier consultation, with links to the website and online survey for users to obtain further information or provide feedback. Users could also post ‘comments’ against Council’s posts.

To further promote the project’s Facebook posts, Council paid to “boost” the posts, meaning that posts are made to appear in the Facebook ‘feeds’ of users (located in the proximity of Ballina) without the user (or their friends) having previously ‘liked’ the Ballina2035 Facebook page. This boosting process provided a cost effective means of increasing the exposure of Facebook users to the Council’s project Facebook page.

Key Facebook statistics:

- 11,323 people were ‘reached’ by Council’s posts – meaning the posts appeared in users’ Facebook newsfeeds.
- 747 page ‘likes’ – indicating a level of support for the content and that users had elected to follow future posts made on the project Facebook page, which would automatically appear in their newsfeed. Also, as a consequence users’ ‘friends’ would see that they had ‘liked’ the project Facebook page.
- 84 ‘comments’ were posted to the project Facebook page. Significantly, these comments were almost universally positive. Matters responded to in these comments related primarily to the proposed sea pool (at Shelly Beach or Black Head), town square concept, desire to bring more life to the Ballina CBD, affordable appropriate housing, improving public transport and embellishments to Pop Dennison Park.
- 70% of Facebook ‘fans’ were female, and 30% were male. 75% of users were aged under 44 years. Significantly, these groups are typically difficult for Council to engage with through traditional mechanisms.

### Community Feedback Summary

The community feedback to the first stage public exhibition process was overwhelmingly positive, particularly with respect to the future vision for Ballina and the range of ideas articulated in the exhibition material. The only ‘negative’ comments received related to concerns that Council rates not be raised to pay for proposed public works and concerns that Ballina not be made too popular, such that the ‘low-key’ character or environmental qualities become eroded.

Some comments, such as those received via written submission concerning the potential habitat impacts associated with proposed ‘beach-shack’ structures at the Serpentine, relate to more detailed design considerations to be considered at a later stage.

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### *Interagency Government Forum*

Council held a meeting with the Interagency Government Forum during the exhibition period to elicit feedback. Feedback was generally supportive with respect to Council's approach to the project and to the content of the exhibition material.

### *Industry Engagement*

In association with the finalisation of the draft strategy, Council has established an Industry Peer Review Panel to review the proposed strategy approach and actions, with a view to providing critical feedback and additional ideas on the delivery of the strategy objectives from an industry perspective.

The purpose of the panel is to provide an industry based testing point for approaches and ideas to support practical and innovative preparation and implementation of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy. Membership of the panel was determined on the basis of local knowledge and relevant industry experience in the fields of planning, property appraisal, environmental management and urban design.

The panel reviewed the draft strategy in November 2015 and provided direct feedback to Council, facilitated through an independent facilitator (Dr Elizabeth Baker). It is intended that the panel will meet on one further occasion following the public exhibition of the draft strategy, prior to reporting the matter to the elected Council for final adoption.

### *Draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy*

A draft strategy has been prepared on the basis of the stage one public exhibition package, formulated into an action-based strategy document, having regard for community feedback received during the public exhibition period and feedback from Government agencies and industry.

A copy of the draft strategy is provided as Attachment 2 to this report.

The strategy has been prepared as a 20 year plan for Ballina with the intention of facilitating Ballina's transition toward a major regional centre in line with the aspirations expressed by the community through the regional centre strategy project.

The strategy has been prepared as an aspirational document which positions Council in a leadership and delivery role. It includes some 'big' ideas and challenges for the Council and the community in that it will require innovation, different ways of thinking and funding to achieve its potential. The strategy is fundamentally about Council's entire way of doing business and as such is wide reaching in its application.

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The strategy process represents a once in a generation opportunity to shape the future of Ballina through a coordinated and concerted effort over a period of 20 years. As such, the strategy has been prepared to be a delivery document rather than a typical 'shelf' and more opportunistic plan. The strategy has been prepared as a plan that is intended for integration into Council's delivery and operational planning over several consecutive four year planning cycles in order to provide for a prolonged and sustained effort to progress towards the future envisaged for Ballina as a major regional centre.

The key elements of the draft strategy are:

- *Purpose* – explains the background and context of why Council is preparing the strategy, and the key characteristics of Ballina, including key strengths and competencies;
- *Community engagement* – outlines the range of engagement activities undertaken to inform the preparation of the strategy and timeline of the project;
- *Community aspirations* – comprises a distillation of the community's aspirations for the future of Ballina as a major regional centre, identified through Council's community engagement activities;
- *Vision* – articulation of the core vision for Ballina as a major regional centre over the twenty year timeframe of the strategy;
- *Principles and key themes* – outlines the four key principles which have guided the development of the strategy's actions, namely inclusiveness, resilience, sustainability and vibrancy. This section also provides context to the six key themes of the strategy, namely: Open space and healthy living; Economic development; Character, culture and amenity; Community facilities and infrastructure; Environment; and Housing;
- *Philosophical approach* – Articulates the proposed philosophical approaches which underpin the formulation of the proposed actions, in response to the community aspirations, vision and principles/themes;
- *Response to key drivers* – Outlines the strategic response to the key drivers of change facing Ballina over the next twenty years, that are reflected in the actions.
- *Strategic Actions* – Articulates a series of objectives and actions under the project's six key themes (outlined above).
- *Action Categories* – The table explains the kinds of actions that Council will take to achieve the strategic vision, reflecting the extent to which the particular action is achievable within the timeframe of the strategy and/or is within Council's direct responsibility/jurisdiction. Consequently, the types of actions include: Aspirational, Facilitate/Advocate, Plan and Deliver.
- *Prioritization and funding* – Explains that the prioritization of the strategy's actions will be undertaken in the context of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan on an ongoing basis.
- *Monitoring and evaluation* – Outlines the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the strategy.

Council is invited to endorse the draft strategy for public exhibition. It is proposed that the draft strategy be placed on public exhibition for a period of six weeks over the Christmas period.



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It is acknowledged that Council usually seeks to avoid exhibiting material for public comment over the Christmas period. However, due to the nature of the project, public exhibition over the Christmas period may prompt a strong level of interest and community feedback, including visitors to Ballina. The draft strategy is also founded on prior extensive community engagement initiatives over more than 18 months.

Further, exhibition over this period is required in order to finalise the strategy within the project timeframe, in accordance with Council's funding agreement with the Department of Planning and Environment.

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

The exhibition of the community engagement package can occur within the allocated project budget. The project does not have particular legal implications for Council at this stage.

With respect to finance, the strategy includes a number of actions that relate to work already planned or being undertaken by Council. In these instances, such initiatives could be addressed within existing programs and budgets.

However, the strategy also identifies a variety of initiatives that will incur costs that are essentially unfunded. Some of these are considered to be 'stretch' initiatives that may only occur opportunistically whilst others are actions that require resourcing within the life of the plan. Initial funding options and mechanisms are identified in Attachment 3 of this report. Further details will be presented as part of the reporting post exhibition in conjunction with feedback received.

### **Consultation**

A significant amount of consultation with the community, Council staff, Government agencies and industry has been undertaken in relation this matter. The details of this consultation are contained in the body of this report.

### **Options**

1. That Council place the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy (subject to its finalisation for publication) on public exhibition for a period of six weeks.

Due to the extensive community engagement that has been undertaken in the preparation of the strategy, and having regard for the project timeframe required of the funding grant, this option is recommended. The public exhibition of the draft strategy will provide an opportunity for broader community consideration of the proposed strategy for Ballina.

Prior to public exhibition, the draft strategy will be formatted and minor adjustments made to enhance presentation for exhibition. The exhibition period would occur for at least six weeks having regard for the required timing to meet Council's grant obligations and public holidays over the Christmas period and final review of the ideas and concepts for Ballina as a major regional centre.

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2. That Council considers this matter further through an additional Councillor workshop or places the project on hold.

For the reasons outlined above this option is not recommended.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Council notes the progress of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy project, the community engagement undertaken and the content of this report.
2. That the Council authorizes the draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy for public exhibition for a period of six weeks.
3. That the Council receive a report on funding options for the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy in conjunction with the reporting on the outcomes of the public exhibition undertaken in accordance with item 1.

#### **Attachment(s)**

1. BMRCS - Written Submissions Received - First Stage Public Exhibition.
2. Draft Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy
3. BMRCS - Possible Funding Sources for Future Planning and Infrastructure Delivery

### Simon Scott

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**From:** Del Nevins [delnevins@shire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:delnevins@shire.nsw.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 September 2015 2:06 PM  
**Subject:** Ideas for the future

Having come from Perth where the bike riders and lycra brigade are very prominent, we were surprised to see so few on the roads here when we first arrived. Since then which is only about 3 months we have noticed a huge increase of bike riders coming over on the ferry and riding out to South Ballina beach and back.

South Ballina Beach road is not wide enough for 2 cars so then factor in bikes as well and this is going to grow into an issue in a fairly short space of time.

I would like to nominate that this be added into your vision for potential upgrades to make Ballina more user friendly as we know from experience the amount of bike riders is only going to increase as time goes on.

You will also note that they have now got the ferry charging bike riders \$1 each to come and go and this is because of the increase in traffic.

There is plenty of room on either side of the road to put in a bike path and make it a generous size so we car occupants don't feel like we're going too close to them.

regards  
Del Nevins  
Celebrant  
0418924128



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

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This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.  
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

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TRIM RECORD: 15/0062704

Mandy Lisson  
12A Eryth Street  
Lismore NSW 2480  
~~mandy.lisson@ballina.nsw.gov.au~~

Att: The General Manager  
Ballina Shire Council  
PO Box 450  
Ballina NSW 2478

7<sup>th</sup> September, 2015

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Re: Submission for Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

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Dear Sir/Madam

I write this letter in response to your public exhibition of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy. Firstly, I congratulate you on the Strategy. There are some really great ideas and strong vision and I commend the project team on the considerable work done so far.

I believe the most precious aspect of Ballina is its locality, situated within a stunning coastal environment rich in biodiversity and that any vision for Ballina's future should fully consider ways to preserve and enhance this important feature. I noted that the landscape concepts in the Ballina Strategy seek to fully maximize natural environments for the public by way of boardwalks, bike paths and ocean pools, etc. While I fully support creating opportunities for people to enjoy and have access to natural areas, I recognize that this also puts greater pressures on local ecosystems. In order to safeguard sensitive environments, there needs to be clear limits around development and human disturbance at recognized important sites.

In particular, I would like to address the proposed concept plans as they relate to shorebird habitat within the estuary. Shorebirds are a group of birds whose population declines are some of the most severe of any taxa worldwide. They include migratory species which complete extremely long annual flights from Siberia and West Alaska to Australia. The population decline of these species can mostly be attributed to unprecedented rates of habitat loss at important stopover sites in the Yellow Sea. As a result, this year the Eastern Curlew and the Curlew Sandpiper were listed as Critically Endangered under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC). Both of these species are observed in the Richmond River estuary in the summer months. All migratory shorebirds are considered "Matters of National Environmental Significance" under the EPBC Act.

Resident shorebird populations are also rapidly declining, highlighting that impacts within Australia are putting additional pressures on these birds. Habitat loss and degradation as well as human disturbance are the main causes of decline. The Richmond River estuary regularly supports over 25 species of migratory and resident shorebirds and nine of these are protected under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC).

Currently, I am in the final stages of an 18 month research project with Southern Cross University studying the values of the Richmond River estuary for shorebirds. My project analysed foraging sites within the estuary to determine those with the highest value but also those with the most threats

from habitat degradation and human disturbance. This investigation revealed that the estuary contains a number of high value foraging sites for shorebirds including the large sandbars and mudflats in the Richmond River and North Creek.

Also of significance in the results of my research were comparisons I made of trends of shorebird species populations in the Richmond with other estuaries in NSW such as the Tweed and Clarence. Those results indicated that a number of species were stable or increasing in the Richmond but decreasing in other estuaries. This suggests that the Richmond is providing unique and important habitat for a number of shorebird species. Given the severe population declines of these birds, it is essential to preserve such unique habitat.

Of particular concern to me within the Ballina Strategy are the proposed recreational facilities at the Serpentine, specifically the beach shack shelters, the steps to the beach and the lighting of the foreshore. My research project has revealed that the sandbar in North Creek adjoining the Serpentine is of very high value for foraging shorebirds. This was based on a set of criteria including the total abundance of shorebirds and the number of threatened and migratory species. Of all the high value foraging sites in the estuary, the sandbar at North Creek recorded the highest incidence of human disturbance revealing it is already heavily impacted. The proposed lighting may also have a negative impact on night time foraging of the shorebirds.

To illustrate the findings of my research, I have included figures which have categorized the foraging value habitat in the estuary (Figure 1) and the level of human disturbance (Figure 2). In addition to foraging value, the sandbar in North Creek is also an important high tide roost (rest area) for shorebirds. It is important to note that the other main roosts in Ballina; Flat Rock, South Ballina Beach and Lake Chickiba, all extremely vital habitat for shorebirds, are also subject to high levels of human disturbance.

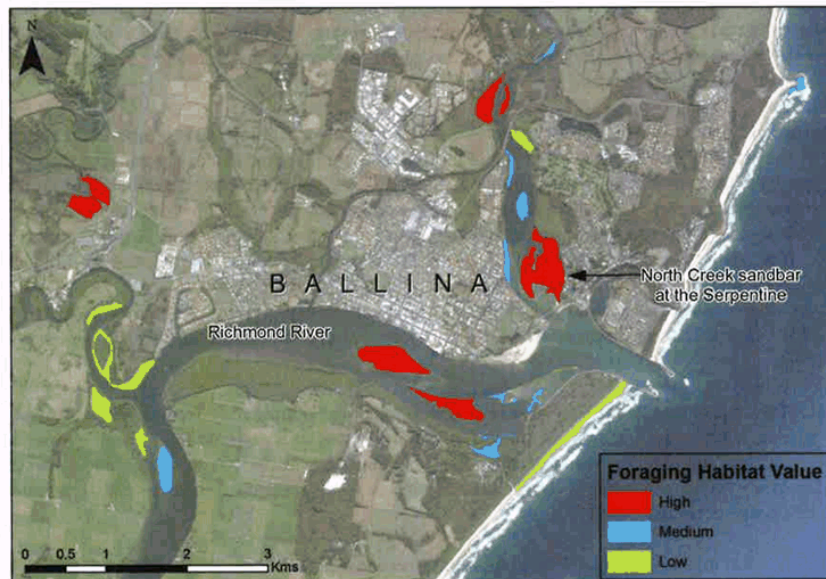


Figure 1: Foraging habitat value of survey sites within the Richmond River estuary

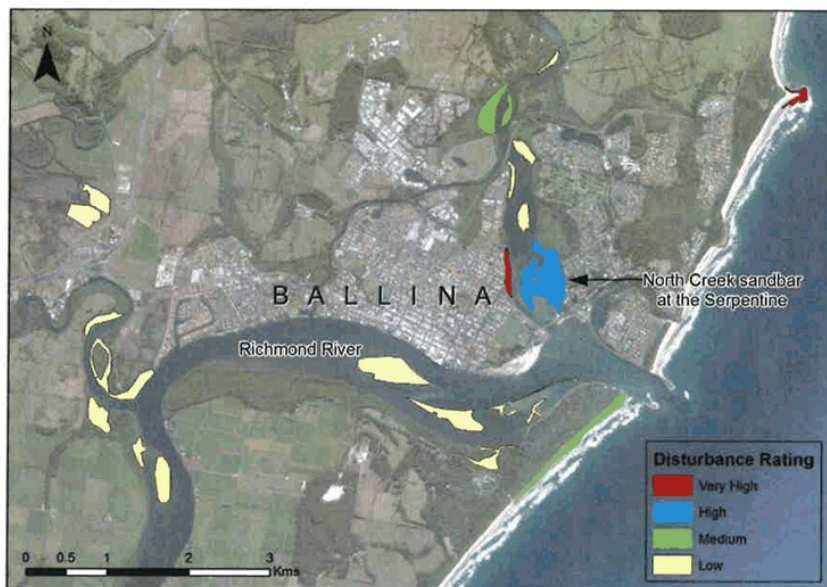


Figure 2: Disturbance levels at foraging survey sites within the Richmond River estuary

Given those observations, it is vital that measures are implemented to protect the habitat of these birds, rather than introducing features which will most likely generate greater levels of disturbance and habitat degradation. Important shorebird habitat such as the Spit has already been compromised by permitting the dog exercise area at that site. It would be disappointing to see more important sites within the estuary lost.

I draw your attention also to the Northern Rivers Regional Shorebird Strategy (NRRSS) which contains a number of actions that should be considered in further development of the Ballina Strategy. These are:

*52.1.2 Land Development*

- *Encourage conservation of shorebird habitat outside of protected areas;*
- *Encourage councils to protect shorebird habitat in local planning documents.*

Shorebird habitat within Australia has been inadvertently lost due to a general lack of knowledge of the plight of shorebird population declines and the location of important habitat. A major component of my project was to map the Richmond shorebird sites into GIS to provide local managers with a tool to include important shorebird habitat into all relevant management decisions. I would be pleased to make this GIS data available to you.

Under new federal legislation to improve the conservation status of shorebird habitat, the EPBC Act policy statement 3.21, the Richmond River Estuary is recognized as Nationally Important Shorebird Habitat. Under this legislation, impact assessment includes whether there is:

*...Loss of important habitat.*

*Degradation of important habitat leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebirds using the site.*

*Increased disturbance leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebirds using important habitat.*

*Direct mortality of birds leading to a substantial reduction in shorebirds using important habitat.....*

While I understand the Ballina Strategy is only in preliminary concept stages, it is worth noting that any development which threatens Nationally Important Shorebird Habitat would be required to be assessed under the EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 Significant Impact Guidelines. I believe it is possible that the current proposed actions within the Ballina Strategy, in addition to the existing disturbance pressures within the estuary would result in a substantial reduction of habitat for shorebirds.

I believe dredging works are proposed for the Richmond River and North Creek. If these works go ahead they have the potential to remove important foraging areas and/or change how sediments accrete and erode to and from the sandbars. The information I have provided in this submission is also applicable to the proposed dredging works and I hope you will consider these details carefully in respect to those works.

Another point I would like to make is that conservation and management of important shorebird habitat will not only result in positive outcomes for the birds. Birdwatching brings enormous pleasure to members of the Ballina Shire community and surrounds, from young children to the elderly. Shorebird-watching enthusiasts meet frequently in Ballina to identify and count the birds within the estuary as part of a national citizen science monitoring project which is contributing important data to major international population analysis research. In so doing, these members find community and a strong sense of purpose. There are bound to be many other nature groups within the shire who similarly appreciate these types of activities. The interests of beachgoers, fishers, boaters, four-wheel drivers and dog owners are well represented within the Shire and often at the expense of local biodiversity and those seeking to enjoy nature in more passive activities. I believe your Strategy should maximize opportunities for these nature focused special interest groups.

I make all these points to emphasize the dire conservation status of shorebirds and the importance of sites such as the Richmond River estuary in their preservation. I implore you to consider their important habitat within the context of the Ballina Strategy and all future management planning of relevance such as the proposed dredging works.

I wish you well with the Strategy and will watch its progression with interest. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Mandy Lisson  
Ecologist and Honours Student

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

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### Simon Scott

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**From:** Australian Seabird Rescue <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 September 2015 12:59 PM  
**To:** Strategic BMRCs  
**Cc:** Paul Hickey; Ballina Shire Council  
**Subject:** TRIM: Submission in regard to Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy  
**Attachments:** letter to Ballina Council Major Regional Centre Strategy.doc

**HP TRIM Record Number:** 15/71957

Attached is my letter of submission in regard to the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy.

Kind Regards,

**Kathrina Southwell**  
**General Manager**  
Australian Seabird Rescue Inc.  
264 North Creek Rd  
Ballina NSW 2478  
Ph: 02 66 862 852  
Fax 02 66 869 852  
[www.seabirdrescue.org](http://www.seabirdrescue.org)

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## **AUSTRALIAN SEABIRD RESCUE Inc.**

ABN 51 972 455 398

WildlifeLink Sanctuary, 264 North Creek Road, Ballina NSW 2478.

Phone: (02) 66862852 • Fax: (02) 66869852

Email: [info@seabirdrescue.org](mailto:info@seabirdrescue.org) • Website: [www.seabirdrescue.org](http://www.seabirdrescue.org)

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9<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

To Mr Hickey,

As General Manager of Australian Seabird Rescue and the Co Ordinator for BirdLife Shorebird 2020 counts and a soon to be small business owner/operator of an ecotourism birdwatching business (Byron Ballina Bird Tours), I wish to voice my concerns over some of the plans that were on Public exhibition of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy.

Some of the concept plans show development of important shorebird habitat along the Richmond River and North Creek.

In regards to the proposed development along the Richmond River: The Ballina Council placed signs along the spit many years ago alerting people to the fact that the shorebirds also use this area in the Summer months. It is disappointing that this area is now a dog exercise area. If the area is further developed, there will be more frequent disturbance to the birds which will compromise their health. Shorebirds need to double their weight to be capable of making their migration to the northern hemisphere, more disturbance means less rest time and more weight loss every time they fly due to frequent disturbances.

### **Has the Ballina council considered the shorebirds that use this area in their major Regional Centre Strategy?**

Of extreme concern to me (and many of the volunteers at Australian Seabird Rescue) is the proposed beach shack shelters with the lighting and steps to the beach on the Serpentine at North Creek. The beach shack shelters are proposed to be placed in and near an area that is used by shorebirds as a roosting/resting and foraging area.

Many of the migratory species that are recorded using this area during the regular BirdLife Australia Shorebird2020 counts are considered "Matters of national environmental significance" under international treaties with Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA) and the BONN Convention. North Creek is also recognised as Nationally Important Shorebird Habitat under the EPBC Act policy statement 3.21.

Nationally Important Shorebird Habitat is required to be assessed under the EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21, Significant Impact Guidelines.  
The current proposed development of the beach shacks shelters with lighting and steps to the beach will create more disturbance to the shorebirds in an area which is already heavily disturbed. The lighting may affect their foraging habits at night and warrants further investigation.

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Australian Seabird Rescue Inc. is licensed by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change National Parks and Wildlife Service to rescue, relocate and rehabilitate seabirds and shorebirds throughout coastal New South Wales, and marine reptiles on the North Coast of NSW ,  
Licence No. MWL000100290. Inc #9875815

**Has the Ballina Council considered the actions that are listed in the Northern Rivers Regional Shorebird Management Strategy listed below?**

S2.1.2 Land Development

*Encourage conservation of shorebird habitat outside of protected areas;*

*Encourage councils to protect shorebird habitat in local planning documents.*

As a new ecotourism business owner operator, in the next 12 months, I will open my business and will be conducting bird watching tours, specifically focussing on the shorebirds that frequent The Serpentine and the sandbar on North Creek. Through my market research I have found that people want to see the shorebirds in a more natural environment, rather than on man-made boardwalks, surrounded by man-made beach shacks. The Ballina Shire has such beautiful natural areas that are appreciated by many locals and visitors to the area and I hope this is taken into consideration in future planning.

An additional concern to the Ballina Regional Centre Strategy, I believe there is some dredging being planned in North Creek in the future. I understand that the channel needs dredging but would like further information on exactly which areas of North Creek will be dredged, considering the area is recognised as under the EPBC Act policy statement 3.21 as Nationally Important Shorebird Habitat. Under this new legislation, impact assessment includes whether there is:

*...loss of important habitat*

*...degradation of important habitat leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebirds using the site*

*...increased disturbance leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebirds using important habitat*

*...direct mortality of birds leading to a substantial reduction of shorebirds using important habitat.*

**Has the change in turbidity which could be caused by the proposed dredging of North Creek even been considered as to how it may affect areas that the shorebirds use?**

**Where will the dredged material be moved to?**

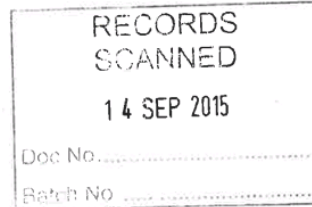
I hope that there will be more community consultation in regards to the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy and look forward to receiving further information on the proposed dredging of North Creek in the very near future.

Regards,

Kathrina Southwell.  
264 North Creek Road  
Ballina

15/63841

1/69 Stewart Street  
Lennox Head NSW 2478.  
Phone: 6687 7221  
E-mail: ~~XXXXXXXXXX@ballina.nsw.gov.au~~  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Mr Simon Scott  
Strategic Planner  
Strategic & Community Facilities Group  
Ballina Shire Council  
Ballina NSW 2478.

Dear Mr Scott or other Officers

**Re: BALLINA MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE STRATEGY MATERIAL  
FIRST PHASE PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

My apologies for typos, spelling and other errors in these comments.

Some new tenants have just moved next door into a large unit too close to my boundary .

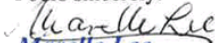
Children have been screaming and other noise has made concentration so difficult.

I only received a copy of the Ballina 2035 community engagement pamphlet on 11<sup>th</sup> September, for which an officer apologised..

I regard the Major Regional Centre Strategy as most important. My parents built a beach cottage at Lennox Head in the mid-1950s, when Ballina Municipality and Tintenbar Shire were so beautiful.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, albeit at such a late stage.

Yours sincerely,

  
Marelle Lee

1/69 Stewart Street  
Lennox Head NSW 2478.  
Phone: 6687 7221  
E-mail: marellelee@gmail.com  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Mr Simon Scott  
Strategic Planner  
Strategic & Community Facilities Group  
Ballina Shire Council  
Ballina NSW 2478.

Dear Mr Scott

**Re: BALLINA MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE STRATEGY MATERIAL  
FIRST PHASE PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

Why not learn from world's best practice?

Instead of trying to patch-up a century of bad or non-existent planning, start afresh for the next 20 years.

This happened at Los Altos, a thriving residential suburb of San José --- Silicon Valley, California.

I have been there several times because my son, Bruce Peters, a Global Controller of Finance, and his equally highly qualified wife Nancy and their two young children, Bradley and Beverly live there.

About 1900, I was told, the Californian Government, and possibly the local government council, had land there and obtained more from the Catholic Church.

That land included a large preserve, what in Australia would be called a reserve, which has been left largely in its natural state. The preserve includes a small mountain and various hills used by climbers. There are long walking and cycling trails, creeks and other natural features and a set of tennis courts and a large sporting area..

A working farm, with orchard, has been established mid-preserve. Children are shown how cows are milked and animals fed. The farm sells fresh produce, eggs, vegetables and fruits, and meat from chickens, pigs, cattle and other livestock grown in healthy surroundings. Using the preserve is free to tourists and locals.

The only motor vehicles are operated by the government instrumentality which maintains the preserve.

Thousands of people use the preserve daily, but because it is so large it is not crowded.

The adjacent residential section of Los Altos is a revelation. Blocks are a reasonable size. Homes are all single storey. Only public institutions, such as first class museums, galleries, libraries etc are high rise.

Buildings are not allowed near side boundaries, thereby eliminating noise pollution, lack of privacy etc.

REGIONAL CENTRE -2

There are no backyard or other private swimming pools. That saves water and eliminates the possibility of children drowning. Instead, owners of the about 80 lots pay rates to maintain a central, most attractive swimming pools and change rooms complex, including function and meeting rooms, and undercover outdoor areas. This complex is not so close to housing that noise could be a problem. Owners' contributions pay for lifesavers for swimmers' safety. My son takes care of lifesavers' rosters as his contribution. Other residents help in various ways.

Schools also have monitored swimming pools and tennis courts.

Well-designed roads carefully link with outside umpteen lane highways.

The adjacent business area of San Jose was overhauled and re-designed in the 1980s. Skyscrapers are not allowed next to a few historic buildings dating back to early Mexican and Spanish times, such as a Mexican earth cabin and luxurious Victorian era home, not a museum.

A large central area has been retained mid-CBD used for special occasions such as Christmas fairs.

Before chorusing "Ballina can't afford that etc, this model Los Altos suburb has eventuated over decades. This affordable housing works for Mr and Mrs Average. Billionaires have huge estates nearer the mountains.

Canberra was planned, and works. Why couldn't a much smaller version work in Ballina Shire? There is level land towards the Alstonville Plateau, with sea views in the distance.

Much of Ballina Shire residential areas have been spoilt by replacing original single storey homes with duplexes and other multi-storey buildings.

Every time a conventional single storey home is replaced with a duplex etc, with diminished open space, children will suffer.

Also at Lennox Head, Ballina Council changed the zoning of a large area of public reserve in the 1922 Lennox Head Estate Plan to enable it to be sold off to the NSW Government to expand the Lake Ainsworth Holiday Park, which now looks so ugly..

(I know from reporting Ballina Council meeting to the Lennox Head Residents Association for nine years that the Lennox caravan park produced more revenue than the rest of the shire's caravan parks added together.)

But now children have been deprived of that valuable play space, so they play on Council footways and roads, which is so dangerous.

**I am absolutely opposed to children playing on roads.** I was told that Council staff said they could play on beaches. Sand is not suitable for many activities and is too close to the sea for safety for younger children.

The Local Government Act has planning flaws.

### REGIONAL CENTRE -3

At meetings I have attended about Ballina becoming a regional centre, I have heard many complaints about not enough public transport, particularly for the elderly.

### COMMENTS ON BALLINA 2035 Community Engagement.

For more than two decades I, Marelle Lee, have been on the Heritage Committee of the Richmond River Heritage Committee, which is the convenor of the Regional Museum in Lismore. Museum archives contain considerable material about Ballina.

I have lived at Lennox Head for more than 20 years, after decades in Lismore. But my mother, Mrs Una McPhee, lived in Ballina for the last 12 years of her life, which provided me with an understanding of life in Ballina, particularly for the elderly.

Given that I have been doing about 40 hours voluntary work a week for the RRHS since the death of Annette Potts, my focus on the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy is on the last bullet point in "Our community's priorities and concerns ..."

- Respect our history and heritage

Unfortunately, in the past, Ballina Shire Council is not renowned for history and heritage respect. A prime example is the way Ballina Council allowed the hulk of the steamship then *MV Florrie* to be badly damaged by being outside in the weather on Richmond Riverbank for 30 years. Also an early European settlement well, installed on what became Ballina Golf Course, was allowed to be filled in.

Other topics are "How can we"

- Keep Ballina Beautiful? Too dense housing can be a descent into ugliness and noise pollution. Such densities have risen dramatically in Lennox and probably to a lesser degree in Ballina in the last few decades. Stop allowing buildings so close to the river and North Creek that the public does not have room to walk there. Don't crowd buildings. Public land should not be taken over and sold off.

The 1922 Lennox Estate Plan provided narrow blocks, which were suitable for small beach cottages and weekenders shacks. When they were demolished to make way for two-storey units built close to side boundaries the quality of life for residents declined through noise pollution and lack of privacy etc.

Some Lennox residents have not spoken to neighbours since they built next door, and don't ever intend to. That doesn't produce happy neighbourhoods.

Worse --- children's play space was eliminated. They have had to play on council footways and roads, which is so dangerous.

The situation was exacerbated by Ballina Council changing the zoning from the southern shore of Lake Ainsworth from public recreation, to enable that land to be sold to the NSW Government to expand the Lake Ainsworth Holiday Park. (I am aware that Lake Ainsworth Park raised more funds than the rest of the Shire's caravan parks added together. That I learned when I reported Ballina Council meetings for nine years for Lennox Head Residents Association.

- 'Support our sense of community?' I think Ballina already has a strong sense of community. The Ballina Advocate publicises events well. More other media publicity might help

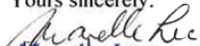
Repeat T/VN

REGIONAL CENTRE 4

- 'Bring more life to the CBD?' As Australia is close to recession at present that is difficult. Ballina has several CBDs; I believe the main CBD is in **danger of** inundation from the river, which could rise with sea level rises. Tamar Street already floods in heavy rain. I was told the ground water table is close to the surface in the main CBD.
- 'Grow local employment' Recent Federal Government decisions to allow more foreign migration could help, along with more building of affordable housing. More people taking care of beaches, trying to stop plastic rubbish there. Remove weeds near beaches and replace with locally indigenous flora.
- 'Be creative and innovate'. Educate the general population to understand new approaches. Don't adopt a superior attitude as some Council officers do.
- 'Get infrastructure we need?' Campaign to Federal and State Governments.
- 'Support older residents?' More buses needed, according to opinions at meetings I have attended.
- 'Cater for youth and families?' Provide more facilities for sports and entertainments. Ballina has public space. More low cost, stand alone housing.
- 'Lead active healthy lives?' Again sporting and other facilities. Then it is up to people to take advantage of them.
- 'Enjoy and care for the coast?' More volunteers and leaders needed. Lennox Residents Association members and other groups do a fine job, but some are becoming too old.
- 'Be more sustainable?' Again, more education.
- 'Deal with climate change?' Plan more centres on high ground, away from the coast. Spend on essentials proven to assist at river mouth.
- Have suitable housing? See my introduction.. Councils have to adhere to the Local Government Act. Much campaigning may be needed to change attitudes.

Down the decades Ballina Council decisions have been based on what it is believed the NSW Government will allow at that stage... not what will be best for people who will live here in 20 years.

Yours sincerely,

  
Marelle Lee

### Simon Scott

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**From:** nathan cooper <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, 21 September 2015 4:27 PM  
**To:** Strategic BMRCs  
**Subject:** TRIM: Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy - submission

**HP TRIM Record Number:** 15/71956

Hi

I am a local resident and landowner. I am passionate about this area and am actively involved in several community groups.

I have read the documents pertaining to the BMRCs. Congratulations to the council for being proactive and broad in focus.

Please consider my submission to the BMRCs below.

One area I think is overlooked is the rural land use in the Ballina Shire. It is vastly under-utilised and has significant potential to contribute to all the strategic scenarios outlined in the BMRCs as well as substantially increase council revenue.

#### **1 Inexpensive rural housing for single or double households**

Firstly housing has become unaffordable to many of the demographic groups in this area. There is a shortage of housing for small households and people wanting to live close, but not in townships. Contemporary housing has become narrowly focused to cater for developers as well as working or financially secure renters or owners in overly engineered industrialised homes. The options available are brutal to community well-being, affordability, ecology and diversity.

Rural landholders should be allowed to supply inexpensive small rentals on their properties under new council guidelines for such housing. For example these dwellings should be considered ecologically sustainable with compost toilets, solar power, tank water, simple grey water treatment, lightweight construction materials, heavy insulation, correct sun angles, vegetable gardens, compact size, aesthetically complimentary to our scenic rural areas and limited to two per title on existing roads etc.

Rural landholders would pay extra rates for these dwellings as well as provide either financial or ecological contributions to the Ballina Shire such as regenerating a portion of their land or nearby council land or sealing a portion of a local road in the DA.

A new part time position could be created at council to inspect such dwellings and waste systems paid for with inspection fees to landowners.

Rules for semi permanent accommodation in mobile housing such as caravans could also be rewritten to make it easier for very low income earners to live in rural surroundings in such dwellings next to sheds and existing houses.



The above types of housing already exist outside of council guidelines and are considered the only affordable lifestyle housing available. It would be good for the shire to embrace the reality of the community rather than historic ideals.

### **2 Rural land use support**

Much of the rural land in Ballina is under-utilised, weed infested or used for uneconomic cattle grazing. Most of it could be described as lifestyle rural living.

The council could inspire and support rural landowners to diversify and make better use of their land by encouraging the many innovations in rural land use happening around the globe. This has the potential to create many more jobs, create opportunities for young people, integrate the rural and suburban communities and insulate the local economy from external shocks such as an interrupted food supply or recessions.

#### **Some areas of consideration are:**

Using existing council staff and systems to source generic business plans for suitable rural micro businesses, publicise existing examples of suitable rural innovation around the globe and tweak existing council guidelines.

**a Landsharing** - Promote existing portals for rural landowners to rent land to small businesses such as egg farmers, vegetable growers, nut tree growers and pig breeders. Young people can become farmers and start small businesses without the financial burden of buying rural land. This has created a wave of new farming activity in the US with many successful examples of how it can work.

**b Reforestation** - Helping landowners access information and grants to remove weeds and revegetate degraded land. Access carbon credit schemes, expand wildlife corridors and create habitat for threatened species. Look at council rates reductions in exchange for council owned carbon credits. Celebrate rural leaders in this area.

**c Street side stalls** - Are a great way to provide rural landowners with incomes, create casual employment and provide the community with a connection to the rural areas as well as local produce. Council could actively promote them as the beneficial activities they are. Rural landowners could be encouraged by favourable council guidelines, free PR on existing food maps and council material as well as letting the community know what a valuable contribution street side stalls have.

**d Ballina fresh food forest** - promote Ballina as a hub for locally grown fresh food, country drives through thriving little villages and a diverse community with a big heart. Currently the wider view of Ballina seems to be focused on the township and negative stereotyping. The rural aspect of the Ballina Shire could help counter this reputation.

**e Rural landholder stewardship** - rural landholders need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their land from an ecological perspective. Environmental credibility is a big part of the future global community focus and Ballina is in a great position to start this conversation around rural land ownership and responsibility.

I hope some of these ideas can be incorporated into future planning.

Nathan Cooper  
T 02 6687 0798  
M 0417105543

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**Simon Scott**

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**From:** glen hewett [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 22 September 2015 3:42 PM  
**Subject:** The Future of Ballina

Good afternoon,

There is something I would really like to see happen to make Ballina more aesthetically pleasing.

I was born in Ballina and spent much of my life exploring and learning and surfing, as a fourth generation child of the town.

What I would like to see will involve council and other state authorities co-operating collectively to correct probably the biggest eyesore in the shire.

That is the front of Black Head and some parts of the headland.

Ever since the headland was blasted away - I remember seeing that happen as a small child - prior to that my father and his mates fished from the headland in its original state - it has remained in a state of neglect. I think after more than 40 years of neglect, something should be done.

I do not know of any other coastal town that has not fully rejuvenated their greatest asset - the foreshore.

This is a great surfing spot - the rock shelf offering some of the best waves in the region, a great fishing spot and general viewing area. It is also, as you would well know, a very important aboriginal site.

Surely, the area could be turned into a park with local vegetation and groundcovers, picnic shelters, a viewing platform and signage explaining the history of both the local indigenous peoples and subsequent white settlement.

I hope that this suggestion can be given due consideration and I look forward to seeing Black Head restored to a new aesthetically pleasing and functional place for everyone to enjoy and for the shire to be proud of and showcase.

Kind regards,  
Glen Hewett

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27. 9. 15  
9 Pacific Terrace  
Ballina 2478

Attention Mr. Matthew Wood.

Dear Mr Wood,

Many thanks for mailing me the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy on the two suggested rock pools.

I attach a letter (photo copy) I wrote to the local newspaper on the location of the proposed rock pool. I have refrained from writing to you until such time as I had a lot of feed back in my letter to the Editor.

Very much to my surprise I have received dozens of ratepayers full me up and discuss the pool and its location. I have not had one person say they were against the pool. I have had only two persons say Black Head was the incorrect location. The first person stated there was no lighting at Black Head and this would invite the wrong element of a night. The other party would not give a reason, only to say it was the wrong location.

I have read in the press you have selected the southern end of Shelly beach for the pool. To me this seems to go against all Council requirements, any ratepayer who wishes to open a business in Ballina has to comply to the strict car parking requirements.

It is obvious if a pool were to be located at the Southern end of Shelly beach, it would only be a matter of time before the park located on the western side of Shelly beach road would have to be converted in to a car park.

Planning for a pool, Council should be looking to the future, not the present. The southern end of Shelly beach does not stand out as future in the same light as Black Head.

Kingsford Smith did not see Shelly rocks, he saw Black Head. It would be a crime to allow this historical event become forgotten and not be used to the benefit of Ballina.

2.

I am fully aware the sketches you have been good enough to mail me are not to scale, Looking at both locations the pools appear to be extremely small, if ~~this~~ this is the case, Council has only defeated the purpose of a rock pool. Pools have to be either 50 meters or 25 meters. Black Head has far more area than the Southern end of Shelly beach and is far more suited for a pool.

As I advised, I only had two franchisees who spoke to me against the Black Head location, one franchisee reason was because there was no lights. I can only assume street lighting will be included as part of the overhaul plan.

I am fully aware to construct the pool at Black Head will be more expensive than Shelly rocks. To obtain a quality product one has to pay.

I and a lot of other ratepayers would like to see the rock pool at Black Head.

Yours

Jack Dawson



ADVOCATE

# pinion

Send your letters to starballedit@n

**irited**

atter where I  
n I speak, as  
know I come  
the topic of  
mes to sharks.

The general public is currently not going into the surf, and those who do only venture a short distance from the beach.

What has surprised me,

there are far less people walking on the beach.

The other morning, I was on Angels Beach and there were only me and a lone fisherman on the entire

beach between Flat Rock and Black Head.

While the chamber of commerce has stated local business has not been affected, it is only a matter of time.

Ballina is a tourist resort and if business suffers, the town will suffer.

With the current unfair penalty rates, business does not want any further burden to put up with.

The end result could be staff reductions as well as reductions in service to the public.

It is going to be a long time before the public forgets the shark scare, regardless of any measures which may be put in place.

On the other hand, the public will always have a desire to come to the beach and also swim in salt water.

Ballina has to have some alternative to keep the tourist and the ratepayers coming to our beach.

May I be rude enough to recommend council immediately commence the construction of a salt water pool at Black Head.

I am aware council has some early drawings for a rock pool and some are available for inspection at the council.

Money rules everything today, and to assist raise funds for a pool, I suggest:

- The NSW Public Works department did not complete the restoration of Black Head when they took rock for the breakwalls - it is important they be required to honour their obligation;

- The name of the pool be the "Kingsford Smith Memorial Rock Pool" - if this was to be, I feel government assistance could become available;

- The NSW Premier, Mike Baird, has acknowledged to shark problem and sent a team of scientists to the area to assist in rectifying the shark problem - financial support should not be in the to-hard basket;

- The Federal Government could be approached to help;

- I fully agree with council

plans to update the Ballina and Alstonville pools, but I feel this could be put off for the future and the money directed to the "Kingsford Smith Memorial Rock Pool";

- Maybe start a fundraising plan. The main thing is: Let's get the ball rolling. Let's get the Kingsford Smith Memorial Pool started.

Jack Trevan,  
Ballina

**Surfer wants action**

#### **Pool at Black Head**

THE suggestion for an ocean rock pool to be constructed in Ballina would have my strongest support

There are many people who are not prepared to enter the surf for fear of being caught in a rip and maybe lose their lives.

There are many people who will not swim in public swimming pools because of their concern of water quality.

There are also people who will not swim in Shaws Bay because of their concern of the water quality and the sea grass.

I am not saying these people are correct or incorrect. I am only pointing out facts.

Many years back, one of Ballina's service clubs, under the guidance of the late Nugget Saunders and the help of the Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore Surf Life Saving Club, constructed the small rock pool on Shelly rocks.

This asset has proved to be well patronised and popular with families.

Unfortunately, the pool continues to fill up with sand, which requires cleaning, a task which has fallen on the council's shoulders and financed by

the Ballina ratepayers.

It is my firm opinion if a pool were to be constructed, it should be located at Black Head (northern end of Shelly Beach).

I realise this area is currently away from facilities, but it is the perfect location for such an asset to Ballina.

The waves washing on to Black Head area cross rocks, not sand, like the Shelly rock area, so the regular requirement to clean the pool should not be necessary.

Car parking, one of Australia's largest problems, should not be a problem at Black Head.

There is a very very large area of flat ground for parking.

This is not as so at the Shelly rock area.

The large amount of rock which would be removed to make the pool could be used to make a platform out to sea, which in turn could be used by fishermen.

That would be another tourist attraction for Ballina.

For me, and those who suffer badly from sandflies which are present at the Ballina public pool and Shaws Bay: There are no sandflies at Black Head.

What a blessing.

**Jack Trevan, Ballina**

### Ballina2035 - Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

#### Purpose

Ballina will continue to emerge as a major regional centre over the next twenty years. What this will mean for Ballina and what needs to be done to accommodate this change, in a way that benefits our existing and future residents, local businesses and visitors, is the subject of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy (Ballina2035). The strategy identifies key drivers of change, opportunities and key challenges over the next twenty years and proposes a series of actions that may be taken to respond to change in a proactive and positive manner.

The Strategy addresses the following six key themes:

- Open Space and Healthy Living
- Economic Development
- Character, Culture and Amenity
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Environment
- Housing

The Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy seeks to identify measures by which the Council can respond to these themes, within its scope and responsibilities, in a manner that fits the character, needs and local culture particular to Ballina.

Ballina is characterised by:

- Being the Shire's core for the provision of a diverse range of retail, hospitality, civic, health, professional and business services in the Ballina CBD; retail in the Kerr Street Retail Precinct; light industry and large format retail in the Southern Cross Industrial Estate (North Ballina) and the West Ballina Enterprise Corridor; and marine industry in the Smith Drive Industrial Estate;
- Having quality urban infrastructure including road and pedestrian/cycle path networks, water and sewerage system and public open space network;
- A mixture of low density and medium density housing, including historic cottages, with higher density development generally located in proximity to the CBD and in sections of East Ballina. Lower density residential development predominates elsewhere;



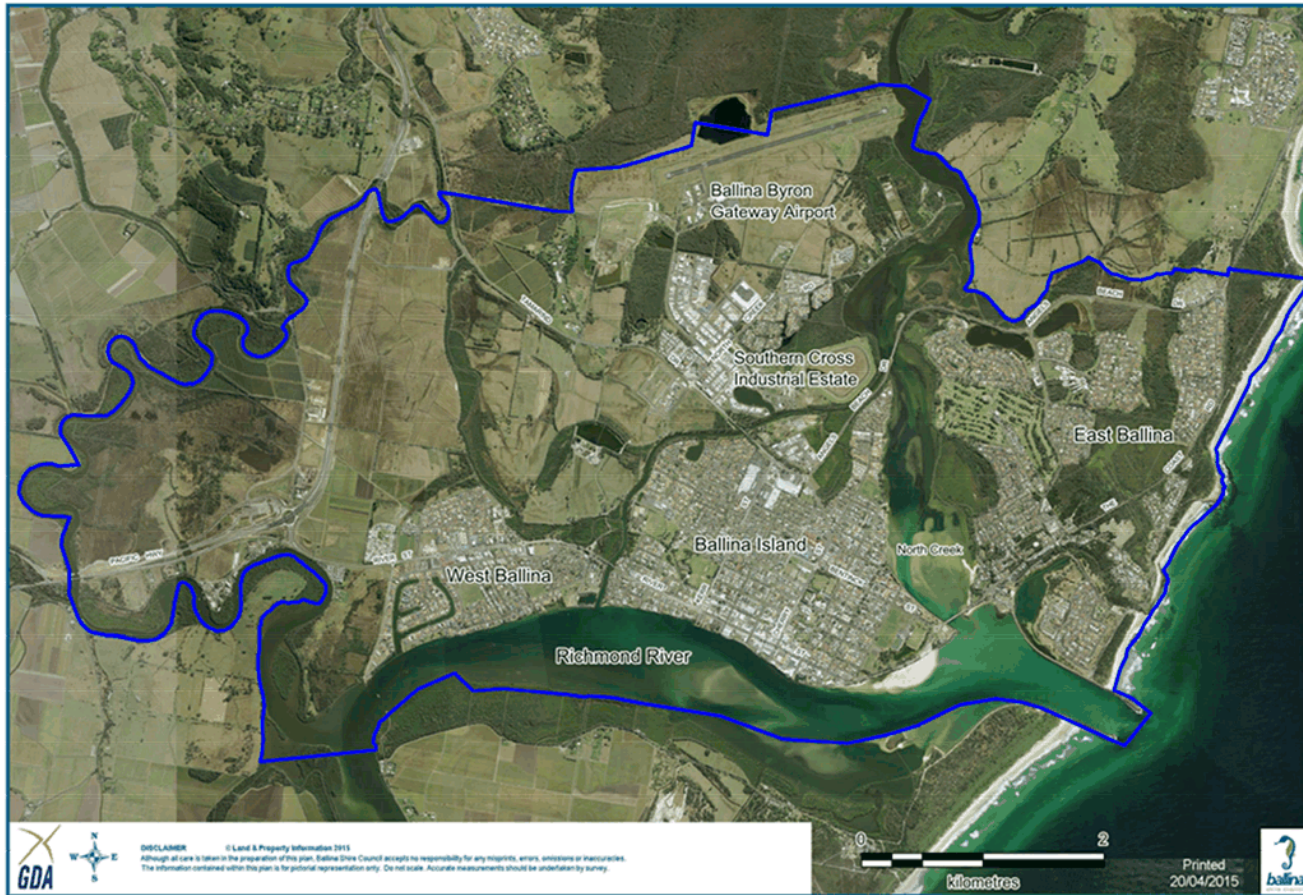


Figure 1. Map of Study Area

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

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- Relatively flat topography, wide streets with large areas of green public open space, including sporting facilities, passive open space, urban bushland, linked by an extensive shared pathway network;
- Extensive access to coastline areas, beaches and key waterways of the Richmond River and North Creek; and
- Strong links to Aboriginal and European cultural heritage including historic buildings (cottages and homesteads, main street commercial buildings and civic and religious buildings), prominent street trees and cultural values and stories associated with key landscapes, coastal environments and urban bushlands.
- Having strong education and hospitality sectors supported by diversity of choices in school education and by extensive tourism assets.

Ballina's key strengths and core competencies include the following:

- Accessibility to the coast, waterways & the natural environment – the physical environment is acknowledged as Ballina's key defining feature, due to its position on the Richmond River, North Creek and Pacific Ocean and proximity to natural areas.
- Open space assets and lifestyle – Our extensive open space assets contribute in a significant way to the social, economic and environmental strength of Ballina.
- Safe and friendly community with a "low-key vibe" that is reflected in the character of natural and built environment and the character of our community.
- As a transport hub of growing importance to the region, due to the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport and Ballina's position at the intersection of the Pacific and Bruxner Highways.
- Well-serviced, in terms of the standard and broad range of urban infrastructure and services including road and pathway networks, accessible infrastructure (changing places) and sustainable water management infrastructure (including water recycling), as well as with health and education facilities.
- Regional food bowl – due to the Northern Rivers Region having productive soils and relatively high rainfall, which supports a strong (and developing) local food culture that has a reputation for quality, freshness and sustainability.
- Regional arts culture and creativity – due to the reputation of the Northern Rivers as a region that values arts and creativity as a core part of its identity and attractiveness.
- Proximity to commercial and cultural/entertainment opportunities in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

### Community Engagement

This strategy is founded on comprehensive community engagement involving the following:

- *Futures Forum* - Council held an evening discussion forum at the commencement of the project, involving 47 randomly selected members of the Ballina community. The forum sought to establish community views in response to the following:
  - What does Ballina becoming a major regional centre mean for our community?
  - What are the opportunities it could create?
  - What are the challenges which need to be considered?
- *Civic Panel* - The Civic Panel, comprising 14 community members from the Futures Forum participants, has met at key stages during the project to provide feedback and act as a community “sounding board” to the project’s progress. Four meetings have been held to date, with a further two to three planned.
- *Staff Forum* – 18 Council staff members representing all groups within Council were invited to a discussion forum where the same questions from the Futures Forum were considered.
- *Interagency Government Forum* - Council held a Forum for representatives of Government Departments which saw 21 representatives from State Government departments meet at the first gathering to discuss the views of various agencies within the context of a strategic plan for the future of Ballina. Three meetings were held at stages during the preparation of the strategy.
- *Presentations to Community Groups* – Council invited 24 community groups to engage with members of the project team via various means. Eleven of these groups have participated in the project to date. Project team members gave a presentation and invited open discussion and mapping of concerns, experiences and aspirations to directly feed into the project.
- *Presentations to schools* - To gain youth input in to the project, local schools were invited to receive a brief presentation from the project team to facilitate student input in terms of their experiences and thoughts for the future of Ballina. Three schools participated, with students from years six and ten engaged in an interactive workshop. A series of maps were made using the sMap social mapping tool through this process. Council’s Youth Council was also consulted and has had input to the project.
- *Newspaper Articles* - Articles (six in total) which gave the community background to the project’s progress and invited thought on key issues were written and published over a six week period in the Ballina Advocate. The process instigated further letters and emails to Council, and stimulated the use of the sMap and Instagram tools.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

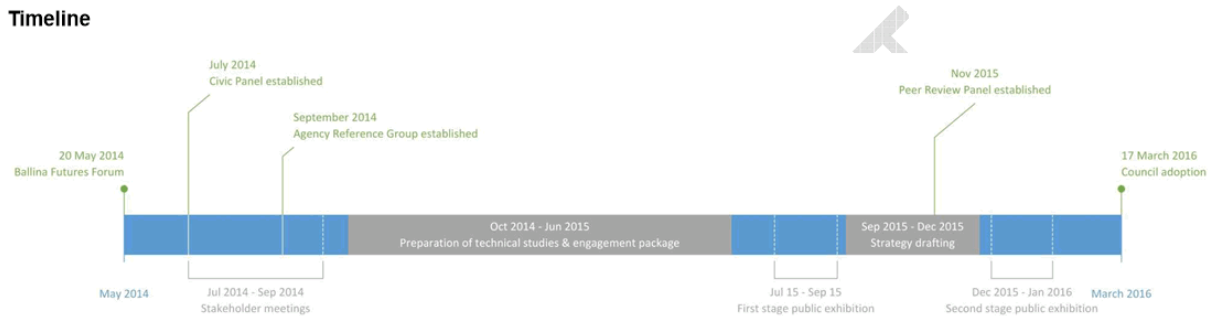
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- *Creative Workshops* - There were four workshops of 2.5 hours each held, targeted at grandparents and grandchildren or older residents and their younger friends or relatives, which were designed to bring generations together to share experiences of the Ballina community and what participants like about living in Ballina, through paver-based art. Following the workshops, the pavers were fired and are now being incorporated into the Wigmore Arcade redevelopment, providing a durable record of what is important about our community to different generations. A total of approximately 60 people were involved in these workshops.
- *sMap* – Ballina Shire Council is the first organisation in Australia to use sMap, which is an interactive online mapping tool with which community members are able to map points of interest and post comments and suggestions for Ballina's future. A total of 62 maps were produced with over 500 points of interest plotted using sMap.
- *Instagram* - Council set up Instagram hashtag - #ballinafuture and asked that people tag photos they have of what they like, or dislike about Ballina, or tag photos of what they would like to see in Ballina in the future. In total, 89 photos have been shared on Instagram using the #ballinafuture hashtag.
- *Facebook* – Council utilised the social media platform Facebook to notify and engage with our community. The 'Ballina2035' Facebook page received over 750 page 'likes' and 92 'comments', with over 11,000 people 'reached' through the platform.
- *Public exhibition of a community engagement package* - The information obtained from the above community engagement activities was analysed and incorporated into a community engagement/exhibition package comprising: Context Information; Strategic Question Sheets; Background Report; and Technical/Specialist Studies.
- *Industry Peer Review Panel* – In association with the finalisation of the draft strategy, Council established an Industry Peer Review Panel to review the proposed strategy approach and actions, with a view to providing critical feedback and additional ideas on the delivery of the strategy objectives from an industry perspective. The purpose of the panel was to provide an industry based testing point for approaches and ideas to support practical and innovative preparation and implementation of the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy.
- *Traditional media* – Additional to the above, conventional advertising (through local media), media releases and Council's own community publication ("Community Connect") were utilised to raise community awareness of the project.

A Community Engagement Package, comprising information distributed for public comment during August-September 2015, provides further details regarding the background and rationale underpinning this strategy. The engagement package is available on Council's website.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

### Timeline

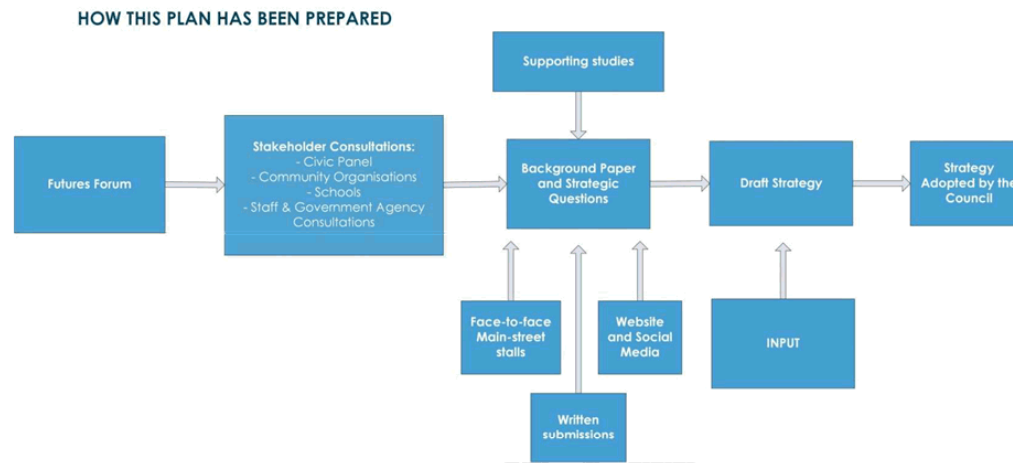


### Community Aspirations

The following key community aspirations were identified through Council's community engagement activities during the preparation of the strategy:

- A strong desire to preserve the natural and scenic qualities that contribute to Ballina's amenity and character.
- A desire for enhanced recreational opportunities associated with our open space areas and the coast and waterways, through improved infrastructure and amenities.
- Recognition that the community's future wellbeing will be underpinned by economic opportunities and employment growth and that these require us to support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- A desire to see more life and activity in the Ballina CBD, through the provision of more casual meeting spaces, enhanced 'street-life' and the clustering of boutique retail uses and development of a restaurant/nightlife precinct.
- A need to ensure that public places and facilities, beaches and waterways, commercial areas and our pathway network are connected to and accessible by all members of our community and visitors.
- A desire for enhanced cultural expression through more public art, interpretive signage, community events and activities.
- A recognition that the nature of our housing stock will need to change to ensure we have a variety of dwelling types suitable for a wide range of households.
- A desire to ensure that Ballina's transport infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of our community, in terms of strategic road improvements, affordable public transport options, and convenient and adequate parking opportunities.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy



### Vision

The following vision has been identified as the community's preferred outcome for Ballina in the year 2035:

In 2035... Ballina is a vibrant and prosperous regional centre.

### Principles and Key Themes

The vision is supported by four key principles, which have guided the development of the strategy's actions. These principles are:

- Inclusive – to ensure that everyone has opportunities to participate in community life to the fullest extent possible.
- Resilient – to be always improving the capacity of our community to deal with challenges and can adapt to change.
- Sustainable – to ensure that the decisions made today do not compromise the decision making options of future generations.
- Vibrant – to bring more life and vitality to Ballina's community, as a basis for community wellbeing and prosperity.



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

The ways in which these principles are reflected in the development of actions against the six key themes of this strategy is shown in the following table:

Key Themes	Principles			
	Inclusive	Resilient	Sustainable	Vibrant
<b>Open Space and Healthy Living</b>	Comprises connected and diverse infrastructure that supports active and healthy coastal lifestyle in the public domain	Is contemporary and well maintained, providing long term benefits to the community	Complements environmental and social values and supports economic activity	Is embedded in the character and identity of Ballina and personal and community activity
<b>Economic Development</b>	Fosters opportunities for employment for variety of age groups and skill sets	Enables industry and business with longevity, capacity, local support and regional connectivity	Focusses on initiatives that draw on technology, clean energy, local skills and equity	Creates new, innovative and entrepreneurial activity
<b>Character, Culture and Amenity</b>	Supports new things and is respectful of existing and historic elements	Is underpinned by community values and aspirations that are articulated and embedded in policy, planning and infrastructure	Recognises culture, and social character and composition, within the community.	Is living, changing, engaging, interesting and inclusive
<b>Community Facilities and Infrastructure</b>	Meets needs for a healthy, interactive and connected community	Balances need, resources, hazards and risks and up front and long term costs	Is robust and responsive to change need and circumstance	Is supportive of social interaction, community capacity building and local identity
<b>Environment</b>	Is accessible to the community and visitors and connects people to place, flora and fauna, utility and amenity	Has core attributes recognised and protected, and potential impacts are understood and mitigated or avoided	Has intrinsic and instrumental value managed for the benefit of current and future generations and biodiversity	Comprises quality areas that contribute to community identity, economy and activity
<b>Housing</b>	Is within financial reach and able to meet a variety of household circumstances	Is able to adapt to future challenges such as climate change	Minimises the use of resources including energy, water and carbon	Has architectural merit, is interesting and contributes to a sense of place

### Philosophical Approach

The following section outlines Council's philosophical approach to the progress of Ballina to a major regional centre:

- *Show leadership where it counts* – A number Ballina's unsung successes have been a product of forward thinking and pro-active Councils of the past (such successes include the airport, Angels Beach Drive & Prospect Bridge and the development of much of the shire's industrial and residential land). These successes reflect the need for Council to play a significant leadership role in key areas, to bring prospective success into reality.
- *Enable things to happen* – Recognise that sometimes Council's role is best served by being a 'catalyst' rather than 'doer', which may involve providing the forum, facility and/or appropriate regulatory arrangements to enable the doers to step-up and take good ideas forward.
- *Make investments count* – Look for opportunities to target investments of infrastructure and 'human capital' into areas that have potential to leverage multiple benefits, in terms of community wellbeing, economic opportunity and environmental enhancement. This may mean 'applying resources in a smarter way', rather than necessarily applying resources as 'more of the same'.
- *Plan from the bottom up* – Recognise that community input is a valuable tool at each stage of planning and delivering new ideas and that a citizenry which is well informed, empowered and 'networked' can bring the energy and information necessary to make good ideas great.
- *Pick low-hanging fruit* - Identify easy first steps to enable early implementation of key aspects of a project that have relatively low cost (both monetary and otherwise), with the overall project delivered in stages over time.
- *Start from where we are* – Know and acknowledge where we are now is the best strategy for getting to where we want to be in the future. This recognises that at each step of the way we need to build on the existing resources, skills and opportunities currently available in our community.
- *Engender entrepreneurial culture* – Acknowledge the fact that sometimes the best approach is to do less rather than more, in the sense that the removal of barriers and bringing parties together, may be all that is required to stimulate others into taking good ideas forward.
- *Facilitate an inclusive community* – Seek to ensure that all members of our community have ongoing and equal opportunities to be involved in civic and community life to the greatest extent possible, regardless of their cultural or socio-economic background, or their physical or mental condition.



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

- *Engender resilience* – Pursue a path that respects the needs of the present whilst responding to the foreseeable challenges of the future, in a manner which is flexible and adaptable enough for future decision makers to do the same. This approach is the foundation of sustainability.
- *Be disruptive* – Acknowledge that at times it may be necessary for Council to lead the community in a particular direction or at least “shake things up” by challenging or disrupting current ways of thinking and doing things and pursuing change.
- *Prototype, pilot and plan for failure* – Acknowledge the fact that sometimes it is best to test an idea before moving to full implementation. This is the concept behind the ‘tactical urbanism’ approach. Coupled with appropriate feedback opportunities, this approach can ultimately save resources and improve outcomes to better meet the needs of our community. This also recognises that sometimes it’s necessary for good ideas to be allowed to ‘fail’ so that they can be improved upon and turned into longer-term successes.

### Response to Key Drivers

Key Drivers of Change	Strategic Response
Climate Change	Pursue adaptable and flexible climate change responses to appropriately manage foreseeable risks and provide options for future decision makers. The aim is to leave future decision makers in a reasonable position and keep options open in relation to climate change.
Small Business Innovation	Recognise the value of small business as the key driver of future economic growth and activity by fostering networking and innovation in the sector.
Ballina Byron Gateway Airport transport hub	Harness opportunities presented by having a key gateway to the region in Ballina, by making strategic investments in infrastructure and encouraging compatible economic opportunities.
Population Change	Recognise and prepare for population ageing, whilst encouraging demographic balance through the attraction of younger cohorts. Attraction of working families is important to the balance and economic prosperity of the community.
Population Growth Potential	Prepare for the population growth that is anticipated to occur with the development of major urban growth areas, in a manner which enhances lifestyle opportunities and access to services and facilities for existing and future residents. This includes an ongoing strategy of greenfield development in the shire supported by targeted infill in Ballina.
Digital Readiness	Support digital readiness in government, business and community sectors to promote civic, economic and social networking opportunities.
Industrial Land Supply	Harness opportunities associated with the strategic location of Council’s industrial land supplies, adjacent to the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport and key future road infrastructure upgrades. Encourage long-term innovative business activity on Council’s land.
Maritime opportunities	Leverage off Ballina’s maritime location through appropriate investment in infrastructure and embellishments to promote community and business opportunities associated with access to the coast and waterways.
Public Domain and Open Space	Build on opportunities associated with Ballina’s high quality open space assets through strategic embellishment and improvements to the public domain, to promote active lifestyles and encourage social interaction and community cohesion.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Central Business District Networking Hub	Stimulate life and vitality in the Ballina CBD through enhancement of the public domain, "place activation" and the encouragement of private development that responds to the river setting of the CBD.
Visitor Economy	Harness opportunities for local business associated with the growth of the visitor economy, whilst managing the impacts of tourism on access to facilities and sense of place for the local community.
Proximity to South East Queensland	Acknowledge the increasing influence of south east Queensland on the North Coast region due to ongoing upgrades to the Pacific Highway, in terms of both the opportunities and pressures this presents. Link with South East Queensland in terms of employment, culture and housing.

### **Climate Change**

*Ballina is in a vulnerable position when considering the predicted impacts of climate change, as expressed through the IPCC and various government policy and responses in Australia. In particular, Ballina may be impacted by rising sea levels and more extreme weather events, especially when thinking about inundation, tidal water, stormwater, coastal erosion and flooding.*

*From the perspective of the strategy, the key is not to find it all too hard or assume the worst. Rather, it is about a logical and measured response within the financial, knowledge and practical means of Council and the community over time.*

*The timeline for the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy of 20 years is not long enough to solve climate change challenges nor to realise many of the impacts. However, the strategy is founded on a philosophy of managing risk and moving in a positive direction. The strategy is about ensuring Ballina is a vibrant and prosperous regional centre that warrants the public and private financial and technical investment to address the predicted and actual impacts. It is about encouraging the attitude, prosperity and investment necessary to pay for measures that can address the climate change challenges of the future.*

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

### Strategic Actions

The following actions are proposed to achieve the community's vision for Ballina in 2035.

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
<b>OPEN SPACE AND HEALTHY LIVING</b>				
<b>Objective A1 - Provide improved amenities and facilities in association with key foreshore and open space areas.</b>				
A1.1	Embellish foreshore open space, incorporating improved shade, parking, play equipment, amenities and landscaping at key locations, as shown on the Landscape Plans.	Improved facilities and usability of open space areas by locals and visitors.  Improved tourist attraction.  Improved lifestyle attraction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of the draft landscape plans, subject to further detailed design and costing, and identifying/obtaining funding.</li> <li>- Sites include: Kingsford Smith Drive &amp; the Spit, The Serpentine Beach, Memorial Park and North Missingham Bridge Beach Precinct; Black Head; and Captain Cook Park.</li> <li>- Focusing embellishments in key high use locations, whilst retaining low-key 'informal' open spaces without major improvement works, in order to maintain a broad range of open space and recreational opportunities.</li> </ul>	Deliver
A1.2	Facilitate the construction of a sea pool at convenient, cost effective and achievable location.	Improved recreational opportunities, particularly during rough sea conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying the approval pathway for construction.</li> <li>- Assisting with the identification of grant opportunities to fund construction.</li> </ul>	Facilitate
A1.3	Ensure the accessibility of change rooms and toilets at key locations in the open space network (activity nodes), as shown on the Open Space Plan.	Improved facilities and usability by locals and visitors.  Facilitating growth in accessible tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertaking an accessibility audit of existing facilities.</li> <li>- Preparing cost estimates for improvements.</li> <li>- Improving facilities as funds become available.</li> </ul>	Deliver
A1.4	Extend the shared pathway network as shown on the Open Space Plan.	Improved pedestrian accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertaking detailed design and costing for shared pathway extensions proposed in the Open Space Plan.</li> <li>- Obtaining funds for the works.</li> <li>- Obtaining approvals for construction.</li> <li>- Construct pathway extensions as funds become available.</li> </ul>	Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
A1.5	Progressively embellish the shared pathway network to incorporate improved public amenities, exercise stations, shelter, drinking fountains, public art, play spaces, pop-up activity spaces and bicycle and mobility scooter parking at key activity nodes shown on the Open Space Plan.	Improved pedestrian accessibility.  Improved attractiveness for maintaining an active lifestyle.  Greater interest and usability of the open space network.	- Identify opportunities to provide new infrastructure and embellishments at strategic locations within the open space network.  - Constructing works, in a staged manner, as funds become available.	Deliver
A1.6	Provide a major regional park facility at Pop Denison Park, in accordance with the Pop Denison Park Master Plan.	Improved recreational opportunities.	- Implementing the Pop Denison Park Master Plan, funded primarily through Council Open Spaces Developer Contributions Plan.	Deliver
<b>Objective A2 – Facilitate the appropriate use of public land to achieve balanced environmental, social and economic outcomes.</b>				
A2.1	Ensure that appropriate management arrangements are in place for the use of public land, which facilitate the appropriate use of the land for the benefit of our community.	Equity and transparency in the use of public land.	- Preparing Plans of Management for public land, on the basis of comprehensive community consultation and in accordance with Council's statutory responsibilities.  - Reviewing the arrangements whereby organisations or groups enjoy the exclusive occupation of public land, to ensure that appropriate legal arrangements are in place to legitimise that use, particularly where occupation was established historically.	Deliver
A2.2	Facilitate pop-up entrepreneurial activities, such as food vending, personal training, and recreation equipment and watercraft hire, at key locations in the open space network, at key activity nodes shown on the Open Space Plan.	Improved recreational opportunities.  Increased economic development opportunities	- Facilitating opportunities for the (limited) commercial use of public land, in appropriate locations, through the provision of streamlined licensing arrangements for these uses.	Facilitate
A2.3	Review the demand and supply situation for the recreational needs in the shire and provide for projected future needs.	Better catering for local recreational needs.	- Revising Council's Open Space Strategy to audit the availability of existing facilities and identify future needs, addressing field sports, aquatic sports and indoor sports.  - Funding the provision of additional facilities on the basis of developer contributions, rate revenue and grants.	Plan
A2.4	Provide for and facilitate opportunities for	Improved range of	- Revising Council's Open Space Strategy, considering	Plan /

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
	adventure-based recreation in appropriate locations.	recreational opportunities.	opportunities to include adventure based recreation opportunities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low-impact mountain bike trails in appropriate natural areas in East Ballina; and</li> <li>- water-based adventure play equipment in Shaws Bay and/or North Creek and/or the Richmond River.</li> <li>- Facilitating private commercial adventure-based recreation ventures, such as wave pools, extreme sports venues and sky-diving operations, in appropriate locations, subject to a commercial operator seeking to establish and operate them.</li> </ul>	Facilitate
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>Objective B1 - Cultivate entrepreneurial culture and innovation, as the underpinning of future economic growth and prosperity.</b>				
B1.1	Establish an ongoing dialogue with local business, face-to-face and through print and online media, as a means for improving the relationship between Council and local business, encouraging networking and stimulating entrepreneurial activity.	Improved relationship between Council and local business.	Engaging with local business through an engaged media strategy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveys on business relationships with Council;</li> <li>- Meetings with local business chambers and industry clusters;</li> <li>- Regular business focussed newsletter publication;</li> <li>- Utilisation of social media (LinkedIn, Facebook &amp; Instagram).</li> </ul>	Deliver
B1.2	Reduce the regulatory burden of Council operations and statutory functions on local business.	Reduced regulatory burden on local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveying local business to identify opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden imposed by Council activities &amp; functions.</li> <li>- Identifying barriers to outside businesses, wishing to locate regionally, from relocating in Ballina.</li> <li>- Amending relevant Council plans and policies to remove barriers to entrepreneurial activity and achieve procedural improvements and cost savings for local business.</li> <li>- Continued involvement in the NSW Small Business Friendly Council's program.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate  Plan
B1.3	Establish co-working spaces in the proximity of the CBD, to support entrepreneurial sole traders and small business.	<p>Improved business conditions for small business.</p> <p>Improved networking and economic development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveying local small business to gauge demand and range of facilities/services to include. Typically, co-working spaces provide sole traders and emerging businesses with access to Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, printers/copiers and reception services within a professional office environment. These spaces may also provide social and professional networking and mentoring opportunities for small or start-up businesses.</li> <li>- Assisting the establishment of a co-working space.</li> <li>- Working with an appropriate business or not-for-profit organisation to manage the co-working space over the long-term.</li> </ul>	Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
				Facilitate / Advocate
B1.4	Support the establishment of clusters of compatible businesses to stimulate street activity, support collective/precinct marketing and encourage the emergence of networking 'hubs'.	Improved vibrancy in the streetscape.  Improved networking opportunities for business.	- Preparing an Economic Development Strategy identifying measures that would support the physical clustering of compatible businesses, such as restaurants, boutique retail and health services, in specific precincts in the CBD. - Working with local business clusters to support collective marketing and promotion.	Plan  Facilitate / Advocate
B1.5	Actively seek to attract key businesses to the shire that provide for long-term employment and innovation.	Increased local employment.	- Actively marketing the Southern Cross Industrial Estate and Airport Precinct as an innovation and employment hub.	Deliver
<b>Objective B2 - Leverage Ballina's existing strategic economic assets to support economic development and employment opportunities.</b>				
B2.1	Protect and enhance our environmental assets, as a basis for maintaining Ballina's key lifestyle and economic advantages.	Maintaining key environmental and lifestyle assets.	- Continuing to implement coast and hinterland environmental restoration projects, supported by local volunteer organisations and grant funding.	Facilitate
B2.2	Identify opportunities to leverage Ballina's extensive open space network as a major sport and recreation event hub (such as marathon/triathlons, surfing, water sports, cycling), as a basis for growing recreational tourism.	Stronger visitor economy.	- Identifying measures to attract large scale sport and recreation events and/or training facilities. - Identifying grant opportunities to fund works. - Undertaking strategic investments in open space infrastructure to support major recreational events. - Investigate options for facilitating temporary accommodation in association with major events, including the temporary expansion of existing camping grounds.	Plan  Facilitate Deliver
B2.3	Continue to invest in strategic road infrastructure to ensure Ballina's road network continues to function efficiently into the future.	Improved road infrastructure for residents, businesses and visitors.	- Implementing Council's Strategic Road Network Plan, including strategic road connections between Lennox Head and Ballina and North Ballina and West Ballina, as well as lane duplications and intersection upgrades.	Deliver
B2.4	Encourage growth of accessible tourism by building on Ballina's natural accessibility and extensive tourism assets.	Stronger visitor economy.	- Undertaking an accessibility audit of Council infrastructure (including pathway networks and coastal access) and encourage the same by local businesses, to identify opportunities to improve disability access in the public and private realms; - Promoting accessible tourist activities, venues and accommodation options through Council's tourist information outlets and promotional media.	Plan  Facilitate
B2.5	Promote opportunities associated with the	Growing	- Preparing an Economic Development Strategy which	Plan



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
	availability of industrial land in proximity to the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport and the Pacific and Bruxner Highways.	employment opportunities.	identifies opportunities to promote the clustering of industrial land uses that are compatible with the ongoing growth of the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport. - Establish a program to identify and encourage new industries that provide employment and harness opportunities around emerging technologies, food production, alternative energy production, advanced/specialist manufacturing (3D printing) and the like.	
B2.6	Support the development of transport logistics infrastructure and facilities, to leverage Ballina's strategic transport advantages (associated with the airport and highways).	Growing business opportunities.	- Providing for the private commercial development of transport logistics infrastructure, through appropriate land use zoning. - Ensuring that large scale industrial and commercial development in association with the Pacific and Bruxner Highways do not detract from the visual amenity of the entrance to Ballina.	Plan
B2.7	Support the development of regional arts events to add value to the tourist offering in Ballina.		- Continuing to promote and support the growth of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery.	Deliver / Facilitate
B2.8	Support the establishment of a quality, dedicated conferencing facilities as a means for supporting conference/training destination tourism in Ballina.	Stronger visitor economy.	- Working with appropriate public and private parties to facilitate the establishment of improved capacity for holding major conferences in Ballina, as a means for encouraging conference/training destination tourism.	Facilitate / Advocate
B2.9	Establish an RV Park to accommodate overnight stays by recreation vehicles, in a low impact manner.	Stronger visitor economy. Reduced impact from unregulated informal overnight visitors.	- Identifying, in consultation with the RV industry, a suitable location and facilities for the accommodation of overnight stays by recreational vehicles (campervans and the like), incorporating waste disposal and water access, in a low impact way with minimal facilities. - Facilitating the establishment of an RV Park, including appropriate management arrangements.	Deliver
B2.10	Establish a major event space in West Ballina, to facilitate major sporting and cultural festivals and events.	Stronger visitor economy.	- Identifying an appropriate location for a major event space, in the proximity of West Ballina, having appropriate access and site conditions. - Facilitating the establishment of a major event space, including appropriate management arrangements. - Address of this concept in developer contributions planning for the shire.	Facilitate / Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
<b>Objective B3 - Encourage activity in the Ballina CBD to stimulate more vibrant street life.</b>				
B3.1	Engage in active place-making and CBD activation by facilitating a range of pop-up infrastructure and activities to bring more life and vitality to the CBD.	<p>More life and activity in the CBD.</p> <p>Improved environment for CBD businesses.</p> <p>Enabling flexible use of public spaces suited to the particular needs of users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a trial CBD activation program to encourage a range of activities (such as concerts and street performers, outdoor cinema, markets and mobile food vendors) and provide supporting infrastructure (such as mobile seating, bench seats, games, laneway activation, outdoor libraries and permanent and temporary public art).</li> <li>- Working with local businesses to encourage a sense of stewardship over public spaces immediately adjacent to their premises.</li> <li>- Surveying businesses on the success of the trial program.</li> <li>- Identifying funding options for the establishment of a recurrent program budget, if the program is supported.</li> </ul>	<p>Deliver</p> <p>Facilitate</p>
B3.2	Create a civic centre precinct incorporating features such as a town square, Council administration, gallery, library, meeting rooms and performance space in association with the development of cafes and compatible retail uses.	A central hub to focus civic activities and promote networking in the public domain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertaking a site options assessment and design analysis for the establishment of a civic precinct within the Ballina CBD.</li> <li>- Undertaking community engagement to support the identification of desirable inclusions in a civic precinct.</li> <li>- Securing funding.</li> <li>- Constructing the centre in a staged manner as funding becomes available.</li> </ul>	<p>Plan</p> <p>Deliver</p>
B3.3	Encourage new CBD developments to orientate, where possible, to the Richmond River through the introduction of precinct specific development controls and incentives.	A more active and lively river frontage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertaking a detailed design analysis of key properties adjacent to the Richmond River to identify measures to encourage suitable redevelopment that addresses the river front.</li> <li>- Consideration of development incentives, such as car-parking concessions, allowing residential flat buildings, in exchange for a more active and engaged frontage to the Richmond River.</li> <li>- Liaising with key landholders to encourage them to consider opportunities for the redevelopment of their sites.</li> </ul>	<p>Plan</p> <p>Facilitate</p>
B3.4	Work with land owners of vacant shops to facilitate their temporary use as "pop-up shops" for emerging innovative and artistic small businesses.	<p>Countering the negative impact of vacant shops.</p> <p>Assisting new business start-ups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with a suitable business or not-for-profit organisation to act as a liaison agent between landholders and potential pop-up shop tenants.</li> </ul>	Facilitate



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
B3.5	Encourage footpath dining (and other commercial use of footpaths) in the Ballina CBD, where appropriate, through the introduction of a streamlined approvals process and standardised fee structure.	More activity and life in the CBD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviewing existing regulatory arrangements for commercial use of footpaths.</li> <li>- Streamlining and simplify the requirements and process involved in obtaining an approval for footpath dining and commercial use of footpaths.</li> </ul>	Action
B3.6	Enable flexibility in the use of non-fill measures to address flood mitigation for commercial developments in the CBD, to limit the extent of ramps required and so provide for ease of access into shops and commercial properties.	Improved accessibility to CBD properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering the potential use of such measures as limited floor raising and use of flood-compatible materials.</li> <li>- Amending the development control plan to provide flexibility in flood mitigation measures required in association with new commercial developments.</li> </ul>	Plan
B3.7	Consolidate existing commercial development opportunities in CBD rather than relying on lateral expansion.	A strong and vibrant CBD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintaining the status of the CBD as Ballina's commercial core in Council's hierarchy of land use plans and policies.</li> </ul>	Plan
B3.8	Encourage residential development in the CBD to bring more life and activity to Ballina's commercial centre, particularly in the evenings.	More life and activity in the CBD, particularly after dark.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering opportunities to provide more flexibility in the design of new CBD developments that incorporate residential components, including the redefinition of "shop-top housing" in the LEP.</li> </ul>	Plan
B3.9	Encourage CBD redevelopment through the investigation of a contribution payment deferral program for CBD commercial developments.	Redevelopment of dilapidated CBD buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering allowing deferral of development contributions payments from construction certificate stage until occupation certificate stages, to free up developers cash-flow and so improve the deliverability of development projects.</li> </ul>	Plan / Deliver
<b>Objective B4 - Attract innovative and creative people and businesses that build on and complement Ballina's core competencies and strategic assets (economic, social &amp; environmental).</b>				
B4.1	Promote Ballina's strategic economic assets to a wider audience through the preparation of an economic development strategy and/or prospectus and online.	<p>Increased awareness of Ballina's economic strengths.</p> <p>Improved business attraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting, through various media and Council publications, Ballina's key strengths and strategic economic assets.</li> </ul>	Plan
B4.2	Promote digital readiness for local business, through local information and training events.	Improved business capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with TAFE, RDA and NSW Trade and Investment to develop, support and/or promote programs to support business digital readiness.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
B4.3	Maintain pressure on NBN Co. and the Federal Government for delivery of high speed broadband to Ballina.	Improved internet connectivity.	- Making representations to NBN Co. and the Federal Government, as necessary, to support the early delivery of high speed broadband to Ballina, noting the importance of internet access to the development of Ballina as a major regional centre.	Facilitate / Advocate
B4.4	Identify and promote business opportunities associated with Ballina's relative 'drought-proof' status, facilitated by Council's recycled water program.	Improved business attraction.	- Incorporating information about the business opportunities that Council's recycled water program provides, into appropriate marketing and promotional material.	Facilitate / Advocate
B4.5	Support food-related events and activities that contribute to the development a strong local food culture.	Stronger local food culture.  Improved business opportunities.	- Identifying and preparing public spaces (through embellishments and infrastructure) that are appropriate for major and minor public events. - Supporting food-related festivals and public events and activities.	Facilitate / Advocate
B4.6	Encourage face-to-face and online networking of local businesses to promote collaboration and innovation.	Improved networking in local business community.	- Working with local businesses to facilitate networking opportunities for business and industry, through face-to-face interaction and appropriate online platforms.	Facilitate / Advocate
B4.7	Pursue opportunities for the development of a food value-adding industry cluster in the Southern Cross Industrial Estate.	Improved business opportunities.	- Liaising with the food value-added industry to identify measures to encourage the establishment of a food cluster in the Southern Cross Industrial Estate.	Deliver
<b>CHARACTER, CULTURE AND AMENITY</b>				
<b>Objective C1 - Foster social cohesion and build our community's capacity to respond to change.</b>				
C1.1	Encourage community and cultural groups and clubs that contribute to community cohesion.	Greater social cohesion.	- Providing appropriate and affordable community facilities, incorporating meeting rooms/spaces, to meet the needs of local community and organisations. - Facilitating the appropriate use of public land by community organisations that contribute to, and build the capacity of, Ballina's community and cultural life. - Targeting Council's community donations program to reflect the objectives of this plan and Council's Community Strategic Plan.	Facilitate / Advocate

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
C1.2	Encourage local participation in community festivals and events.	Stronger social networks.  Vibrant local event culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating community festivals and events, through the necessary approvals processes.</li> <li>- Providing appropriate event space/s suitable for large public events and festivals.</li> <li>- Continuation and periodic review of Council's Festival and Events Support Program.</li> <li>- Promoting local festivals and events through Council media.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate  Deliver
C1.3	Encourage healthy lifestyle culture through the provision and promotion of open space infrastructure that encourages outdoor activity.	Healthier community.  Improved quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extending and augmenting the shared pathway network to increase the options available for high amenity active recreation.</li> <li>- Providing embellishments and active infrastructure, such as exercise stations, bike storage, boat ramps and small watercraft storage, at key locations in the open space network.</li> <li>- Promoting the use of open space infrastructure through appropriate media.</li> </ul>	Deliver
C1.4	Encourage activity by people with impaired mobility through appropriate accessible infrastructure.	Healthier community.  Improved quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertaking an accessibility audit of public infrastructure including CBD footpaths, shared pathways and amenities, and making improvements where necessary to facilitate access by all members of the community.</li> <li>- Providing dementia-friendly way-finding signage within the shared pathway network.</li> </ul>	Deliver
C1.5	Ensure health facilities keep pace with the needs of our community.	Healthier community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaising with health authorities to ensure healthcare facilities and services keep pace with local needs.</li> <li>- Supporting innovation in the provision of allied and community-based health services.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
C1.6	Work with tertiary educators to identify key skills gaps in local industry and to expand training opportunities to cater to this need.	Increased training and employment opportunities for young workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interrogating local economic data to identify skills gaps in the local employment market.</li> <li>- Liaising with local educational establishments to encourage development of courses to respond to identified skills gaps.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
C1.7	Deliver relevant, exciting and targeted environmental programs that engage with the values and interests of our community and broaden the understanding of environmental processes and ecosystems, and their value.	Improved environmental awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying gaps in our community's understanding of local ecosystems and environmental processes.</li> <li>- Obtaining grant funds for environmental education and rehabilitation.</li> <li>- Delivering environmental education programs and environmental works that enhance the local environment and our community's understanding of it.</li> </ul>	Deliver
C1.8	Support local schools and educational establishments into becoming community hubs.	Improved social cohesion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with the Department of Education to seek to ensure that school-related infrastructure works (including the Ballina High School redevelopment) have the potential to cater to local needs, and are made accessible to the local</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
			community. - Engendering stronger links between local educational establishments and our community.	
Objective C2 - Provide public spaces and facilities that contribute the cultural identity of Ballina and enhance sense of place.				
C2.1	Incorporate public art and lighting installations into public spaces and infrastructure.	Improved amenity.  More developed arts culture.	- Considering opportunities for public art whenever public infrastructure projects are being planned and designed. - Establish and implement a public art plan. - Examination of opportunities for incorporation of indigenous cultural elements into the public domain.	Deliver
C2.2	Facilitate networking within the public domain, through the provision of infrastructure and activities that encourages people to linger.	Improved street life.	- Engaging in place-making focussed around encouraging people to linger in public spaces, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure (such as seating and games), community events and activities (such as busking). - Enabling the flexible use of public spaces through the provision of movable furniture in appropriate locations. - Identify and promote activity centres.	Deliver
C2.3	Improve the perception of safety of public areas, particularly at night.	Improved sense of safety.	- In consultation with Police and the community, identifying areas where people feel unsafe, particularly at night, and making improvements to lighting and casual surveillance.	Deliver
C2.4	Embellish appropriate public spaces to facilitate their use as venues for large and small public events.	More life and activity in public places.	- Providing appropriate infrastructure in key open space areas, to enable them to accommodate public events, including seating, amenities, parking, spaces for mobile vendors and performance spaces. - Facilitating the Kingsford Smith Park / Missingham Park / Commemoration Park / Spit precinct as a major event space.	Deliver
C2.5	Provide interpretive signage in association with public spaces and pathways that contribute to historic, cultural and environmental understanding.	Improved understanding of culture, history and place.	- Providing interpretive signage in association with the shared pathway network and key public areas that provide information about the historic, cultural and environmental context of the place. - Incorporating information regarding the Indigenous and European cultural heritage of place into Council interpretive signage and other media.	Deliver
C2.6	Provide gateway and locality signage consistent with the vision of this plan and community identity.	Improved amenity and sense of place.	- Providing gateway signage at key entry points to Ballina, that is attractive and reflective of Ballina's character.	Deliver
Objective C3 - Preserve and promote local history and cultural heritage that contributes to our collective sense of place.				

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
C3.1	Actively protect and promote sites of local environmental and Indigenous and European cultural heritage significance.	Improved awareness of our local cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researching items/places identified as requiring further research to determine heritage values for heritage listing consideration.</li> <li>- Continuing to respond to community requests to list bona-fide heritage items in the shire in Council's local environmental plan (LEP) as heritage items.</li> </ul>	Plan  Deliver
C3.2	Foster the retention of our historic built environment, through conservation, development incentives and/or adaptive re-use.	Maintaining our local cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researching items/places identified as requiring further research to determine heritage values for heritage listing consideration.</li> <li>- Managing heritage values of Council-owned buildings through Heritage Advisor services.</li> <li>- Continuing to respond to community requests to list bona-fide heritage items in the shire in Council's local environmental plan (LEP) as heritage items.</li> <li>- Identifying development incentives to encourage retention of historic buildings and facades, and incorporating measures into the planning and regulatory framework.</li> </ul>	Plan  Facilitate / Advocate
C3.3	Encourage community based activities and events that engage with our history and local collections/museums, as well as artists and performers to tell these stories.	Improved awareness of our local cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encouraging local community groups to use community facilities (such as public stages, amphitheatre etc) to present performances and multi-media events that engage with our local history and cultural heritage.</li> <li>- Assist community groups to source grant funding to hold cultural activity and community events that promote our heritage, stories and unique features.</li> </ul>	Facilitate
C3.4	Recognise and promote heritage values of significant public places through interpretive signage or other interpretive opportunities.	Improved awareness of our local cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate war memorials for potential listing on State War Memorial Register.</li> <li>- Plan for new interpretive signage to showcase Ballina's natural and cultural heritage values, which complies with best practice interpretation guidelines, complements existing interpretation and is innovative and/or creative.</li> <li>- Encouraging the development of local history tours (land &amp; water based).</li> </ul>	Deliver
C3.5	Develop an agreement with Aboriginal community representatives on protocols for promoting Aboriginal culture of the Ballina Shire.	Improved awareness of our local cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a protocol for how Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values are considered and promoted in Council's operations.</li> <li>- Integrating Aboriginal cultural heritage into public spaces and infrastructure through information, stories, artworks and language.</li> </ul>	Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
<b>Objective C4 - Protect and enhance the qualities that contribute to the amenity and character of Ballina.</b>				
C4.1	Undertake a strategic tree planting program along key pedestrian movement corridors and linking open space areas, beaches and commercial areas.	Improved amenity.  Cooler environment during hot summer months.  Encouraging walking and cycling.	- Strategic street tree planting in locations shown on the Open Space Plan. - Cable bundling of overhead power lines in strategic locations, subject to obtaining grant funding.	Deliver  Facilitate
C4.2	Implement amenity treatments to key gateways and entrances to improve the amenity when entering Ballina.	Improved amenity.  Improved tourist attraction.	- Implement planned 'gateway treatments' comprising signage and street tree planting at key locations entering Ballina township, in accordance with the Ballina Gateway Project.	Deliver
C4.3	Preserve the natural assets that contribute to the amenity of Ballina, including natural stands of vegetation, wetlands and waterway features.	Maintaining amenity and character.	- Maintaining adequate protections for natural areas and ecosystems through appropriate land use zoning and development controls.	Deliver
C4.4	Maintain the existing planning framework for controlling the bulk and scale of buildings, whereby taller buildings are limited to CBD areas and in proximity to open space areas away from the water's edge and coastal reserve, with low density development predominating elsewhere.	Maintaining amenity and character.	- Consciously maintaining the status quo with respect to the hierarchy of development densities in Ballina. - Supporting the provision of higher density housing (not 'high rise') in the proximity of the CBD, by liaising with key landholders to encourage them to consider opportunities for the redevelopment of their sites. - Investigating opportunities for increased residential densities (not 'high rise') in proximity to open space areas, but that are away from the water's edge and the coastal reserve.	Plan
C4.5	Enhance the amenity of the shared pathway network and improve public access to waterways by extending riparian pathways and boardwalks at key locations as shown on the Open Space Plan.	Improved public access to waterways.	- Extending the shared pathway network in key locations to improve connectivity.	Deliver





## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
			<p>public programs independent from the existing art gallery exhibition spaces and available for hire on a casual basis by the wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and source funding to establish and promote 'Art Space' artist studios.</li> </ul>	
D1.5	Foster the development of a regional arts culture.	Developing local arts and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extending professional development programs associated with the Northern Rivers Community Gallery, such as artist workshops, panel discussions, artist master classes. (i.e. term-based art classes, visiting artist master classes).</li> <li>- Establishing an ephemeral biennial community public art event.</li> <li>- Identifying and develop partnerships with other key arts industry or organisations to support local creative industry.</li> <li>- Promoting 'Studio Artists' workshops through Gallery marketing and PR channels.</li> <li>- Expanding the Gallery Shop (on-site and other satellite venues i.e. Ballina Byron Gateway Airport) to support local artists.</li> <li>- Networking with Ballina Chamber of Commerce and local business to establish a 'creative pop-up program' for disused commercial spaces in the Ballina CBD (i.e. Renew Newcastle).</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
D1.6	Promote our existing cultural assets, including gallery, naval museum, community garden, and memorial pool and water slide.	Developing local arts and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing to promote the shire's cultural assets through online and print media.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
D1.7	Ensure that people undergoing personal hardship have access to facilities and services needed to support them out of hardship.	Improved access to social support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In consultation with local service providers and agencies, identifying opportunities to support the needs of people undergoing personal hardship, such as the provision of showers and supporting the delivery of direct services by other agencies.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate / Deliver
D1.8	Facilitate the provision of appropriate neighbourhood centre facilities to assist the community's access to social services and support.	Improved access to social support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with appropriate Non-Government Organisations to establish and manage a neighbourhood centre, where residents and visitors can access information, referrals and personal development opportunities in association with accessing a wide range of social services and support.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
<b>Objective D2 - Ensure that transport infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of our community, tourism and industry.</b>				
D2.1	Deliver strategic road network connections between North Ballina and Lennox Head (North Creek Road) and between North Ballina and West Ballina (Western Arterial).	Improved road connectivity. Reduced through traffic load in Ballina Island.	- Delivering strategic road connections in accordance with Council's Road Network Strategy, funded predominantly by new development, through Council's Roads Contributions Plan.	Deliver
D2.2	Undertake an audit of car parking demand and supply within the Ballina CBD and ensure sufficient car parking spaces are available to meet growing demands.	Maintaining a high level of accessibility.	- Auditing existing car parking vacancy rates during peak periods; - Identifying projected parking demand. - Planning for additional parking facilities, to be funded through development contributions plans. - Constructing additional car parking facilities as funds become available.	Deliver
D2.3	Facilitate the provision of a freight transport logistics centre in an appropriate location with good accessibility to highway and airport infrastructure.	Improved business opportunities.	- Facilitating appropriate land use zoning on an appropriate site.	Facilitate
D2.4	Facilitate improved public transport options.	Improved accessibility.	- Working with the NSW Government and local public transport providers to improve the timetabling and routes available that are more amenable to the daily needs of local people. - Provide improved public transport infrastructure (shelters) at key locations in the network, as shown on the Open Space Plan.	Facilitate / Advocate
D2.5	Work with local businesses to promote car-pooling.	Improved access options.	- Working with local businesses to promote and raise awareness of the Northern Rivers Car-Pooling Service.	Facilitate / Advocate
D2.6	Facilitate improvements to infrastructure to facilities cycling for commuting.		- Ensuring that new infrastructure works facilitate safety for on road cycling, including adequate lane widths and not having up-right curbs at intersections. - Delivery and maintenance of commuter cycling network between Ballina and Lennox Head and between Ballina and Cumbalum.	Deliver
D2.7	Identify opportunities to implement 'smart cities' technology to provide cost effective, efficient and responsive solutions for Council service delivery and infrastructure.	Efficient infrastructure.	- Utilising 'smart cities' technology, where appropriate, in association with infrastructure delivery projects. Smart cities technologies are 'digital technologies or information and communication technologies (ICT) that enhance the quality and performance of urban services, to reduce costs and	Facilitate / Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
			<i>resource consumption, and to engage more effectively and actively with its citizens</i> . - Keeping up to date with emerging transport-related smart cities technologies, to facilitate timely and efficient implementation should such technologies become mainstreamed.	
D2.8	Expand airport infrastructure to cater to the growing demand for regional air transport.	Improved access.  Improved business opportunities.	- Expanding the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport terminal and apron. - Improving road access into the airport precinct. - Facilitating the expansion of airport related industrial opportunities on adjacent land.	Deliver
D2.9	Secure the Government's commitment for the construction of south-facing ramps on the Pacific Highway at Cumbalum.	Improved accessibility.	- Lobbying State and Federal Governments for the construction of south-facing ramps on the Pacific Highway at Cumbalum.	Facilitate / Advocate
<b>Objective D3 - Ensure that maritime infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of our community, tourism and maritime industry.</b>				
D3.1	Augment existing marina facilities to improve the availability and standard of boat mooring, storage and servicing facilities.	Improved opportunities for maritime activities.	- Encouraging the NSW Government to implement the Martin Street Boat Harbour Master Plan. - Encouraging the NSW Government to implement the Ballina Trawler Harbour Master Plan.	Facilitate / Advocate  Facilitate / Advocate
D3.2	Identify a preferred site for a large upstream marina facility and/or maritime industry precinct.	Improved opportunities for maritime activities.	- Working with key stakeholders, identify a preferred location for a large scale marina facility and/or maritime industry precinct. - Encouraging delivery of the project by State Government or the private sector.	Facilitate / Advocate
D3.3	Achieve a permanent solution to providing safe boat passage through the mouth of the Richmond River.	Improved opportunities for maritime activities.	- Continuing to work with key local stakeholders and the NSW Government and agencies to achieve a cost-effective solution to maintaining safe navigation through the mouth of the Richmond River.	Facilitate / Advocate
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>				
<b>Objective E1 - Maintain the natural values associated with Ballina's attractiveness as a lifestyle, tourist and business destination.</b>				
E1.1	Improve the management framework for the protection and enhancement of urban bushland.	Improved environmental quality.	- Identify high priority urban bushland rehabilitation. - Establish a coordinated management framework for delivery of urban bushland regeneration projects.	Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
E1.2	Improve and maintain the water quality of Emigrant Creek and North Creek.	Improved water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementing the Urban Stormwater Management Plan.</li> <li>- Supporting the improvement of riparian areas through targeted restoration projects undertaken in consultation with landholders and local landcare groups, funded through grants.</li> <li>- Supporting improved rural land management practices that impact on water quality.</li> </ul>	Deliver  Facilitate / Advocate
E1.3	Work with up-stream local governments, and other agencies, to improve and maintain water quality in the Richmond River.	Improved water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaising with up-stream local governments, and other agencies, to improve the water quality of the Richmond River.</li> <li>- Supporting the improvement of riparian areas through targeted restoration projects undertaken in consultation with landholders and local landcare groups, funded through grants.</li> <li>- Supporting improved rural land management practices that impact on water quality.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
E1.4	Map key ecosystem services through the preparation of a Biodiversity Strategy.	Improved environmental management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparing a biodiversity strategy that identifies and quantifies the positive contributions made by the natural environment, with respect to the social and economic wellbeing of Ballina and the shire.</li> <li>- Leveraging the strategy to obtain grant funding for the delivery of environmental projects.</li> </ul>	Plan  Facilitate / Advocate
<b>Objective E2 - Encourage the delivery of environmental sustainability within the community, business and government sectors.</b>				
E2.1	Utilise current best practice in the management of solid and liquid wastes, processed through Council's waste management and water treatment facilities.	Efficient and responsible waste management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing the manage wastes and recycling in a sustainable manner.</li> </ul>	Deliver
E2.2	Provide leadership in the implementation of clean energy technologies, where appropriate and cost effective to do so.	Improved environmental sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering the business case for solar and other alternative technologies which reduce reliance on energy intensive central supply for basic services and trial them where appropriate and cost effective in relation to Council infrastructure projects.</li> </ul>	Deliver
E2.3	Support cycling and walking as viable modes of transport by providing pathway and cycle-friendly infrastructure.	Improved environmental sustainability.  Healthier lifestyles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing upgrades being made to the shared pathway networks through the provision of additional cycle-friendly infrastructure such as cycle parking and community bike repair stations.</li> </ul>	Deliver

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
E2.4	Support environmental education measures to improve the community's understanding of the local environment.	Improved environmental awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing to deliver community environmental education programs in consultation with local groups and agencies.</li> <li>- Supporting the establishment of an eco/sustainability centre as a venue for environmental education.</li> </ul>	Deliver / Facilitate
<b>Objective E3 - Manage and mitigate the potential impacts associated with natural hazards.</b>				
E3.1	Plan and prepare for natural hazards that may adversely impact on our community.	Greater resilience to natural hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessing Ballina's vulnerabilities to natural hazards and implementing cost effective engineering responses to improve our community's resilience to those hazards.</li> <li>- Working with emergency response agencies to ensure emergency response and evacuation procedures are appropriate to the needs of Ballina's community, particularly the aged and vulnerable.</li> </ul>	Plan
E3.2	Consider the cost-benefits associated with a range of climate change response scenarios, relating to potential sea level rise and coastal erosion, having regard for practicality, cost and flexibility.	Greater resilience to natural hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering a range of long term options for responding to potential climate change impacts including planned retreat, built defences (such as tidal gates and levies), land filling/raising, over the medium and long term scales.</li> <li>- Identifying equitable and viable funding mechanisms for options that involve the construction of public works and infrastructure in response to the potential climate change scenarios.</li> </ul>	Plan
E3.3	Plan for climate change adaptation for residential buildings over the short to medium term.	Greater resilience to natural hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering a range of options including allowing raised timber floor construction methods for housing in response to flooding and sea level rise considerations.</li> </ul>	Plan
E3.4	Retrofit stormwater infrastructure to mitigate the adverse impacts associated with high tides and heavy or prolonged rainfall events on vehicle movement and private properties.	Greater resilience to natural hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigating options for mitigating coastal processes on Ballina's stormwater drainage system and implement where practical and cost-effective.</li> </ul>	Plan / Deliver
<b>HOUSING</b>				
<b>Objective F1 - To ensure that the future housing stock is appropriate, accessible and affordable.</b>				
F1.1	Encourage increased residential development in the Ballina CBD.	<p>More active CBD.</p> <p>Greater housing choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering policy incentives to encourage more housing in the CBD.</li> <li>- Considering opportunities to provide more flexibility in the design of new CBD developments that incorporate residential components, such as redefining "shop-top housing" in the LEP to allow housing that is not directly or entirely above the commercial part of the development.</li> </ul>	Plan / Facilitate

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Reference	Action	The benefits will be...	This will involve...	Action Category
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating a range of residential development options to cater to young people and the elderly in the CBD.</li> <li>- Considering ways to manage potential land use conflict with CBD living and night life activities.</li> <li>- Liaising with key CBD landholders to encourage them to consider opportunities for the redevelopment of their sites.</li> </ul>	
F1.2	Ensure suitable and adequate housing opportunities are available to cater to the diverse needs of our community.	<p>More active CBD.</p> <p>Greater housing choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating higher density dwelling opportunities (but not "high rise"), through appropriate land use zoning and/or amended development controls, in targeted locations, adjacent to open space but away from direct water frontage, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Within the CBD, including redefined 'shop-top housing';</li> <li>o Adjacent to Kingsford Smith Park, in the vicinity of Owen Street;</li> <li>o In the vicinity of the Trawler Harbour in West Ballina; and</li> <li>o In the vicinity of Treelands Crescent.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Identifying appropriate sites for additional seniors living developments, including multi-storey seniors housing in the CBD, and facilitating their development through precinct specific development controls and other measures.</li> <li>- Encouraging the construction of secondary dwellings ("granny flats") within existing low density residential areas.</li> <li>- Revisiting the viability and capacity for permitting increased opportunities for dual occupancy development in Ballina in five years' time.</li> </ul>	Plan / Facilitate
F1.3	Work with State housing authorities and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to deliver demonstration affordable housing projects.	<p>Improved housing affordability.</p> <p>Improved social equity and diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pro-actively working with State Government housing agencies and Non-Government Organisations to facilitate the construction of demonstration affordable housing developments.</li> <li>- Identifying opportunities for Council to be directly involved in the development of demonstration affordable housing projects, as a commercial venture with social benefits.</li> </ul>	Facilitate / Advocate
F1.4	Facilitate sustainable residential construction, by removing barriers to innovation.	Improved sustainability for housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amending planning and engineering requirements that inhibit dwellings in urban areas from going "off-grid".</li> <li>- Reinforcing planning provisions that encourage sustainable housing outcomes.</li> </ul>	Plan / Facilitate
F1.5	Allow flexible responses to flood mitigation, rather than relying on filling solutions. Consider permitting non filling solutions for flood-affected lots which encourage the raising of dwellings.	Greater resilience to natural hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing for options such as pier and beam construction and use of light-weight materials for smaller residential buildings, and taller buildings with ground level car parking that can withstand flooding.</li> </ul>	Plan

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

### Action Categories

The following section outlines the kinds of actions Council will take to respond and prepare Ballina as it transitions into being a major regional centre.

Action Category	Explanation	Will typically involve	Timeframe/responsibility
<i>Plan</i>	Further work required in relation to options, consultation, location, spatial arrangement, costing and funding sources (where costs are likely to be high) or impact is likely to be significant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigating options and opportunities associated with the issue.</li> <li>- Engaging with key stakeholders to resolve major issues and/or identify the preferred approach.</li> <li>- Incorporation of preferred solution / approach into appropriate Council plans / strategies.</li> </ul>	Delivery possibly beyond the timeframe of the strategy unless "special" access to resources becomes available.
<i>Facilitate/Advocate</i>	Purpose is to support an initiative or outcome as opposed to direct delivery of, or planning for, an outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging with key stakeholders to identify the role Council may play to facilitate the preferred outcome, where Council is not the actioning party.</li> <li>- Providing opportunities for other parties to deliver outcomes by removing barriers, providing 'enabling infrastructure' and/or providing appropriate licensing arrangements.</li> <li>- May involve lobbying other levels of government where appropriate in terms of land ownership, funding or statutory powers.</li> </ul>	Delivery not the responsibility of Council but Council may have a facilitation role.
<i>Deliver</i>	Further work required in relation to detailed design, detailed costing and consultation with those directly impacted by the proposal (including immediate neighbours, user groups etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparing detailed designs in consultation with key stakeholders;</li> <li>- Developing detailed project budgets;</li> <li>- Identifying easy first steps to enable early implementation of key aspects at relatively low cost, with overall project delivered over the timeframe of the strategy in stages;</li> <li>- Identifying/obtaining funds for the works;</li> <li>- Constructing works, in a staged manner, as funds become available.</li> </ul>	Delivery within the timeframe of the strategy.

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

### Prioritisation and Funding

The actions identified in this strategy will be considered for incorporation into Council's Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan by the elected Council as these plans are reviewed.

The prioritisation and funding of actions identified in this strategy will be determined by the Council as part of its regular review of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Opportunities for obtaining funding from other sources will also be explored, including:

- Government grants;
- Special rates variations and levies;
- Direct user charges;
- Investment income;
- Developer contributions;
- Asset recycling;
- Commercialising infrastructure projects;
- Voluntary planning agreements;
- Commercial development; and
- Voluntary community funding ("Crowd Funding").



The suitability of the above funding strategies will vary from project to project. The identification of appropriate funding sources will be investigated as the BMRCS actions are considered for incorporation into Council's Operational and Delivery Plan.

A key advantage of having the Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy in place is that the strategy clearly outlines the community's aspirations for the future of Ballina. This provides a valuable platform for Council seeking grant funding support from other sources.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Ensuring this Strategy remains contemporary and reflective of the community's aspirations will be an important aspect of the 20 year strategy. The periodic review of the strategy's outcomes will help determine if these outcomes continue to reflect the community's needs and desires in terms of the current issues and concerns of the time. Feedback from the review process can then be used to



## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

adjust the actions of the strategy if required to better address these needs. It is suggested that this review process could occur every four years to coincide with Council's broader four year planning cycle.

The ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the strategy could be achieved through means including:

- Branding and active tracking of BMRCS initiatives for community awareness.
- Ongoing use of social media and conventional media to keep the community informed of progress.
- Engagement with the project Civic Panel on an annual basis.
- Annual reporting on progress for at least the first 3 years.



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## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

### Possible Funding Sources for Future Planning and Infrastructure Delivery

Funding Source	Issues	Applicability
<b>Traditional Local Government Funding Sources</b>		
<b>Rates – General (s494 LGA)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New infrastructure projects funded from general rate revenue would need to compete with other projects that are a part of Council's Capital works Program.</li> <li>2. Long lead up periods before works are funded can be expected.</li> <li>3. Funding from general rate revenue cannot be guaranteed in the short term i.e. below 5 years and would in any case be subject to an annual prioritisation process.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unlikely to be a significant funding source for the creation of new assets associated with the BMRCS due to its use to fund existing programs and maintenance of current assets.</li> </ol>
<b>Rates – Special Variation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is an amount above the annual rate increase limit set by the Minister (rate cap) and increases total rate revenue.</li> <li>2. Infrastructure works would need to be costed and broad community engagement and support obtained prior to an application for a special rate variation being lodged.</li> <li>3. Office of Local Government and IPART approval is required.</li> <li>4. Given Council has sought a special rate variation for the 2015/16 financial year it may not be realistic to expect new capital works associated with the BMRCS to be funded through this option in the short term.</li> <li>5. There is also an equity argument around why existing ratepayers should fund works to transform Ballina into a major regional centre.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subject to broad community support for the funding of a range of new assets associated with the BMRCS a special rates variation could be advocated. Given Council has applied for a special rates variation for 2015/16 another variation proposal in the short term – up to 5 years may not be supported.</li> <li>2. Reliance on special rate variations to fund new community assets may result in significant delays to the delivery of proposed assets.</li> </ol>

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Funding Source	Issues	Applicability
<b>Special Rate (s495 LGA)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can be applied to fund a project or for a service. It can be applied to those owners that will benefit from the works or services, that contribute to the need for the works or services or those that will have or access the works or services.</li> <li>2. Consultation with owners impacted required.</li> <li>3. Special rates are more targeted than general rates and are generally applicable in cases where the works or services do not have a broader whole of community benefit.</li> <li>4. Special rates are included within the definition of general income and are therefore part of the Minister's annual general income increase determination. Therefore no net increase in overall rating income results when a special rate is adopted. (see s505 and 506 LGA).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As an example a special rate could be applied to all property owners within the floodplain to fund flood mitigation works. If the special rate were to be the basis for seeking a special rate variation then general income would be increased as opposed to a redistribution of rates without an increase in general income. These additional rates could then fund specific works and services.</li> </ol>
<b>Annual Charges for stormwater management or coastal protection works (s496A and 496B).</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stormwater levies can only be applied to residential and business properties. In the case of residential properties the charge is limited to \$25 per annum unless a strata in which case it is \$12.50.</li> <li>2. Ballina Council has levied an annual stormwater management charge since 2007/8 but does not currently levy for coastal protection works.</li> <li>3. These charges are not restricted by the Ministers general income increase determination made pursuant to s506 LGA.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subject to Council preparing a schedule of works that require funding then a coastal protection works levy could be used as an appropriate funding source.</li> <li>2. In the event that coastal protection works are presently being funded from general rate revenue then an opportunity may be provided to redirect such freed up funds elsewhere.</li> </ol>

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Funding Source	Issues	Applicability
<b>Direct user Charges</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May be applied to existing assets to fund new assets, to new assets to repay loans or to maintain assets.</li> <li>2. A clear nexus should be established between the fee charged and its funding of a new asset class.</li> <li>3. Community support for charge should be obtained to avoid politicisation of pricing policy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A business plan should be developed where new asset such as an indoor sporting and aquatics centre are proposed to be funded through user charges. Depending on likely rates of return it may be viable to consider building some new asset classes based on anticipated revenue streams.</li> <li>2. Office of Local Government approval may be required where Council's borrowing limits will be exceeded.</li> <li>3. Existing assets such as foreshore car parks may have user charges applied to fund new assets. For example beachside parking at Lighthouse Beach could be metered to fund park improvements in Pop Denison Park or beach improvement works.</li> </ol>
<b>Government Grants</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Availability of grants varies from year to year.</li> <li>2. Lack of certainty regarding availability of grants.</li> <li>3. Matching funds often required.</li> <li>4. Requires ability to commence work within a specified time period. Often this requires projects to have been documented and be ready to go at time grant funding is sought.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grants are a valuable source of funding.</li> <li>2. Grants may bring forward anticipated delivery dates for specific assets and to that extent should be a part of funding strategies.</li> <li>3. Grants should not be exclusively relied upon when developing a funding strategy.</li> </ol>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dependent on having and holding cash reserves.</li> <li>2. Investment income is reliant on variable rates of return with higher rates generally increasing exposure of cash assets to risk.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council typically holds cash reserves for various reasons.</li> <li>2. Term deposit type investments offer a low risk income on cash reserves that are being held.</li> <li>3. Can act as 'top up' type income.</li> </ol>

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Funding Source	Issues	Applicability
<b>Section 94 Contributions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These funds are allocated towards projects contained within the work schedules which accompany the s94 plan.</li> <li>2. Availability of funds relates to level of development activity.</li> <li>3. Nexus is required between the works proposed to be funded and the demand generated by the development being levied.</li> <li>4. Existing backlogs in services cannot be funded only additional demand created by new development. May require significant Council co-contributions (apportionment).</li> <li>5. Cap on level of s94 contributions applicable to residential development of \$20K or \$30K for new Cumbalum release area. For non-residential development cap relates to % of development cost. Max contribution 1% if development cost \$200K or more.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. S94 funds can generally only be used to fund works nominated within the s94 plan.</li> <li>2. May require a review of s94 plans to incorporate new infrastructure projects associated with the BMRCs. This may however result in the displacement of some existing projects.</li> <li>3. There may be long lead times associated with the delivery of assets that rely on funding from s94 funds.</li> </ol>
<b>Non Traditional Local Government Funding Sources</b>		
<b>Asset Recycling</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involves sale or lease of an existing asset to fund a new asset (Privatisation).</li> <li>2. Requires case by case assessment of existing Council assets to determine suitability.</li> <li>3. May be misinterpreted by the public and politicised. Requires strong communication effort and a united Council to pursue.</li> <li>4. Numerous examples of surplus open space land sales not being well received by the public exist in other LGAs.</li> <li>5. Asset recycling does however have merit and warrants further examination.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potentially a good source of funding for new infrastructure assets. Subject to careful evaluation of the asset proposed to be recycled to assess suitability and public benefit in what is proposed.</li> </ol>

## 4.1 Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy

Funding Source	Issues	Applicability
<b>Commercialising Infrastructure Projects</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Significant public benefits can be realised if the planning for new assets incorporates consideration of how parts of the project could be commercialised to fund the building of the asset and its long term maintenance.</li> <li>2. Suitable commercialised asset proposals may also be used to justify an increase in otherwise applicable borrowing limits.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has applicability to most infrastructure asset proposals. For example a town square could incorporate commercial kiosks and advertising structures. Play equipment could be sponsored.</li> <li>2. Could also be applied to existing assets to fund new or related assets.</li> </ol>
<b>Planning Agreements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These may be negotiated with developers at the development application or rezoning stage and may be negotiated to fund works that have a public benefit. The key issue here is that they must be entered into on a voluntary basis.</li> <li>2. Planning agreements should not be relied upon as an exclusive means of securing public assets and amenities as there is no certainty surrounding the entering into of such agreements.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning agreements provide an additional opportunity through which infrastructure and amenities which have an identifiable public purpose may be funded.</li> <li>2. Rezoning proposals could trigger a negotiation process designed to unlock the private benefits associated with such proposals so as to fund projects with a public benefit.</li> </ol>
<b>Commercial Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the potential to deliver substantial benefits through an enhanced income stream but also involves risk.</li> <li>2. Diversifies Council's income sources.</li> <li>3. Council is a competitor in the land and property market which can create potential conflict of interest issues.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council has substantial industrial land supplies, various commercial properties and some residential land holdings. Council has an active commercial services portfolio that manages this area of Council's activity.</li> <li>2. Council's employment land holdings near the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport has the potential to provide the community with a substantial financial benefit and delivery of new infrastructure.</li> </ol>
<b>Voluntary Community Funding (e.g. "Crowd Funding")</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involves the community or other beneficiaries providing small or large grants of cash, property or services to Council for delivery of projects.</li> <li>2. Unreliable and intermittent income source but it has the potential to enable delivery of substantial projects and long term benefits to the community.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council has historically been fortunate to receive bequeaths from estates but this is unusual.</li> <li>2. New funding types like crowd funding have potential to introduce new sources of income and provide for special projects.</li> <li>3. Having a long term vision for Ballina may encourage members of the community to commit resources or 'gift' the community to help achieve the vision.</li> </ol>

## **4.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Environmental Protection Zones**

### **4.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Environmental Protection Zones**

**Delivery Program** Strategic Planning

**Objective** To provide the Committee with an overview of the outcomes of the State Government's E zone review for the NSW Far North Coast.

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#### **Background**

Ballina Shire Council engaged in the preparation of a comprehensive local environmental plan under the State Government's Standard LEP Instrument program between 2006 and 2013. This planning process was underpinned by a comprehensive and sustained community engagement program and considerable and careful deliberation by the elected Council and staff over a prolonged period.

Council resolved to endorse a new draft LEP for the shire in December 2011 and subsequently sought finalization and implementation of the draft plan through the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. Prior to Council's draft plan being finalised by the Department (it had received endorsement by the Department's regional office in Grafton) the then Minister for Planning, the Hon. Brad Hazzard made a decision to initiate a review of environmental protection zones in five local government areas on the Far North Coast. It is understood this intervention by the Minister was initiated at the request of the former Member for Ballina, Mr Page and the current Member for Lismore, Mr George.

The consequence of the Minister's decision was that Council's comprehensive LEP was only partly made, with areas identified as having environmental values excluded from the plan. These areas remain subject to the provisions of the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987 (being the instrument the new plan was to replace). Essentially, the Department did not complete the Standard LEP program for the affected council areas, as it had so strongly espoused.

The Department indicated that the "E zone review" review would be completed by March 2013, however it was not able to meet this timeframe. An interim report on the application of the E zones prepared by the State Government's Consultants, Parsons Brinkerhoff, was published for exhibition and comment in May 2014. Council responded to this with the identification of an extensive suite of shortcomings, errors and omissions within the report. This report has not been updated, nor the issues identified by Council addressed for the public record.

In October this year, some three years after the Minister's announcement and two and a half years late, the Department published its final recommendations report for the Northern Councils E Zone Review. The review recommendations do not align with Council's endorsed draft LEP from 2011 or with almost 30 years of environmental protection zoning history and identified environmental attributes and values in the Ballina Shire local government area.

## **4.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Environmental Protection Zones**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the key outcomes from the reporting for information and the public record. This report will be supported by a presentation to the Committee during the meeting.

### **Key Issues**

- Comprehensive local environmental plan for Ballina Shire.
- Environmental protection zoning under the local environmental plan.

### **Information**

Understandably, environmental protection zone matters are an emotional and often divisive consideration in planning. This is why the Council applied extensive resources over a period of five years to study, understand and contemplate environmental attributes and associated zoning in the shire before proceeding to endorse a new draft local environmental plan for implementation in December 2011.

The State Government's response to this was to remove environmental protection zones from Council's new plan prior to implementation. This decision means that Council currently operates two local environmental plans, with this incurring a financial and an administrative cost. It has also meant that numerous parties that would have been supported in their endeavours under the new plan (such as those interested in tourist and rural industry initiatives and those with dwelling entitlements on certain land) have not been able to progress their intentions.

It is evident from the reporting and limited information provided by the State Government for the duration of the E zone review that the specifics and technical underpinnings of the draft Ballina LEP 2012 have not been understood by the Department or its consultants. This is most evident in the interim reporting prepared by Parsons Brinkerhoff, with Council's concerns highlighted in its written response dated 27 June 2014.

In summary, staff's observations are that the E zone review process was poorly conceived, poorly designed and executed and lacked transparency and this reflects in the final recommendations. The process also failed to adequately address the history of zoning in Ballina Shire, the statutory planning framework under which the LEP was prepared (and that is still in force today), and the concept of environmental attributes beyond ecological values.

The State Government has now brought its review to a conclusion. The recommendations of the reporting essentially enable Council to apply environmental protection zoning only to areas of certain ecological character based on set criteria (as well as to culturally significant land from an Aboriginal cultural heritage perspective). Such zoning is also subject to the availability of certain evidence.

## **4.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Environmental Protection Zones**

For Ballina Shire, however, the review recommendations result in the loss of opportunity to apply environmental protection zones to areas on the basis of scenic and amenity value, coastal value, water catchment characteristics or urban buffer intentions. This is a substantial shift for Ballina Shire and one that causes significant change in long standing Council planning policy.

The above matters, as well as other elements of the Department's approach, are shown in an extract from the recommendations report listing the recommendations for the application of E zones contained in Attachment 1. The Department has indicated an intention to implement the recommendations report outcomes via a Ministerial Direction, although the Department has not been able to advise as to when this Direction is likely to be published.

The Department of Planning and Environment has also published a submissions report relating to the feedback received in response to the Parsons Brinkerhoff report. In the case of Ballina Shire, the report does not address the key issues raised by Council in its submissions in any depth and identified errors and omissions in the Parsons Brinkerhoff reporting have not been corrected.

Further to the above, the Department has continued to perpetuate inaccuracies in its documentation in relation to Ballina Shire through incorrect references. For example, the submissions reporting indicates that Ballina Shire Council sought a new zone to address coastal erosion and refers to the Ballina LEP 1987 having an urban buffer zone in the vicinity of Lennox Head and Skennars Head. Both of these references are incorrect and reflect the Department's poor understanding of the local planning framework and the rationale applied by Council to its 1987 and 2012 planning instruments.

Depending on the approach taken by the Council and how the Department chooses to apply the recommendations in practice, there could be significant resource implications. This is most likely in relation to validation of ecological characteristics in the event that the Department does not accept the work Council has previously undertaken.

There are numerous pathways available to Council to address the E zone review outcomes and these are briefly touched on in the Options section below.

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

The legal, resource and financial implications of the E zone review are dependent on the approach taken by Council. As outlined below, this report recommends that Council proceed to a briefing session to discuss the various options in detail.

### **Consultation**

No community engagement has been undertaken by Council to date in response to the State Government's reporting. It is anticipated that a comprehensive engagement program will be implemented should the Council decide to apply environmental protection zones under the Ballina LEP 2012.



### **Options**

There are several options available to the Council in response to the Northern Councils E Zone Review. These include the following:

- Do nothing and retain an approach that applies two LEPs to Ballina Shire, thereby retaining the suite of environmental protection zones under the Ballina LEP 1987.

This option has the advantage of retaining the status quo in terms of identifying a variety of environmental protection values in Ballina Shire. It has the disadvantage of requiring the ongoing administration of two plans and may not be acceptable to the Department of Planning and Environment.

- Apply environmental protection zones to areas of ecological and cultural heritage significance under the Ballina LEP 2012 and repeal the Ballina LEP 1987.

This option provides for compliance with the review outcomes, however it would mean focusing environmental protection zones only on ecological attributes (and only where evidence of those values has been verified). This would mean the community would forego the operation of urban buffer, scenic, water catchment and coastal zones in the local planning framework.

- Apply environmental protection zones to ecologically significant areas deferred from the Ballina LEP 2012 and retain the Ballina LEP 1987 over the other deferred areas.

This would provide for consistent address of ecologically important areas under the Ballina LEP 2012 in conformity with the E zone review as well as retain environmental protection zoning over other environmentally significant attributes or areas in the shire. This approach may not be acceptable to the Department and retains the need for Council to administer two separate LEPs.

The above options also need to be considered in relation other factors including:

- The availability of data that will be acceptable to the Department to meet the E zone review criteria.
- Timing and the suitability of a single or multiple LEP amendment process.
- The opportunity to use overlays and supporting special provisions in the Ballina LEP 2012.
- Other programmed work commitments of the Council.

Any amendment to the LEP is likely to be time consuming, given the nature of environmental protection zoning, and that many of the objections previously received and carefully considered by the Council are likely to be received again. That is, the Department's approach does not remove the potential for some people to be concerned about how ecological attributes and values are addressed in the planning framework. It is suggested, before the Council commits to implement a course of action that involves amending the LEP, that funding support be sought from the Department.

## **4.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Environmental Protection Zones**

In light of the various options available, it is recommended that the Council proceed to a briefing session to examine and discuss the available options in further detail before determining a course of action. Any direction achieved as an outcome from those discussions would then be reported publicly to the Council for formal determination.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Council receives and notes the information regarding the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Northern Councils E Zone Review contained in this report.
2. That the Council convene a briefing session concerning the Northern Councils E Zone Review to examine options to respond to the policy directives made by the Department of Planning and Environment.

### **Attachment(s)**

1. Attachment 1: E Zone Review Recommendations (Department of Planning and Environment)

## 3. Final Recommendations

### Application of E Zones

#### 1 When will E zones be applied?

- E2 and E3 zones will only be applied if the *primary use of the land* is considered to be environmental conservation (E2) or environmental management (E3) and the land contains attributes which meet one or more of the criteria for an E2 or E3 zone (Tables 1 and 2).
- An E4 zone can be applied if the land contains attributes that are consistent with the Department's Practice Note *PN09-002 Environment Protection Zones*.

#### 2 How will the primary use of the land be determined?

- The primary use of the land is the main use for which the land has been used for the last two (2) years. This may mean that land which is currently zoned rural will continue to have a rural zone but it may have parts of that land which have attributes that meet the criteria for an E2 or E3 zone included in a mapped planning control.
- The primary use of the land may vary across a particular property depending on the characteristics of the land. This may result in more than one zone being applied to the land.
- The primary use of land will be identified during the preparation of a planning proposal.

#### 3 What are the E zone Criteria?

- The land proposed to be zoned E2 or E3 must contain one or more of the criteria listed in Tables 1 and 2.

#### 4 What is the procedure for applying an E2 or E3 zone to land?

- Councils will assess land against the E zone criteria and consider the primary use of the land before proposing an E2 or E3 zone.
- An E2 or E3 zone can only be applied to land with a primary use of environmental conservation or environmental management and, which has attributes that have been verified to meet the E zone criteria.
- If the land has attributes that meet the E2 criteria, however the primary use of the land is environmental management rather than environmental conservation, a council may apply an E3 zone.
- If a council believes the primary use of the land does not warrant an E zone, and the land meets the E zone criteria, then a LEP Map and associated clauses can be applied.
- The E zones will not include buffers to the vegetation attributes that meet the E zone criteria.

**Table 1: E2 zone Criteria**

Criteria	Description
SEPP 26 Littoral Rainforests.	Land mapped as littoral rainforest in accordance with the statewide policy for littoral rainforest protection ( <i>State Environmental Planning Policy 26 – Littoral Rainforests</i> ).
SEPP 14 Coastal Wetlands.	Land mapped as coastal wetlands in accordance with the statewide policy for coastal wetland protection ( <i>State Environmental Planning Policy 14 – Coastal Wetlands</i> ).
Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) listed under the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> and/ or the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> .	Land containing vegetation communities listed as Endangered Ecological Communities under the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> (TSC) <sup>1</sup> and the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC) <sup>2</sup> .  The <i>Far North Coast Regional Conservation Plan</i> <sup>3</sup> lists the following vegetation communities as examples of EECs that currently exist on the Far North Coast:  <i>Byron Bay Dwarf Graminoid Heath Community, Coastal Cypress Pine Forest, Coastal Saltmarsh, Freshwater Wetlands in Coastal Floodplains, Littoral Rainforest, Lowland Rainforest, Lowland Rainforest on Floodplains, Subtropical Coastal Floodplain Forest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest, Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains, Themeda grassland on Seaciffs and Coastal Headlands, White Gum Yellow Gum Blakely's Red Gum Woodland, and White Gum Moist Forest.</i>  Other vegetation communities may be added consistent with these Acts in the future.
Key Threatened Species Habitat.	This criterion includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• old-growth forests where the overstorey or canopy trees are in the late mature stage of growth<sup>4</sup>;</li> <li>• areas of predicted high conservation value for forest fauna assemblages, refugia, endemic forest fauna or endemic invertebrates<sup>5</sup>, and</li> <li>• habitats for threatened species or endangered populations that cannot withstand further loss where the threatened species or endangered population is present<sup>6</sup>.</li> </ul>
Over-cleared vegetation communities.	Land comprising: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. over-cleared vegetation communities, where more than 70% of the original (pre 1750) extent of the native vegetation type has been cleared<sup>7</sup> and</li> <li>2. native vegetation in over-cleared Mitchell landscapes<sup>8</sup>.</li> </ol> The <i>Far North Coast Regional Conservation Plan</i> lists the following as examples of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-cleared vegetation communities on the Far North Coast<sup>9</sup>:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rainforests, Wet sclerophyll forests (shrubby and grassy subformations), Dry sclerophyll forests (shrubby and shrub/grass subformations), Grassy woodlands, Grasslands (Themeda australis sod tussock), Heathlands, Forested wetlands, Freshwater wetlands, Saline wetlands; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Over-cleared Mitchell landscapes<sup>9</sup>:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Byron-Tweed Alluvial Plains, Byron-Tweed Coastal Barriers, Clarence-Richmond Alluvial Plains and Upper Clarence Channels and Floodplains.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Culturally significant lands,	Areas of culturally significant lands such as Aboriginal object sites, Aboriginal places of heritage significance, and other significant objects identified by the local Aboriginal community <sup>10</sup> .

1 <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/nsw-act>

2 <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/default.aspx?keywords>

3 Far North Coast Regional Conservation Plan, NSW Environment Climate Change and Water, 2010, p24

4 <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/pnf/OGRFreviewFieldIdent.pdf>

5 Scotts, D 2003, Key Habitats and Corridors for Forest Fauna: A Landscape Framework for Conservation in North-east New South Wales, NPWS Occasional Paper no. 32, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney, NSW.

6 NSW Office of Environment and Heritage 'Threatened Species Profiles Database' <http://www.bionet.nsw.gov.au>

7 Keith, DA 2006, Ocean Shores to Desert Dunes the Native Vegetation of New South Wales and the ACT, Department of Environment and Climate Change, Hurstville.

8 Mitchell, PB 2002, 'NSW Ecosystems Study: Background and Methodology', report prepared for National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville, NSW and Far North Coast Regional Conservation Plan, NSW Environment Climate Change and Water, 2010, p27.

9 Far North Coast Regional Conservation Plan, NSW Environment Climate Change and Water, 2010, p26

10 Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (2011)

**Table 2: E3 zone Criteria**

Criteria	Description
Riparian and estuarine vegetation and wetlands.	Land comprising riparian and estuarine vegetation on <i>waterfront land</i> , defined under the <i>NSW Water Management Act 2000</i> , or wetland areas other than those mapped as SEPP 14 Coastal Wetlands.  Waterfront land is defined under the <i>NSW Water Management Act 2000</i> as the bed of any river, lake or estuary and any land within 40 metres of the river banks, lake shore or estuary mean high water mark.
Rare, Endangered and Vulnerable Forest Ecosystems.	Land comprising areas of rare, endangered and vulnerable forest ecosystems as defined by the <i>Joint ANZEC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement Implementation sub-committee (JANIS)</i> (Commonwealth of Australia 1997) <sup>1</sup> .
Native vegetation on coastal foreshores.	Native vegetation on land with frontage, or adjoining or adjacent to, a beach, estuary, coastal lake, headland, cliff or rock platform.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 1

**5 How is the E zone criteria verified?**

- An E2 or E3 zone or other mapped planning controls cannot be applied to land unless the attributes that meet the E2 or E3 criteria have been verified on that land.
- Verification of the presence of attributes that meet the E2 or E3 criteria on the site must be undertaken by one or a combination of the following:
  - biodiversity field inspections and ground surveys conducted by an appropriately qualified person.
  - Aboriginal heritage field inspections and ground surveys conducted by an appropriately qualified person or someone with extensive field experience and in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW*, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (2010).
  - supporting flora and fauna reports conducted by a suitably qualified person and guided by the *Draft Framework for Biodiversity Assessment*, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2014) and the *Draft*

*Threatened Biodiversity Survey and Assessment: Guidelines for Developments and Activities*, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (2004). Such reports will only be acceptable where the field work is not more than five years old.

- review of current (not more than five years old) high resolution digital aerial photography that has been verified by another one of these verification techniques.
- supporting cultural heritage reports conducted by a suitably qualified person and in accordance with a *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (2011).
- consultation with Aboriginal cultural knowledge holders in regard to culturally significant lands in accordance with a *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (2011).

**Considerations for Applying E Zones and Additional Mapped Planning Controls**

**6 Transferring environmental zones**

- The areas of land to which the current environmental protection zones listed in the Table 3 (below) apply, may be zoned E2 or E3 once councils have verified the attributes of the land against the criteria.

**Table 3: Current Environmental Protection Zones**

<b>Ballina LEP 1987</b>
7(a) Environmental Protection (Wetlands)
7(l) Environmental Protection (Habitat)
<b>Byron LEP 1988</b>
7(a) Environmental Protection (Wetlands)
7(b) Environmental Protection (Coastal Habitat)
7(j) Environmental Protection (Scientific)
7(k) Environmental Protection (Habitat)
<b>Lismore LEP 2000</b>
7(a) Environment Protection (Natural Vegetation and Wetlands)
7(b) Environment Protection (Habitat)
<b>Tweed LEP 2000</b>
7(a) Environmental Protection (Wetlands and Littoral Rainforests)
7(l) Environmental Protection (Habitat)

- Kyogle Council should apply a rural zone, equivalent to the zone in the superseded Interim Development Order, to the land which was proposed to be zoned E2 or E3 and was deferred from the Kyogle LEP 2012, until such time as investigations are completed to identify appropriate E zones or additional mapped planning controls.

**7 Public and private land inconsistent with the criteria**

- Public land may be zoned E2 or E3 despite being inconsistent with the criteria, if the primary use of the land is environmental conservation or environmental management.

- Private land may be zoned E2 or E3 despite being inconsistent with the criteria, only if it is consistent with a negotiated development outcome (master plan, rezoning, development consent, designated offset areas) or at the request of the landowner.

**8 Voluntarily revegetated land**

- Land which has been voluntarily revegetated by the current landowner, will not have an E2 or E3 zone applied to it without the agreement of the current landowner providing:
  - the revegetation has been actively undertaken and is not the result of natural regrowth;
  - active revegetation includes a combination of planting, seeding, weed control, fencing, removing stock, watering, ripping, mulching and soil improvement to encourage the natural regeneration of native vegetation; and
  - the primary use of the land is agriculture.
- Land which has been voluntarily revegetated can be included on a Vegetation Map without the agreement of the current landowner if the attributes have been verified to meet the criteria for an E2 or E3 zone and the primary use of the land is environmental conservation or environmental management.
- If revegetation has been undertaken with the support of grant funding, and a condition of that funding was the ongoing conservation or management of the vegetation, then an E2 or E3 zone may be applied to the land.

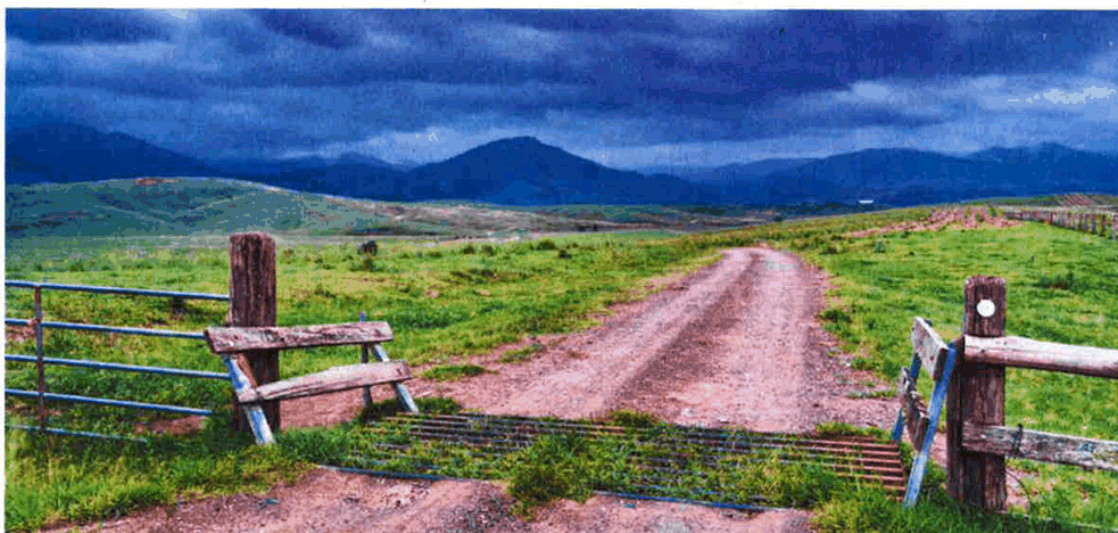
**9 Zoning of State and regionally significant farmland**

- When zoning State or regionally significant farmland, councils will have to take account of the primary use of the land before applying an E zone or a rural zone.

**10 Application of multiple zones to a single property (split zoned lots)**

- More than one zone can be applied to properties where the characteristics of different areas of the land reflect the different primary uses of the land.
- Councils should consider the suitability of alternative zones or including the land on a Vegetation Map when considering more than one zone for a property.
- As a general principle, the use of multiple zones on a property should be minimised as far as possible.





**11 Application of the E4 zone in Byron Council**

- Byron Shire Council is to prepare a planning proposal to apply a suitable residential zone to that land where an E4 zone was proposed under the draft Byron LEP.

**12 Application of additional mapped planning controls**

- Matters of public health, safety, risk and hazard such as drinking water catchments, flooding, coastal risk areas and land subject to strict development controls such as steep land may be included in a LEP Map.
- A LEP Map is not to be used for areas of scenic protection or aesthetic values.
- Land that has been verified to meet the criteria for an E2 or E3 zone where the primary use of the land is not environmental conservation or environmental management may be included in a mapped planning control, such as a Vegetation Map.

**Additional Considerations for Far North Coast Councils**

**13 Aesthetic values**

- Councils on the Far North Coast will not be permitted to use scenic values as an attribute for the application of an E2 or E3 zone or mapped planning controls.

**14 Permissibility of agriculture in E Zones**

- *Extensive agriculture* is to be listed as permissible with consent in the E2 zone for all Far North Coast LEPs.
- *Extensive agriculture* is to be listed as permissible without consent in the E3 zone for all Far North Coast LEPs.

**15 Coastal Zone Management**

- Far North Coast councils are to use a Coastal Risk Map and associated clause to manage land affected by coastal hazards.

**16 Section 117 Direction**

- A Section 117 Ministerial Direction specific to applying E zones and mapped planning controls in Far North Coast LEPs will ensure the consistent application of the final recommendations of the Northern Councils E Zone Review for Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore and Tweed Local Government Areas.

**Statewide Implications**

**17 Existing Use Rights**

- The Department will investigate the possibility of an amendment to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* or the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*, to remove or extend the 12-month time limit for abandonment of existing uses for the land use *extensive agriculture*.

**18 Implications for remainder of the State**

- These recommendations will initially apply only to the five Far North Coast councils. However, in the meantime, if other councils in the State are reviewing the application of E zones, then the principles contained in these recommendations can be used. Councils should contact the Department of Planning and Environment for assistance.
- The Department of Planning and Environment will investigate the implications of the Northern Councils E Zone Review final recommendations on the application of E zones and mapped planning controls across the State.
- The Department will consider a revision of the Standard Instrument LEP template to remove 'aesthetic values' from the zone objectives of the E2 and E3 zones.

16 Department of Planning & Environment