



NATIONAL SEA CHANGE TASKFORCE

The Challenge of Coastal Growth

SUBMISSION

NSW LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Inquiry into infrastructure provision in coastal growth areas

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Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	6
Terms of reference	8
1. Background	10
1.1 About the National Sea Change Taskforce	10
1.2 Coastal growth: a national phenomena	12
1.3 Understanding the growth	14
1.4 Understanding of the nature of coastal areas	15
1.5 The impact of tourism on infrastructure	16
2. Population growth and trends in NSW coastal councils	19
2.1 Population growth	19
2.2 Population projections	21
2.3 Population ageing	22
3. Infrastructure needs	23
3.1 Overview	23
3.2 Roads	24
3.3 Bridges	26
3.4 Sewer	26
3.5 Solid waste disposal	27
3.6 Transport	28
3.7 Health	29
3.8 Other infrastructure	30
3.9 Summary	30
4. Enhanced coordination	33
5. Best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management	35
6. Social, environmental and economic issues	36
7. Conclusion	38
References	39
Contact details	40
Appendix 1 – Census data	41
Appendix 2 – Estimated Resident Population NSW coastal growth councils 1999-2004	45
Appendix 3 - Maroochydhore Communiqué	55
Appendix 4 - List of Funding LGAs – National Sea Change Taskforce	57

SUMMARY

This submission has been made by the National Sea Change Taskforce (the Taskforce) in response to an invitation from the NSW Standing Committee on Public Works (the Committee) to contribute to the inquiry into the provision of infrastructure to coastal growth areas in NSW. The Taskforce is a national body representing the interests of coastal councils and communities experiencing the effects of rapid population and tourism growth.

This inquiry can inform the strategic planning process in the State as the NSW Coast has been identified as one of four priority areas in which regional strategies are to be developed. It is considered essential that the challenges facing these areas including infrastructure are fully identified and understood before major decisions affecting coastal development in NSW are made.

The provision of infrastructure to meet growth is an issue facing governments in many States of Australia. In Queensland the State Government has recently announced a regional plan with associated spending of \$55 billion on infrastructure to address population growth in the rapidly growing coastal region of south-east Queensland over the next two decades. The National Sea Change Taskforce believes there is a need for a similar plan to meet the current and projected infrastructure needs of coastal communities in NSW.

In recent years two coastal councils have not experienced population growth – Bellingen Shire and Richmond Valley Councils. However it can't be assumed that this pattern will continue. In addition the impact of tourism on infrastructure provision must be considered.

The role of the Taskforce is to provide national leadership in addressing the impact of the 'sea change' phenomenon and to provide support and guidance to coastal councils attempting to manage the impact of rapid growth. The Taskforce executive consists of representatives of coastal councils in every state. The organisation was formally constituted in November 2004 and to date the Taskforce has received funding from more than 60 participating councils (Appendix 4).

One of the first actions of the Taskforce has been to commission research to find out more about the nature and impact of the movement of population to the coast. A copy of the final report of the first stage of the research undertaken by The University of Sydney accompanies this submission. The next phase of this research into national and international best practice planning models has begun and a progress report will be available in July.

Population growth in coastal NSW is part of a national phenomenon known as 'sea change'. Recent ABS figures indicate the growth rate in coastal Australia is 60% higher than the national growth rate. However councils in these areas are struggling to keep pace with demand. This movement to the coast is expected to continue for at least the next 10 to 15 years. Coastal councils have a responsibility to their communities to address the issue of population and tourism growth. Through the Taskforce they are seeking the support of the State and Australian Governments as a fundamental step in identifying and implementing effective solutions to growth.

Recent research by The University of Sydney has noted there is a difference between the existing demographic profiles of sea change communities and those moving to the coast areas. In many NSW coastal communities the proportion of people over 65 is consistently higher than the State average of 13.5%. Those moving to coastal areas are younger. The ABS recently considered the sea change phenomenon for the first time. It found 79% of those moving to high growth coastal areas around Australia were under 50 years.

Reasons for the move included better climate, more affordable housing, better lifestyle and work. The number of retirees moving to the coast is expected to increase later this decade as the baby-boomer generation starts retiring from the workforce.

The NSW councils considered in this submission have in common a coastal location, population growth and tourism. However these are extremely varied communities. From the typology developed in recent research it is apparent that many of the NSW coastal growth councils are communities based on tourism and lifestyle.

Apart from population growth, coastal communities in NSW face the added impact of a significant increase in the level of tourism, one of Australia's largest export earning sectors. Tourism brings an economic benefit to local commercial operators and helps generate certain employment opportunities. But tourism revenues do not contribute to the public infrastructure required and the burden falls on local ratepayers. Coastal councils do not seek to discourage tourists. They do need help to provide infrastructure and services required.

The rate of population growth in NSW coastal areas outside metropolitan Sydney is 30% higher than the State average. This is in line with national data. Population projections vary according to the assumptions they are based on however all point to the consequences of failing to provide the future infrastructure needs of local communities and tourists.

Local infrastructure needs were found to vary between coastal councils. The survey covered infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, cycle paths, bridges, solid waste disposal, as well as transport, education, health and other infrastructure. All councils that completed the survey reported a significant funding shortfall over the next ten years. The input points to serious concern about the adequacy of roads and their current condition.

Bridges were considered to be an above average priority of need. Sewer infrastructure was considered of concern and a very high need priority for many. The condition of solid waste disposal was reported to vary among participating councils. Public transport was considered to be inadequate in most councils. In addition it is thought there are some fundamental lessons from the experiences of The City of Newcastle in the management of transport infrastructure including that assessment of the area's needs occurs from a metropolitan Sydney perspective rather than a regional one. In terms of the provision of other infrastructure, existing hospital services and access to health and aged care were considered by most councils to be far from adequate and matters of extreme priority. Health workforce availability was also thought of as an issue.

In addressing increasing infrastructure needs, coastal councils in NSW face a number of limitations. These include a lack of coordinated regional planning, inflexible local rating provisions and lack of access to a growth tax.

One of the most urgent needs is for funding to assist coastal councils to undertake the initial preparatory work to clearly identify and details priority infrastructure needs and areas for funding.

The Taskforce promotes the adoption of a coordinated approach to managing growth in coastal areas that would be based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal growth is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment. Australia does not have an agreed national policy or framework for planning and managing coastal areas. There is a clear need for enhanced coordination of planning and management of coastal growth at a local, regional, State and Commonwealth level. There is also a greater need for cross-jurisdictional coordination between all levels of government in relation to coastal planning and management.

The Taskforce considers that effective regional settlement planning is a priority in NSW. The provision of infrastructure is one of the critical factors as are other factors including social, environmental and heritage concerns.

To address the need for enhanced understanding and use of best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management in coastal areas the Taskforce has contracted The University of Sydney to undertake further research. These factors are seen as integral to addressing the challenge that growth poses to coastal areas. It is hoped that an interim report may be available by July. Once produced, a copy will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration. It is anticipated that a Final Report on best practice in planning for and managing growth in coastal areas will be released in late August 2005.

The Taskforce also proposes to commission further research aimed at developing a range of specific regional and local planning models suitable for application in Australian sea change communities.

Rapid population and tourism growth is having a significant social impact on existing coastal communities. Researchers have identified socio-economic disadvantage and polarisation in non-metropolitan coastal communities. The Taskforce considers that further research is required to assess the social implications of sea change growth.

The Taskforce is also concerned about the impact of urban growth and development on the environment in coastal areas. The level of development is placing many coastal environments at risk of serious degradation. Another issue of concern is the future of agricultural land in coastal areas.

In conclusion the sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in NSW and in every other state in Australia. It can only be addressed through a commitment on the part of local, State and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way.

There is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid population and tourism growth in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment. It could also lead to the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of NSW coastal communities.

What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

The Taskforce proposes that the Committee considers the following recommendations:

- ❑ That a proportion of GST revenue be allocated to coastal councils in areas experiencing high tourism to assist them to meet the increase in demand for infrastructure and services associated with that tourism.
- ❑ That the NSW Government initiates a process of conducting a detailed scoping and assessment of infrastructure gaps for coastal areas throughout the State and provides the necessary funding to enable coastal councils to prepare such detailed assessments.
- ❑ That a special reference to sea change be included in relevant Australian and State portfolios to assist in the process of coordinating coastal planning and management.
- ❑ Enhanced coordination at regional, State and national levels should be seen as a priority.

INTRODUCTION

‘Coastal communities around Australia and around the world are struggling to plan for rapid population growth driven by internal migration from metropolitan cities and inland areas’

(Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p.1)

This document has been prepared by the National Sea Change Taskforce (the Taskforce) in response to an invitation from the NSW Standing Committee on Public Works (the Committee) to make a submission concerning issues surrounding the provision of infrastructure to coastal growth areas in NSW. The Taskforce is a national body representing the interests of coastal councils and communities experiencing the effects of rapid population and tourism growth.

It is understood that this inquiry will inform the strategic planning process in the State as the NSW Coast has been identified as one of four priority areas in which regional strategies are to be developed. It is considered essential that the challenges facing these areas including infrastructure are fully identified and understood before major decisions affecting coastal development in NSW are made.

The provision of infrastructure to meet growth is an issue facing governments in many States of Australia. The Government of Queensland has recognised the special needs of the rapidly growing coastal region of south-east Queensland with the announcement in late April 2005 that it plans to spend \$55 billion on infrastructure to address population growth in this region over the next 20 years (OUM 2005). The population of this area is currently 2.7 million and is expected to increase by a further one million people over the next 20 years. The plan includes \$24.5 billion to be spent on roads and public transport, \$3.3 billion on social and community infrastructure, \$13.4 billion on energy networks, and \$2.3 billion on water infrastructure. The plan also includes \$1 billion for new hospitals on the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.

The National Sea Change Taskforce believes there is a need for a similar plan to meet the current and projected infrastructure needs of coastal communities in NSW. Research conducted by The University of Sydney points to a need for a comprehensive, regional approach to settlement planning in coastal areas that is linked to infrastructure funding commitments similar to recent metropolitan planning approaches (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005).

This submission has been drafted to provide an overview of the impact of growth in coastal areas in New South Wales on infrastructure. It starts by outlining the background to the 'sea change' phenomenon in NSW and the effects this is having on coastal communities in NSW and elsewhere in Australia. The submission is based on a belief that there is a clear need for additional resources to meet the shortfall in funding for basic infrastructure and human services in coastal communities.

In preparing this submission the Taskforce has sought input from the 21 NSW coastal councils outside metropolitan Sydney.

It is thought that a number of coastal local government authorities (LGAs) will make submissions to this inquiry on behalf of their individual councils.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

It is understood that this inquiry focuses on coastal growth areas in NSW. Most coastal councils in NSW have experienced growth in recent years as indicated in Appendices 1 and 2. Only two coastal LGAs have not experienced growth in recent years – Bellingen Shire and Richmond Valley Councils.

However, it cannot be assumed that significant growth will not occur in the future that will impact on the provision of infrastructure in these areas. In addition all coastal areas in NSW are affected by growth in tourism to varying extents. This creates additional demand for infrastructure and services.

The terms of reference for this inquiry have specifically excluded the metropolitan coastal areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. It is understood these areas have been excluded on the basis that they are to be included in the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy Discussion paper, which is yet to be released. In addition it is thought that also the Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils on the Central Coast may be excluded.

It is the view of the Taskforce, however, that all the areas outside metropolitan Sydney should be considered within the scope of the current Inquiry as they represent approximately 20% of the NSW coastline and their infrastructure needs are similar to other coastal areas in NSW.

These peri-metropolitan areas are one of two types of so-called 'sea change' communities that have experienced significant population growth. The other type is high amenity growth areas (Burnley and Murphy 2004).

In addition, tourism is of significance in these locations. It is therefore argued that the population and tourism growth being experienced in these areas is due to the proximity of the Central Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong to metropolitan Sydney.

Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) such as Census data over time (Appendix 1) and the more recent estimated resident population data (Appendix 2) indicate that the NSW coastal councils currently experiencing growth excluding metropolitan Sydney are:

- Ballina Shire Council
- Bega Valley Shire Council
- Byron Shire Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- Coffs Harbour City Council
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Gosford City Council
- Great Lakes Council
- Greater Taree City Council
- Hastings Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Kiama Municipal Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Nambucca Shire Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Shellharbour City Council
- Shoalhaven City Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Wyong Shire Council

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 About the National Sea Change Taskforce

The Taskforce had its origins at a meeting of Chief Executive Officers of 27 high growth councils who met in February 2004 to consider options for addressing the challenge of rapid growth in coastal areas. The meeting, called the Sea Change Summit, took place at Mudjimba, on the Sunshine Coast, on 1 and 2 February 2004.

After two days of workshops, presentations and deliberations the CEOs released a communiqué announcing the establishment of a national task force to seek the cooperation of State and Federal Governments to address the challenge of coastal growth (see Appendix 3). The communiqué proposed the development of a specific sea change funding program to assist councils and regions deal with increasing demand associated with sea change growth. It also called for the development of coordinated regional plans by State Governments that would provide greater certainty about the extent and rate of growth in coastal communities. In relation to infrastructure and services a detailed survey of coastal LGAs was proposed to quantify the current shortfall for infrastructure and services and to identify future needs and priorities. Another area identified for action was consideration of alternative funding options for the timely provision of infrastructure, such as betterment taxes, advanced developer contributions and public private partnerships.

Funding for the Taskforce's activities comes from member councils. The number of councils involved in the NSCT has steadily increased since the Summit in February 2004. A Sea Change conference held in Melbourne in May 2004 was attended by CEOs, mayors and councilors representing 56 coastal councils from every State in Australia. The organisation was formally constituted in November 2004 and the Taskforce has received funding from more than 60 participating councils (see Appendix 4).

The role of the Taskforce is to provide national leadership in addressing the impact of the 'sea change' phenomenon and to provide support and guidance to coastal councils attempting to manage the impact of rapid growth. The Taskforce executive consists of representatives of coastal councils in every state.

One of the first actions of the Taskforce has been to commission research to find out more about the nature and impact of the movement of population to the coast. Additional information on the scale of population movement, the magnitude of infrastructure requirements and the options available for addressing the challenge of coastal growth is required in order to accurately assess the current and future needs of coastal LGAs and their local communities. The Taskforce has commissioned the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake a phased research project and the first stage has recently been completed. The research work has been led by Dr Nicole Gurran and Professor Ed Blakely who will also be making a submission to this Committee.

Subsequent phases of this research will be of interest to this Committee. The proposed steps will identify models of international and national best practice in planning to address issues arising from the impact of population growth and tourism and develop a range of specific regional and local planning models suitable for application in sea change communities in Australia.

1.2 Coastal growth: a national phenomena

The movement of population to the coast is occurring in every Australian state and is gathering pace. This movement has been referred to as 'the big shift' (Salt 2003). It has also become known as the 'sea change' phenomenon.

In March 2005, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released figures for Australia which showed that the number of people moving to coastal areas in the year to 30 June 2004 was 108,000 (ABS 2005). This indicated a growth rate of 2% in the year to June 2004, which is more than 60% higher than the national growth rate of 1.2% during this period.

While only 28% of the population live in coastal areas, the figures show nearly half the total Australian population increase in the year to June 2004 occurred in these areas.

The movement of people to the coast is occurring on such a scale that some coastal areas, such as the Central Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong in NSW and the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, have become major population centres. The Gold Coast for example, is a much larger population base than Canberra and has approximately the same number of people as the State of Tasmania, the combined population of Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils in NSW is set to overtake the population of Canberra and the Sunshine Coast has replaced Hobart as the tenth largest urban centre in Australia.

In NSW rapid population growth is evident on the northern and southern coasts of the State. These coastal areas offer an attractive quality of life and an appealing environment. As indicated previously, however, councils in these areas are struggling to keep pace with demand.

The movement to the Australian coast is expected to continue for the next 10 to 15 years, driven in part by the ageing of the 'baby boomer' generation and by factors such as escalating house prices in capital cities and a desire by many people to seek a better lifestyle, away from the congestion of the cities. Given the acceleration of growth in these areas, and the scale of projected growth in the future, local councils

face a significant challenge in dealing with the social, environmental and economic issues related to rapid growth.

It is now clear that sea change growth is not just occurring in a few individual coastal areas. It is a national issue that is impacting on the management, operations and budgets of coastal councils in every Australian state.

Coastal councils believe they have a responsibility to address the issue of growth in the interests of safeguarding the welfare of their residents. They seek the support and cooperation of State and Federal Governments as a fundamental step in identifying effective solutions to meeting the challenge of sea change growth.

1.3 Understanding the growth

Recent research by The University of Sydney has noted there is a difference between the existing demographic profiles of sea change communities and the demographic profile of people who are currently making the shift to coastal areas. The report observes that

‘most sea change communities have a higher median age and are ageing at a more rapid rate than the total population in each State. This trend is most pronounced in NSW where sea change LGAs have a media age ranging from 37 to 43 years compared to the overall media age of 35 years for NSW in total. The median age in the majority of NSW sea change communities increased by between two and four years between 1996 and 2001, compared to the media age for NSW overall, which increased by only one year during the same period’ (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p. 31).

The percentage of people over the age of aged of 65 in coastal LGAs is consistently higher than the state average of 13.3% (ABS 2005). For example recent ABS figures on the percentage of people over the age of 65 in coastal councils include:

Bega Valley	17.8%
Ballina	19.1%
Shoalhaven	19.6%
Nambucca	21.3%
Tweed	21.7%
Eurobodalla	22.2%
Hastings	22.2%
Great Lakes	25.6%

While older people, including retirees, represent a higher than average percentage of the population in coastal areas, current population research indicates this is changing. Until recently, it was believed the shift to the coast is currently being led by the ‘baby boomer’ generation and included a high proportion of people aged over 50. A recent report released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, however, throws new light on the demographic profile of ‘sea changers’, revealing they are younger than previously thought (ABS 2004a).

The report, *Australian Social Trends 2004*, is the 11th edition in a series by the ABS examining social issues and areas of public policy concern. However it was the first to include findings on sea change indicating the significance of this issue.

It shows that 79% of people who moved to high growth coastal regions in the year prior to the 2001 census were aged less than 50 years (*ibid.*). The report identified a variety of reasons for people making the move to the coast, including both 'push' and 'pull' factors. Some people are looking for a better climate. Others are seeking affordable housing. Some 'sea changers' are looking for work and others are seeking a better lifestyle, away from the congestion of the city.

It has recently been observed that groups impacting on coastal areas include part-time 'sea changers' and absentee property owners. A growing number of part time 'sea changers' commute between a home on the coast and a job in a capital city. This trend has previously been identified in the United States. Absentee property owners, who buy an investment property and rent it out as holiday accommodation, are also having a growing impact.

The *Australian Social Trends 2004* report highlights a need for further research to more clearly identify the impact of migration to the coast. Coastal councils need to understand the factors at work so they can put appropriate strategies in place to deal with the increasing demands being placed on them. As the ABS report points out, the influx of a large number of people will radically change these coastal communities (ABS 2004a).

It is worth noting that the number of retirees moving to the coast is likely to increase later this decade when the baby-boomer generation is expected to begin retiring from the workforce. This factor is likely to contribute to further increases in population growth in coastal areas (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p.16).

1.4 Understanding of the nature of coastal areas

These councils considered in this submission have in common population growth and a coastal location. However these are extremely varied communities.

The ABS has classified them as either predominantly cities – Gosford, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Shellharbour, Tweed, Wollongong and Wyong - or regional areas. Only Bega Valley Shire Council has a very small (1.5%) area that has been classified as remote (ABS 2005).

Recent research commissioned by the Taskforce has developed a typology for sea change communities (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005). Table 1 provides a summary of each type of coastal community and a breakdown of coastal LGAs. As can be seen many of the NSW coastal growth LGAs are predominantly tourism and lifestyle communities.

TABLE 1 – NSW sea change community typology

Coastal types	Description	NSW coastal LGAs
Coastal cities	Substantial urban conurbations beyond State capitals	Gosford Newcastle Wollongong
Coastal commuters	Suburbanised satellite communities in peri-metropolitan locations	Shellharbour Wyong
Coastal getaways	Small to medium coastal towns within 3 hours drive of a capital city	Kiama Lake Macquarie Port Stephens Shoalhaven
Coastal lifestyle destinations	Predominantly tourism and leisure communities	Ballina Bega Valley Byron Clarence Valley Coffs Harbour Eurobodalla Great Lakes Greater Taree Hastings Kempsey Nambucca Richmond Valley Tweed
Coastal hamlets	Small, remote coastal communities often surrounded by protected natural areas	Bellingen

1.5 The impact of tourism on infrastructure

Apart from population growth, coastal communities in NSW face the added impact of a significant increase in the level of tourism in their areas.

International tourism is forecast to become Australia's largest export earning industry sector by the year 2007. Coastal townships such as Byron Bay are already experiencing tourism peaks that are placing unprecedented demand on local infrastructure, including roads, water supply, waste collection and sewerage treatment. For instance on Census night 2001 in the Byron LGA 1,329 overseas visitors were recorded or almost 5% of the total Census population.

Tourism currently accounts for approximately 430 million visitor nights a year nationally, with 69% of tourist activity in non-capital city areas. It is predicted that this level of activity will increase to 620 million visitor nights in 2020, with a corresponding 43% increase in the economic value of the sector (ABS 2004b).

Growing levels of tourism in regions such as the NSW North Coast, Mid North Coast, Central Coast, Illawarra and the South Coast is having a noticeable impact on local communities, including traffic congestion, impact on the environment and demand for services including water, sewerage treatment and waste collection. For example, in Shoalhaven City Council the resident population is 90,679 and increases to more than 320,000 people at the peak of the summer holiday season and the Byron Shire Council, which has a resident population of 30,700 people, experiences two million visitors annually.

Local communities are struggling to cope with this rapid growth in demand associated with tourism. Tourism brings an economic benefit to local commercial operators and helps to generate employment opportunities. But while visitors generate revenue for accommodation, meals and local retail outlets they do not contribute to the cost of public infrastructure they use, such as roads, water, sewerage treatment, collection of waste and recreation facilities. The burden of expanding the capacity of this infrastructure to meet the increasing demands of tourism inevitably falls on local ratepayers who are each being forced to cover the costs of providing services for hundreds of tourists.

Coastal councils do not want to discourage tourists from visiting their communities, but they do need help to provide the infrastructure and services they require and to ensure that local residents continue to support tourism in their areas.

Tourism consumption in Australia in the year 2002-2003 amounted to \$73.3 billion. (ABS 2004b) These figures indicate that international tourism accounted for 23% of this consumption figure and domestic tourism accounted for 77%. GST revenues to the states from this consumption are estimated at \$6.66 billion.

The National Sea Change Taskforce proposes that a proportion of this GST revenue be allocated to coastal councils in areas experiencing high tourism growth to assist them to meet the increase in demand for infrastructure and services associated with tourism.

This approach is supported by the Tourism Transport Forum. In 2002 the then Tourism Task Force noted that 'local Governments, especially in New South Wales, have tight budgets and the tourism infrastructure costs borne by local councils are either subsidised by ratepayers or businesses. Neither group is the exclusive beneficiary of the activity. State and Territory Governments receive over \$5 billion per annum in GST revenue from tourists and should investigate ways of using a portion of this revenue windfall to help Local Councils maintain infrastructure.' (p. 7). It is considered that the \$5 billion referred to has since increased to at least \$6.6 billion).

RECOMMENDATION

That a proportion of GST revenue be allocated to coastal councils in areas experiencing high tourism to assist them to meet the increase in demand for infrastructure and services associated with that tourism.

2. POPULATION GROWTH AND TRENDS IN NSW COASTAL COUNCILS

2.1 Population growth

Research indicates while metropolitan State capitals in Australia have increased sizably since the end of World War II between 1966 and 2001 there was an overall net internal migration loss from these cities to non metropolitan Australia. In terms of NSW coastal growth researchers note that before 1971 population growth only occurred in less than half of coastal statistical local areas. However after 1971 96% of these areas experienced population increases (Burnley and Murphy 2004).

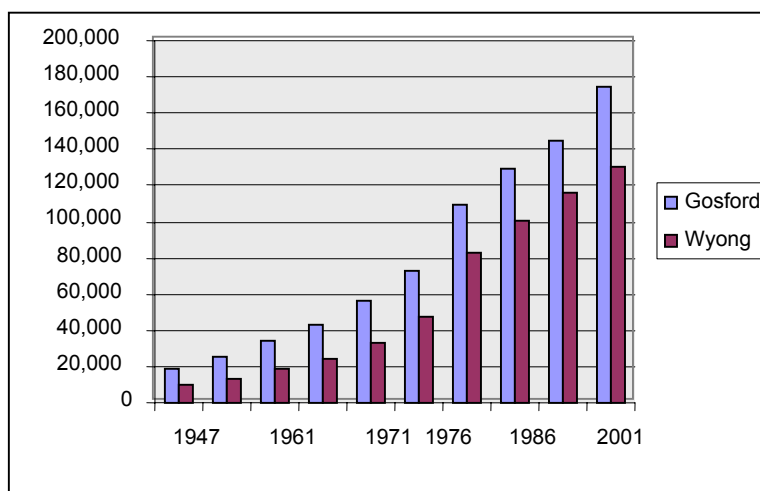
Table 2 quantifies the historic growth that has occurred in the Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council since the end of World War II. This can be seen graphically in Table 3.

TABLE 2 – CENTRAL COAST LGAs HISTORIC POPULATION FIGUES

Year	Gosford	Wyong
1947	18,700	10,195
1954	25,132	13,187
1961	34,162	18,834
1966	42,880	24,646
1971	56,190	32,867
1976	73,410	47,362
1986	109,278	82,359
1991	128,941	100,433
1996	144,840	115,999
2001	174,200	130,854

NOTE: Figures from 1976 onwards drawn from ABS Census data

TABLE 3 – CENTRAL COAST HISTORIC GROWTH 1947 - 2001



According to recently released figures, approximately 1.63 million people live in coastal areas in NSW outside metropolitan Sydney (ABS 2005). The rate of population growth in these areas is consistently higher than the State average.

In the five years from 1999 to 2004 the average annual Estimated Resident Population (ERP) growth rate for NSW was 1.0%. In coastal areas during this period the growth rate was 1.3% (ABS 2005), that is 30% higher than the state average.

As can be seen in Appendix 2, recent growth rates in the vast majority of LGAs in New South Wales have been considerably higher than that experienced in the State overall. For example:

- Eurobodalla Shire Council has had average annual growth of 2.1% between 1999 and 2004
- Great Lakes Council has experienced average annual growth of 2.2% over the same period
- Hastings Council has experienced annual growth of 2.4%
- Tweed Shire Council has experienced average annual growth of 2.5% during the same five year period.

2.2 Population projections

Population projections in NSW coastal councils have been found to vary according to the assumptions on which they are based. Table 3 provides an example of a number of estimates for the projected population of Coffs Harbour to 2021. This has been prepared by Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) in response to its concern that some population projections may be too low. CHCC's projections have used the population numbers estimated by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) (2004) but have also included components for additional areas in their LGA and higher growth rates in certain areas.

With the ERP for CHCC being 66,529 as at 30 June 2004 Table 4 highlights the impact different calculations for population projections can have. This has consequences for the provision of infrastructure in response to meet the needs of local communities.

TABLE 4 – COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
ESTIMATED POPULATION PROJECTIONS

<i>SOURCE</i>	Jackson 2004	DIPNR 2004	CHCC 2005
2006	66,568	66,980	68,889
2011	69,905	71,820	74,388
2016	72,931	76,710	80,051
2021	75,655	81,760	85,937

Drawing on recent work undertaken for the Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW (LGSA) Appendix 3 provides an insight into population projections for individual councils (Jackson 2004). This indicates that there is an underlying assumption that while coastal NSW has experienced growth in the past this trend will continue in the future. Accordingly, there is a need to address current needs shortfalls in infrastructure as well as planning for the future of these communities.

2.3 Population ageing

In addition to managing continued growth coastal NSW councils will also need to manage an ageing population. Table 5 provides an example of the 'bulge' effect of the changes in age groupings in the population from 2001 to 2021.

TABLE 5 – GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL
POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP 2001 - 2021

	2001	2011		2021	
Age	Population	Increase over 2001	% total increase	Increase over 2011	% total increase
0-4	10,072	1,393	3.82%	2,056	5.64%
5-9	11,340	1,010	2.77%	1,879	5.16%
10-14	11,454	1,377	3.77%	1,691	4.64%
15-19	10,162	2,441	6.69%	1,268	3.48%
20-24	7,743	2,530	6.93%	1,240	3.4%
25-29	8,443	1,598	4.38%	2,002	5.5%
30-34	9,680	1,230	3.37%	2,688	7.38%
35-39	11,244	1,114	3.06%	2,010	5.52%
40-44	11,881	1,111	3.04%	1,622	4.45%
45-49	10,767	2,749	7.53%	1,450	3.98%
50-54	9,820	3,372	9.24%	1,357	3.72%
55-59	7,930	3,882	10.64%	2,508	6.88%
60-64	6,558	4,490	12.3%	3,070	8.43%
65-69	6,257	3,197	8.76%	3,540	9.72%
70-74	6,852	1,074	2.94%	3,756	10.31%
75-79	6,363	519	1.42%	2,407	6.61%
80-84	4,448	1,301	3.57%	825	2.26%
85+	3,031	2,107	5.77%	1,065	2.92%
TOTALS	154,045	36,496	100.00%	36,431	100.00%

SOURCE: Gosford City Council (unpublished)

3. INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

3.1 Overview

As this inquiry is concerned with the infrastructure needs of coastal growth areas in NSW in preparing this submission the Taskforce undertook a survey of coastal councils. Using Gosford City Council as an example Table 6 provides an understanding of some of the factors covered by the survey.

TABLE 6 – GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL
INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEY SELECTED RESPONSES

	CURRENT CONDITION	CURRENT SHORTFALL	PRIORITY OF NEED	10 YEAR SHORTFALL	COMMENTS
STATE ROADS	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A	RTA 100% funded
REGIONAL ROADS	Average	\$ 6.35m	High	\$16.75m	Joint funding with RTA
LOCAL ROADS	Average	\$1.225m	Above average	\$15m	Half of network needs kerbs, guttering and drainage
CYCLE PATHS – off street	Average	\$1.5m	Average	\$15m	
FOOTPATHS	Below average	\$6m	Above average	\$60m	Less than one third of network has a footpath on one side of the road
BRIDGES	Below average	\$5m	High	\$9m	Replacement of old timber bridges is a priority
WATER	Very good	see NOTE	see NOTE	see NOTE	
SEWER	Excellent	see NOTE	see NOTE	see NOTE	
DRAINAGE	Average	\$3m	High	\$25m	Extensive drainage infrastructure upgrade required to meet minimum drainage capacity requirements
SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL	Good	0	Extremely high	\$5m	A class 2 landfill must be established in the next 5 years
WHARVES/JETTIES	Average	\$2m	High	\$4m	Less than 20% of public wharves have disabled access

NOTE:

Revenue is dependent on yet to be established iPART pricing determinations. Long term funding requirements are subject to investigations currently underway.

The estimated total infrastructure shortfall for a number of individual councils over the next decade for roads, cycle paths, footpaths, bridges, water, sewer, drainage, solid

waste disposal, water, wharves, jetties and boat ramps include the following amounts:

Ballina	\$ 67.15 million
Bega Valley	\$ 65.71 million
Eurobodalla	\$ 231 million (incl. \$195m for roads)
Gosford City Council	\$ 150.75 million (not incl. State roads, water and sewer)
Greater Taree	\$ 60.90 million
Wyong	\$ 66.88 million (not incl. State roads)

The following pages provide an outline of some of the infrastructure issues facing councils experiencing growth in coastal NSW.

3.2 Roads

The input from councils points to serious concern about the adequacy of national, State and local roads, as well as future funding shortfalls and vary between councils as be seen in the following examples:

- Great Lakes Council considers that only 35% of its sealed roads could be described as in good condition and just under a quarter of these roads were rated as in poor condition. While this council rated its unsealed roads as being in better condition, it nevertheless regarded more than half of these roads as being in a fair to poor condition. Great Lakes Council estimated its capital works backlog to be approaching \$20 million.
- Ballina Shire Council rated roads as being of the highest priority and estimated a total funding shortfall over the next 10 years as \$25.1 million.

TABLE 7 – BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL – ESTIMATED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

	Current condition	10 year funding shortfall (\$,000)	Priority of need
<i>State roads</i>	Below average	5,000	Extremely high
<i>Regional roads</i>	Average	2,100	Extremely high
<i>Local roads</i>	Average	18,000	Extremely high

- Local roads in the Bega Valley were considered to be of great concern.

TABLE 8 – BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL - ESTIMATED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

	Current condition	10 year funding shortfall (\$,000)	Priority of need
<i>State roads</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Regional roads</i>	Above average	4,800	Above average
<i>Local roads</i>	Below average	37,250	Very high

- Richmond Valley Council considers that 60% of its sealed and unsealed roads are in poor condition.
- Funding for roads in Eurobodalla Shire Council is a priority need that varies according to the type of road as can be seen in Table 9.

TABLE 9 –EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL – ESTIMATED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

	Current condition	10 year funding shortfall (\$,000)	Priority of need
<i>State roads</i>	Average	100,000 (capital only)	Very high
<i>Regional roads</i>	Below average	N/A	High
<i>Local roads</i>	Above average	95,000 (incl. regional roads funding)	Above average

- As can be seen in Table 10 for Greater Taree City Council the state of current roads is also of concern.

TABLE 10 – GREATER TAREE CITY COUNCIL – ESTIMATED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

	Current condition	10 year funding shortfall (\$,000)	Priority of need
<i>State roads</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Regional roads</i>	Below average	10,000	Very high
<i>Local roads</i>	Well below average	35,000	Very high

In addition examples were provided of the flow on effect from upgrades and improvements to the Pacific Highway resulting in increased traffic and greater local congestion due to easier accessibility of popular tourist destinations. Examples of the

increases in tourism include Byron Bay in Byron Shire Council and Evans Head in the Richmond Valley Council. This reinforces the need for better management through an integrated approach to the national, State and local roads.

Not all responding councils reported roads as an issue. For example, Shellharbour City Council rated the current condition of its roads as above average.

3.3 Bridges

All councils considered bridges in their area to be an above average priority of need. For example:

- In Ballina Shire Council bridges were considered to have the highest priority of need with an estimated ten year funding shortfall of \$ 3 million.
- The estimated ten year funding shortfall in Bega Valley Shire Council was set at \$10.8 million.
- Existing bridges in Eurobodalla Shire Council were rated as very inadequate and it was estimated that \$ 9.6m was required over the next 10 years.
- The current condition of the 86 bridges in Gosford City Council was rated as below average and represented a high priority of need. In particular replacing old timber bridges was a priority. The funding shortfall over the next decade was estimated to be \$9 million.
- Great Taree Council has 210 bridges and the overall current condition is regarded as poor. This represents a high priority of need and the estimated funding shortfall over the next 10 years is \$10 million.
- Wyong Shire Council considers it has a \$2 million shortfall for bridges on local and regional roads.

3.4 Sewer

Many councils participating in the survey regarded sewer infrastructure as of concern and a very high need priority. For example

- Ballina Shire Council's sewer covers 273 km and is currently in above average condition yet it is estimated that \$80 million needs to be spent on it over the next 10 years with an expected shortfall of \$20 million.

- Eurobodalla Shire Council considers its sewer revenue has been structured to fund current and long term needs.
- Gosford City Council's sewer of 1,385 km is currently regarded as in excellent condition. Funding revenue is dependent on pricing determinations through iPART. These are yet to be established. Long term funding needs are currently under investigation.
- In Wyong Shire Council the 1,143 km sewer network is currently in good condition but requires \$37 million to be spent on it over the next decade.

3.5 Solid waste disposal

The condition of solid waste disposal infrastructure was found to vary between councils as instances below indicate

- Ballina Shire Council considers its existing solid waste disposal infrastructure as extremely inadequate and in extremely poor condition. It estimates a ten year funding shortfall for this to be \$2.2 million.
- The three landfills in Bega Valley Shire Council are considered to be in poor condition and very inadequate. This is considered to be an area of high need priority with an estimated \$3.5 million funding shortfall over the next decade.
- In contrast the current infrastructure in Eurobodalla Shire Council is considered in above average condition. However this is an area of high need priority and there is an estimated funding shortfall in the next ten years of \$10 million.
- Gosford City Council currently operates two class 1 landfills with projected closure times being 2009 and 2018. These closure times depend on the continued availability of a class 2 landfill for the disposal of inert waste. As the current local facility which is not Council owned has a life of 5 years a class 2 landfill must be established within the next 5 years.
- For Wyong Shire Council solid waste disposal will require funding of \$60 million over the next ten years with no shortfall. The current infrastructure is in good condition and more than adequate to meet the needs of the community.

3.6 Transport

Briefly in terms of adequacy of transport infrastructure

- The private and CountryLink bus services in Ballina Shire Council were considered to be of average standard and did not represent a high priority of need.
- Bega Valley Shire Council and Shellharbour City Council placed a high priority on the need to improve both private and public bus services as existing services were rated as inadequate. In addition, although Shellharbour has access to rail services these were also deemed inadequate.
- In Eurobodalla Shire Council private bus services were the only available form of transport and these were of lower than average adequacy.
- In Gosford City Council it is considered that private bus services are inadequate. They are delayed in traffic congestion and experience long travel times during peak periods. In addition this area also has ferry services however these were considered limited services and operated with minimal government subsidy. Both rail and ferry services were rated as below average.
- CountryLink, private bus and rail services in Shellharbour City Council were considered to be inadequate.
- In Wyong Shire Council it is considered that private bus services are below average and that existing rail services needed to be faster and more frequent.

It is considered that there are fundamental lessons to be learned from the experience of The City of Newcastle in the management of transport infrastructure in coastal areas. For example

- The council believes that while the Lower Hunter is in a unique situation as a regional centre with government-operated bus and train networks, it has not been able to fully exploit this benefit. The priorities and issues that are important to the Hunter Region are assessed by the transport agencies in relation to situations in Sydney, rather than from the perspective of the Hunter Region. This indicates certain limitations to managing transport needs in this area.
- Inner city transport in Newcastle is reasonably frequent, but services decrease rapidly in suburbs further out than Broadmeadow. In general,

service levels are low; service standards are inconsistent; fares, tickets and timetables are not integrated; the various modes are not coordinated; there is virtually no promotion and there has been very little community input into the shaping of the transport network. Each bus company has an individual approach as to how services are provided leading to a large amount of inconsistency in how the community sees the delivery of public transport services.

- Conflicts between freight and passenger train services are another significant issue.
- Various social surveys undertaken in the Lower Hunter confirm that the biggest groups of people using public transport are youth, elderly, low-income earners and those who live in households with one or less vehicles. Newcastle's aging population will likely increase the demand for all forms of public transport.
- While some bus operators in the Lower Hunter have low floor buses which accommodate people with disabilities more easily, these buses are rotated between routes and therefore it is impossible for people to know when accessible buses will appear on their services. Accessible buses operated randomly throughout the network are not a very useful asset for people with restricted mobility.
- The rail transport that serves the Newcastle city centre is believed to currently have the capacity for significantly larger transport demand than the current. It is anticipated that the Newcastle road system will progressively congest over time creating increased demand for public transport. Council's land use strategies for the city centre support higher density and a mix of activities. There is concern that the recent announcement by the NSW Government to close the railway line from Broadmeadow to Newcastle and to establish a public transport interchange at Broadmeadow does not give adequate consideration to future demand for, and supply of, public transport in the Hunter.

3.7 Health

Responses on health indicate that current services are considered to be far from adequate in relation to existing hospital services and access to health and aged care

services. These were a matter of extreme priority. However, Wyong Shire Council was able to report that a major hospital redevelopment is currently underway.

Health workforce availability was also considered to be an issue. For Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shire Councils this was considered to be a high and very high need respectively. In Wyong Shire Council health workforce availability was rated as of highest priority of need and a high demand for nursing staff reported.

It is to be noted that while this was not a substantial focus of the survey, the findings suggest that for NSW coastal growth areas health infrastructure requires further and more detailed investigation of local needs in coastal growth areas in NSW before more meaningful comment can be made.

3.8 Other infrastructure

Other infrastructure needs identified included playing fields and for many councils access to broadband services and mobile phone coverage were high priority needs. For example

- Wyong Shire Council reported that it understood that a sum of \$1.5 million would enable ADSL coverage to 95% of the council's population. Mobile phone coverage in responding councils was also a need.
- Eurobodalla Shire Council reported that in its area there were too many spots without mobile phone reception.

3.9 Summary

The above findings suggest that high growth coastal communities do not have the human or financial resources to keep pace with increasing demand for infrastructure such as roads, water, sewerage. In addition, these communities cannot meet demand for services such as hospitals, public transport, emergency services and educational facilities.

Research undertaken for the National Sea Change Taskforce indicates that coastal councils are attempting to keep pace with growth in demand within severe limitations (Gurran, Squires & Blakely 2005). These limitations include lack of coordinated

regional planning and inflexible local government rating provisions. Local government authorities also lack access to a growth tax, such as GST or PAYG taxation.

Unlike other States, NSW councils are subject to rate pegging. This limits their capacity to fund community infrastructure through general revenue. Capped increases in rates have lagged behind increasing operational costs such as wages, Occupational Health and Safety and insurance costs, constraining the ability of local government to meet community needs for infrastructure and services.

Many of the coastal councils experiencing population growth were originally based on rural, fishing or forestry sectors and had relatively small town populations resulting in a relatively small rate base. Because of rate pegging the growth of the rate yield has been modest. For example the Eurobodalla Shire Council's general rate is considered to be 20% below the State average. Further compounding the problem for these councils is that the traditional industries in coastal areas have been overtaken by tourism and they now find tourism to be a most important if not the most important economic activity yet councils are attempting to manage on lower than average general revenue.

Rate pegging is not the sole cause of infrastructure shortfalls in coastal areas. Research notes that the current 'tool kit' for funding the provision of infrastructure in coastal areas is not adequate. It recommends the development of a different approach, with a more clearly defined role for each level of government. The objectives of the funding formula would be to:

- Gain the resources necessary to protect significant natural assets in coastal areas
- Develop a 'smart growth' approach to development, which incorporates the principles of sustainability
- Provide coastal councils with the resources necessary to meet the growth in demand for public infrastructure and services in coastal areas associated with tourism.

One of the most urgent needs is for funding to assist coastal councils to undertake the initial preparatory work to scope, research, develop, or initiate pilot projects to address priority funding areas. These priority areas, identified by the Taskforce, include:

- Infrastructure - water, sewer, road
- Public transport systems
- Education and health infrastructure
- Managing the interface between urban and natural / protected areas
- Local economic development and community wellbeing

This approach reflects the findings of recent research (Gurran, Squires & Blakely 2005) that observes that 'actual infrastructure gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population visitor needs (roads, sewer, water services and public transport). Smaller population centres experience a shortage of social, professional and health services and a lack of education and training opportunities' (p. 58). Further it is noted that 'the infrastructure needs of coastal councils affected by rapidly growing resident and visitor populations are significant. However councils have very limited opportunities to increase funds for infrastructure provision under the rates and levies they control' (p. 47).

The report goes on to recommend that 'long term infrastructure plans – covering a 15-25 year time span need to be crafted for each for these communities, with State government assistance and a subsequent commitment of up-front funding to implement these plans. Such plans should be closely linked to regional settlement and environmental planning processes' (p. 58).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the NSW Government initiates a process of conducting a detailed scoping and assessment of infrastructure gaps for coastal areas throughout the State and provides the necessary funding to enable coastal councils to prepare such detailed assessments.

4. ENHANCED COORDINATION

The Taskforce notes that current methods of planning, funding and managing population and tourism growth in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate.

It promotes the adoption of a coordinated approach to managing growth in coastal areas that would be based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal growth is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.

Australia does not have an agreed national policy or framework for planning and managing coastal areas. There is a clear need for enhanced coordination of planning and management of coastal growth at a local, regional, state and Commonwealth level.

There is also a greater need for cross-jurisdictional coordination between all levels of government in relation to coastal planning and management.

Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005) point out that 'there is a need for a national framework to lead coastal policy, establish strategy responses to population growth in coastal regions, and to support and resource regional and local coastal planning initiatives. Suitable models for emulation exist in the UK, US and European Union' (p. 59).

The need for greater cross jurisdictional coordination is also evident. The researchers state that in 'comparison to many other nations, Australia's national responses to coastal urbanisation are limited. This is partly due to a historic devolution of environmental responsibility to the States under the Australian Constitution. However, the Commonwealth has an important indirect influence on environmental policy and planning through its funding, taxation, and international trade powers. It can play an important role in national policy making, by setting policies directly and through national government councils (such as the Council of Australian Government and the Natural Resource Ministerial Council) (p. 41).

Since its formation in 2004 the Taskforce has had as one of its key platforms in planning for sustainability the establishment of a collaborative working relationship with all State Governments to develop coordinated regional plans that provide:

- a focus on sustainability of social capital, the environment and economic activity
- greater certainty about the extent and rate of growth in sea change communities
- joint planning of infrastructure and services
- employment opportunities to match population growth

To assist in the process of coordinating coastal planning and management, the National Sea Change Taskforce recommends that a special reference to sea change be included in relevant Commonwealth and State portfolios.

RECOMMENDATION

That a special reference to sea change be included in relevant Australian and State portfolios to assist in the process of coordinating coastal planning and management.

At a State level, it is considered that implementing the initiative contained in this recommendation would assist the adoption of a whole of government approach to the management and coordination growth in coastal areas. The Queensland Government has adopted this approach through the Office of Urban Management, which has been established to manage and coordinate rapid growth in south-east corner of the State.

The Taskforce considers that effective regional settlement planning is a priority in NSW. The provision of infrastructure is one of the critical factors as are other factors including social, environmental and heritage concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

Enhanced coordination at regional, State and national levels should be seen as a priority.

5. BEST PRACTICE MODELS FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

The Taskforce recognises the need for enhanced understanding and use of best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management in coastal areas. These are seen as integral factors that can address the challenge that growth poses to coastal areas.

Recent research has indicated that there are planning models in the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission worthy of consideration in the Australian context.

To progress the development and sharing of this knowledge the Taskforce is in the process of contracting the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake this research. The research will involve the following steps:

- Literature review to identify the characteristics of the sea change phenomenon/similar trends and related issues in the international context
- Research and analysis of best practice planning models in relation to the key issues of environment and heritage, community wellbeing, economy, tourism, infrastructure and governance, that are currently being used in Australian sea change communities and in similar international contexts
- Identification of broad principles for the effective planning, governance and operational considerations in Australian coastal sea change communities
- Identification of a set of tools and planning options suitable for the various types of sea change communities.

It is hoped that an interim report may be available by July. Once produced, a copy will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration. It is anticipated that a Final Report on best practice in planning for and managing growth in coastal areas will be released in late August 2005.

The Taskforce also proposes to commission further research aimed at developing a range of specific regional and local planning models suitable for application in Australian sea change communities.

6. SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Rapid population and tourism growth is having a significant social impact on existing coastal communities. Researchers have identified that 'socio-economic disadvantage and polarisation is apparent within and between non-metropolitan coastal communities. Lower incomes and higher unemployment levels characterise most of these areas, including localities with the highest levels of population growth and development activity' (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p. 56).

Sea change growth and its consequences are not just an Australian phenomenon. Professor Ed Blakely, the chair of urban and regional planning at The University of Sydney (formerly Dean of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Southern California) reports that in the United States 'sea changers' from California have been descending on small coastal townships in Oregon in such numbers they have obliterated the original character of the communities. He notes that having destroyed the community character that attracted them, the sea changers move on in search of another town with an appealing coastal ambience. This loss of community identity and character is an insidious process, lasting for years, as long-term residents, and even 'sea changers', complain that 'the place isn't what it used to be'.

There have been winners and losers in the shift to the coast. The obvious winners are property owners in high growth areas who have reaped substantial windfall profits from the sale of their land for development. State and Federal Governments have also benefited from the collection of taxes associated with these transactions, such as capital gains tax, GST and stamp duty. Other winners include the construction industry and commercial operators such as retailers, resort owners and food and beverage outlets.

The influx of so many people into a coastal community impacts in many different ways. Affluent 'sea changers' tend to drive up property prices while low-income earners find they are priced out of the local property market. As Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005) point out 'there are two issues of concern here; firstly, newcomers increase demand for housing, thus increasing land values. At the same time, environmental conservation policies limit the supply of developable land, also increasing values. There is a need to design environmentally sensitive growth management strategies that do not result in the displacement of lower income residents' (p. 60).

Unemployment rates in sea change areas are noticeably higher than in metropolitan areas and youth unemployment is particularly high in coastal growth areas. In particular this appears to be a problem in those LGAs described as Coastal Lifestyle Destinations as opportunities for employment in these communities are not only limited but tend to be in lower paid service sectors like tourism and retail (p. 56). In Eurobodalla Shire Council, for example, the youth unemployment rate is 23.1%, compared to an Australian youth unemployment rate of 13.8% (ABS 2005).

Apart from high unemployment, research indicates that people living in coastal areas have a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole (Haberkorn 2004, Hugo 2004). Non metropolitan coastal areas also have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Eight per cent are receiving labour market benefits compared to 5.9% in Australia overall (Hugo p. 17).

The Taskforce considers that further research is required to assess the social implications of sea change growth. The focus of such research should include socio-economic disadvantage, health, ageing, housing and the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings. In addition, the Taskforce is concerned about the impact of urban growth and development on the environment in coastal areas. The level of development is placing many coastal environments at risk of serious degradation. As Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005) observe 'coastal environments are under major pressure. Environmental problems include habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development and tourism, loss and degradation of coastal wetlands, change in hydrological systems and marine habitats, the introduction of exotic species and erosion' (p. 55).

Another issue of concern is the future of agricultural land in coastal areas. It has been noted that 'innovative planning mechanisms to offset the financial impacts of conservation on private lands are urgently needed in Australia's coastal communities. Examples include tradeable development rights; incentives; and flexible application of development controls. State governments should assist local councils in developing such approaches and recognise those that do so by both monetary and public awards programs' (p. 55).

7. CONCLUSION

The sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in NSW and in every other state in Australia.

It can only be addressed through a commitment on the part of local, State and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way.

There is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid population and tourism growth in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment. It could also lead to the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of NSW coastal communities.

This submission has attempted to demonstrate that infrastructure provision in coastal growth is an area of concern. This is considered something that needs to be identified and addressed before relevant and appropriate decisions concerning future development in coastal NSW can be made.

To effectively manage population and tourism growth in coastal NSW needs a coordinated and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and management from national, State and local governments. Only then can the range of issues impacting on local communities such as social, economic and environmental be adequately considered and addressed.

What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

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Appendix 1 – Census data

The tables below show available ABS Census data showing population growth in a number of coastal councils

TABLE A.1.1 - Ballina Census 1986-2001

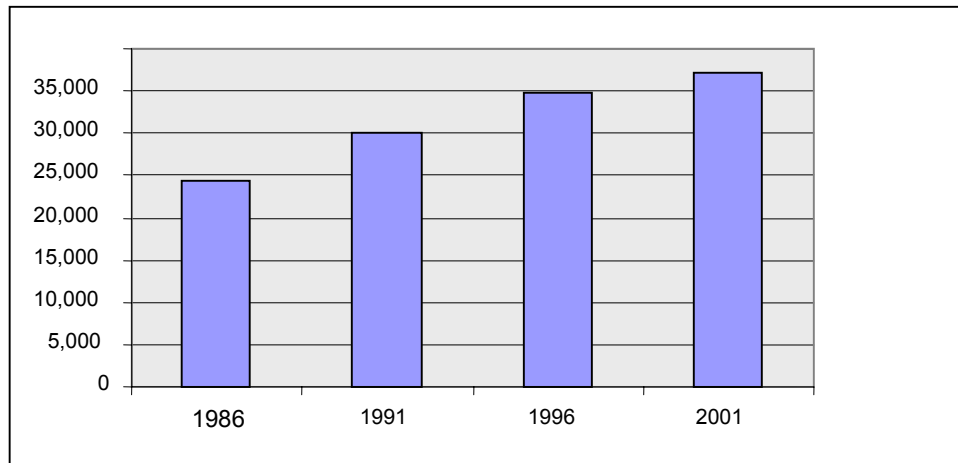
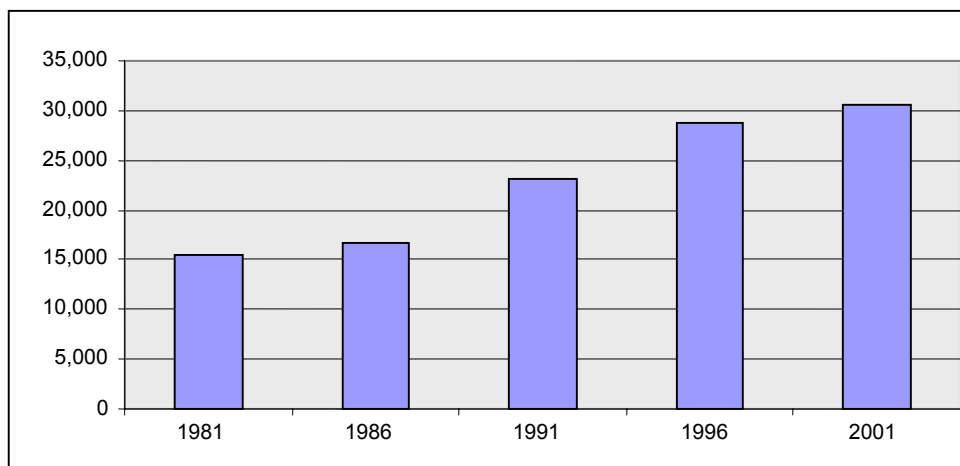
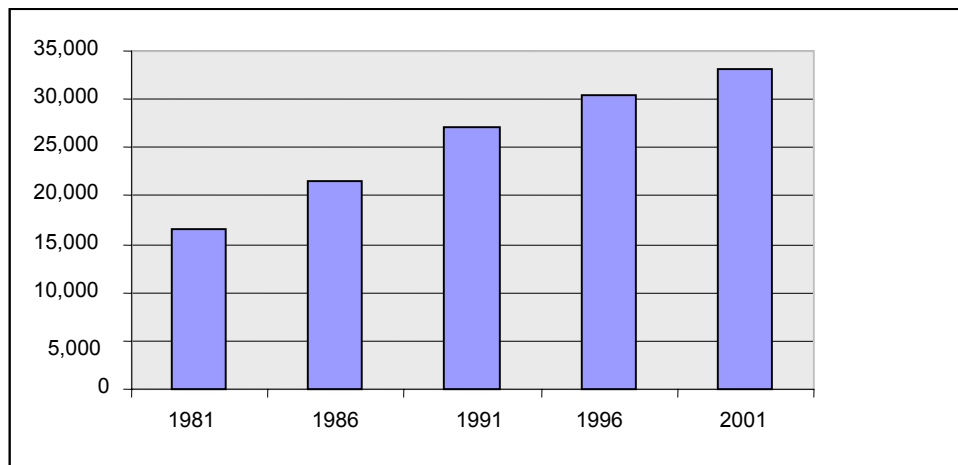


TABLE A.1.2 Bega Valley Census total population 1981 - 2001



NOTE – 1981 figure is a pre-amalgamation total

TABLE A.1.3 Eurobodalla Census total population 1981 – 2001



SOURCE: ABS Census 1981 - 2001

TABLE A.1.4. Gosford Census total population 1986-2001

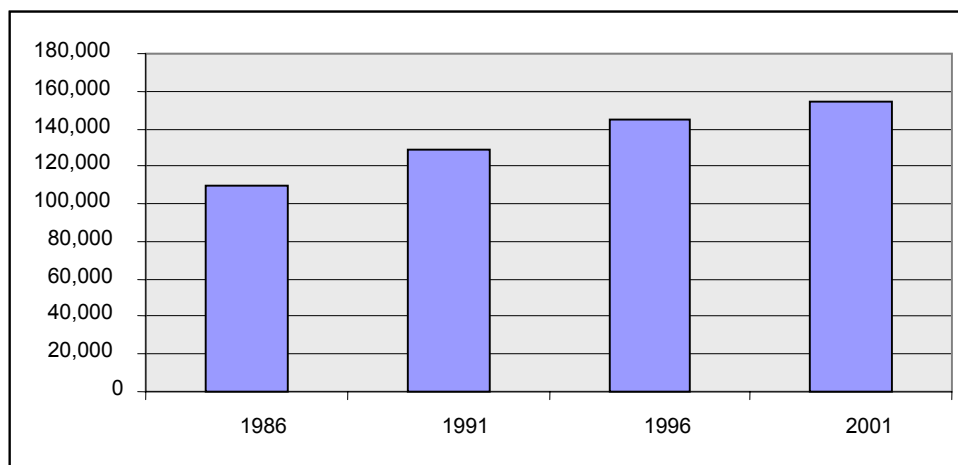


TABLE A.1.5 KIAMA SHIRE COUNCIL Census total population 1981 - 2001

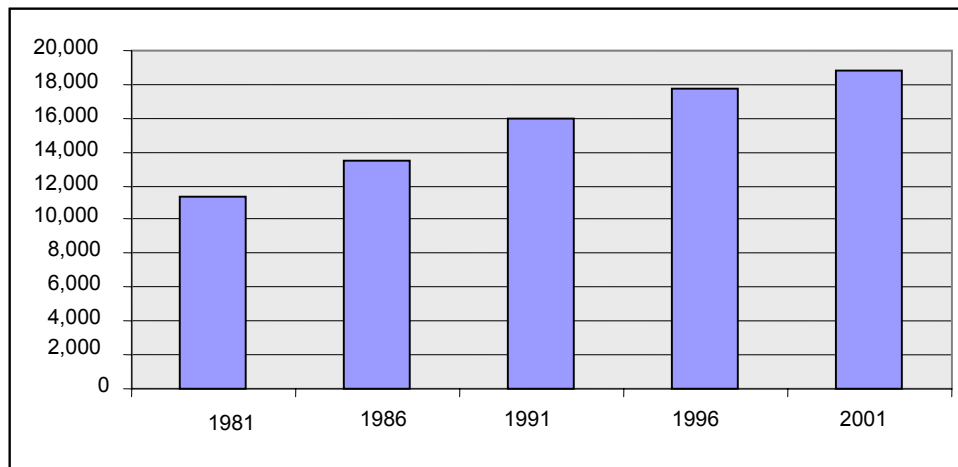


TABLE A.1.6 NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL Census total population 1986 - 2001

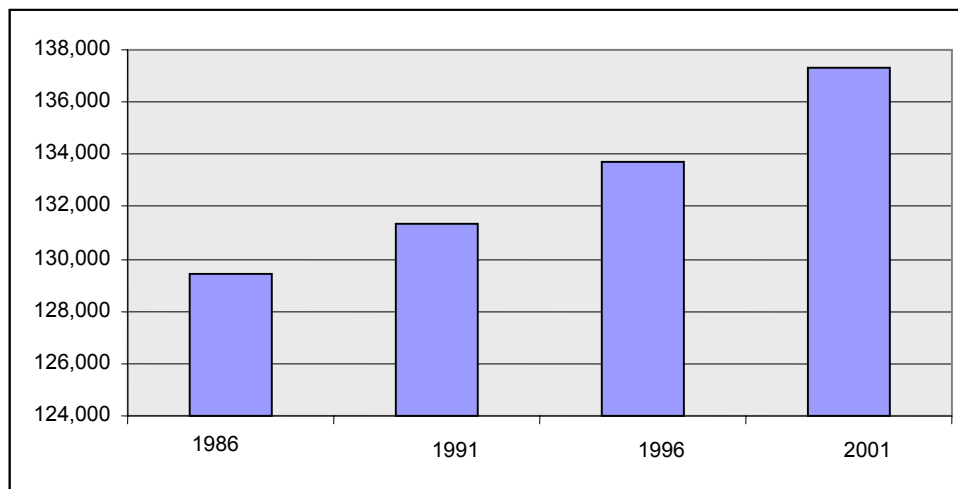


TABLE A.1.7 SHELLHARBOUR Census total population 1981-2001

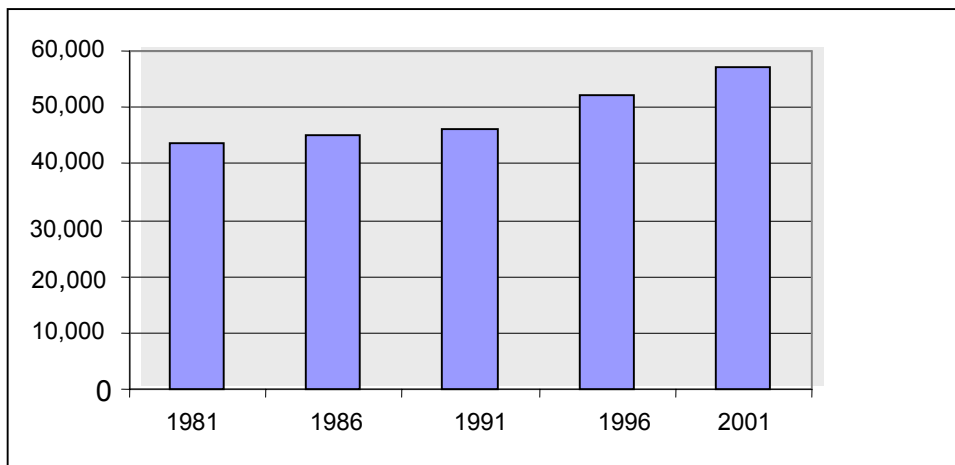
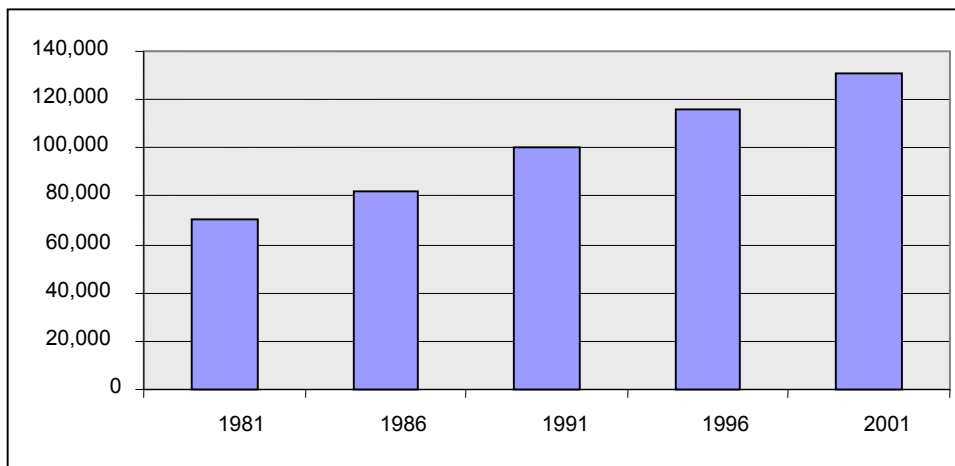


TABLE A.1.8 WYONG Total Population Census 1981 -2001



Appendix 2 – Estimated Resident Population NSW coastal growth councils 1999-2004

TABLE A.2.1 Ballina Estimated resident population 1999-2004

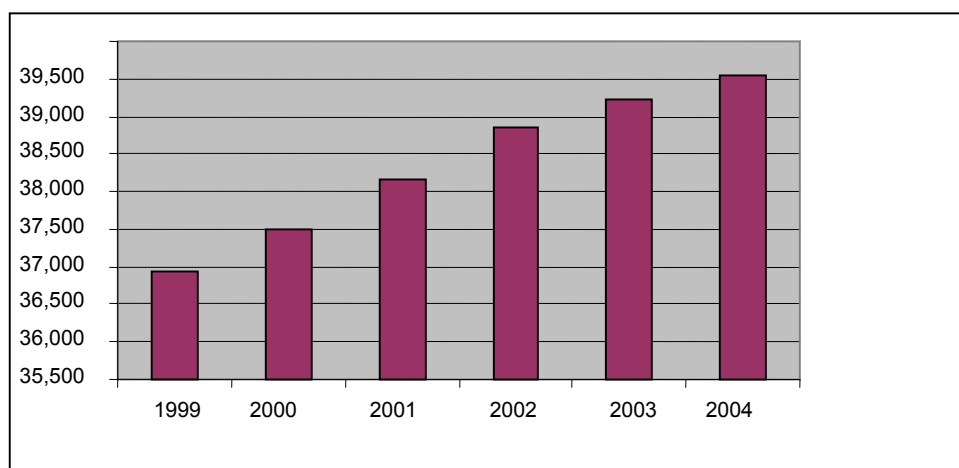


TABLE A.2.2 Bega Valley Estimated resident population 1999-2004

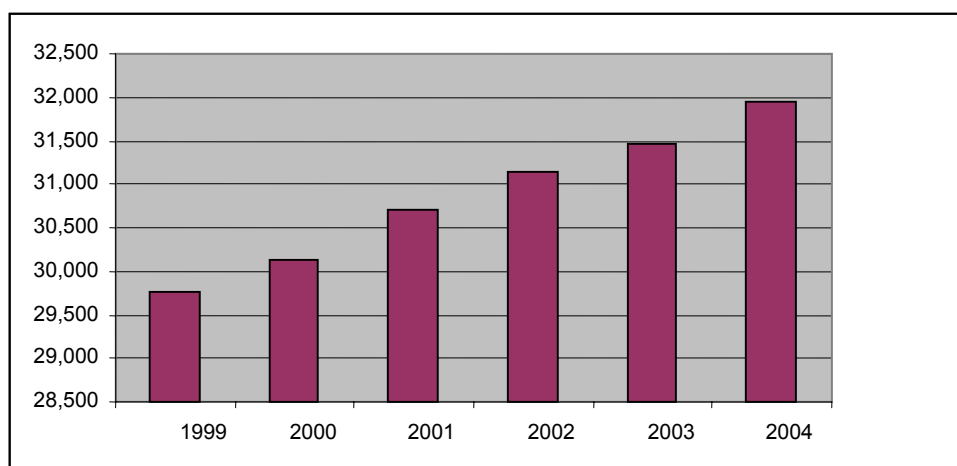


TABLE A.2.3 Coffs Harbour Estimated resident population 1999-2004

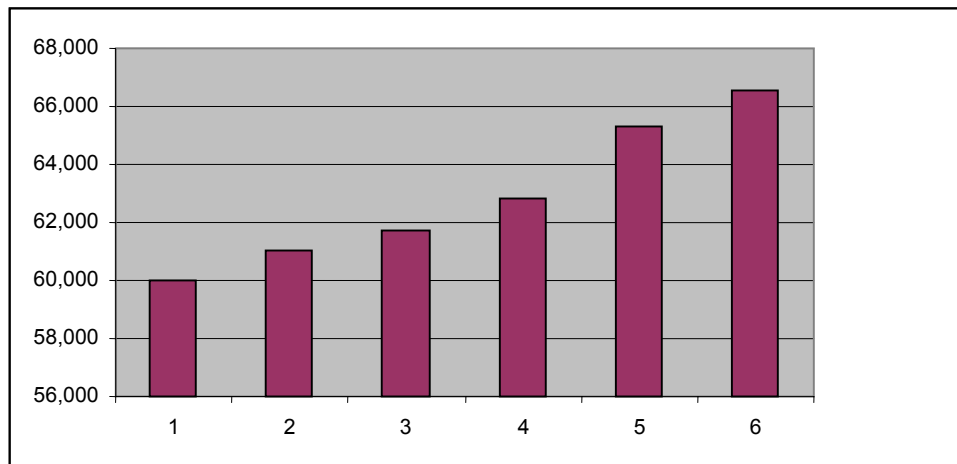
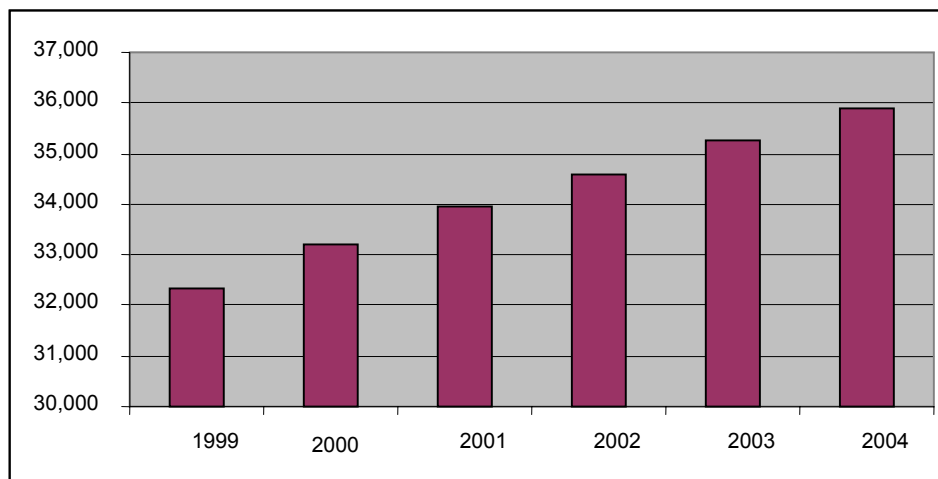


TABLE A.2.4 Eurobodalla Estimated resident population 1999-2004



SOURCE: ABS 2004a and 2005

TABLE A.2.5 GOSFORD Estimated resident population 1999-2005

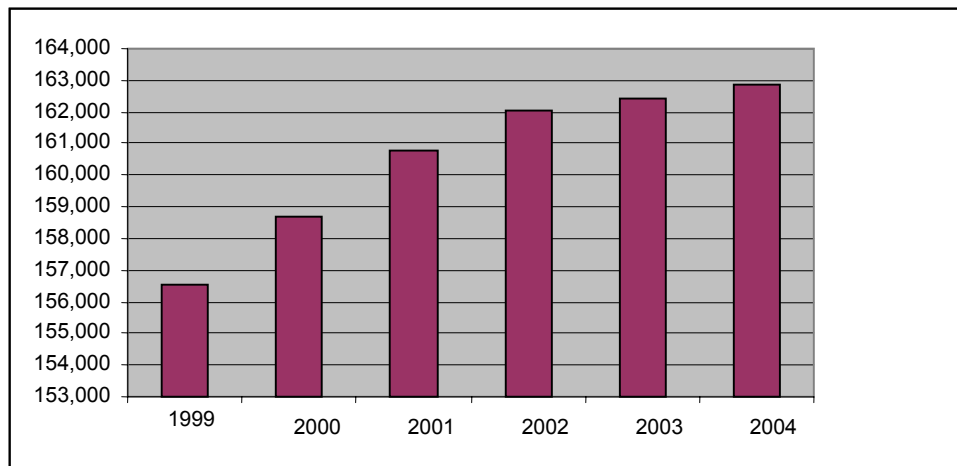


TABLE A.2.6 GREAT LAKES Estimated resident population 1999-2004

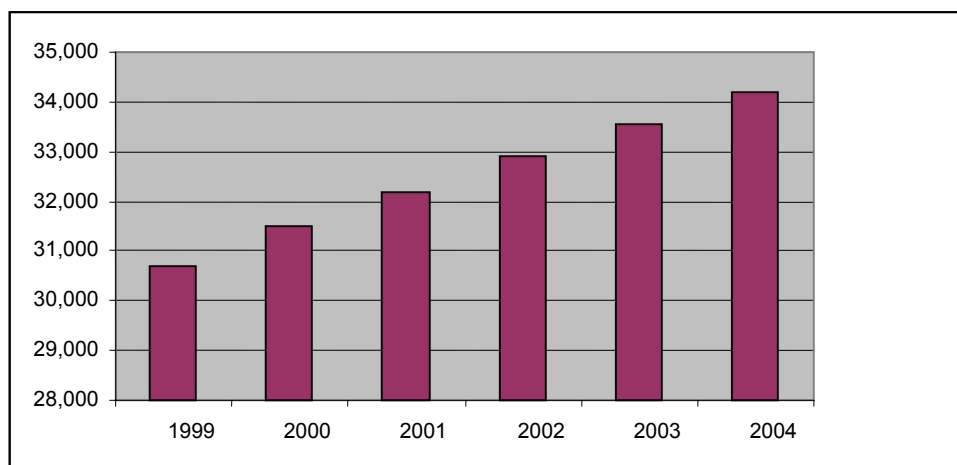


TABLE A.2.7 GREATER TAREE Estimated resident population 1999-2004

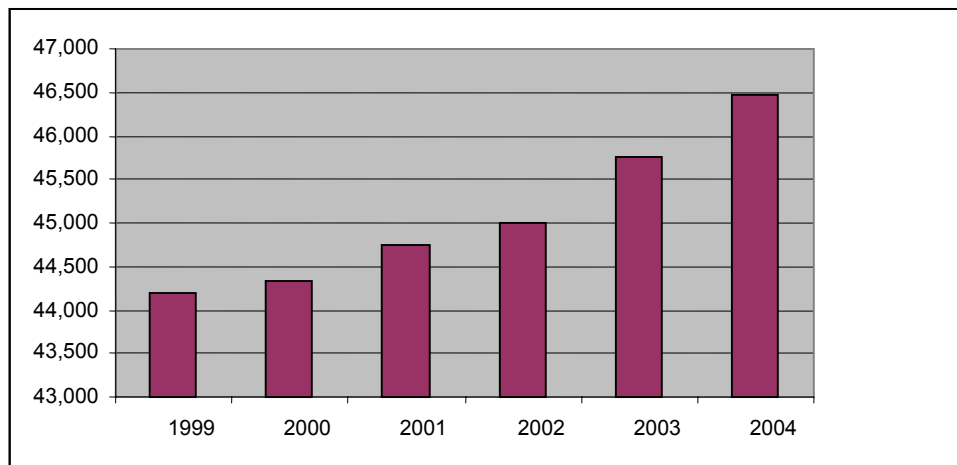


TABLE A.2.8 HASTINGS Estimated resident population 1999-2004

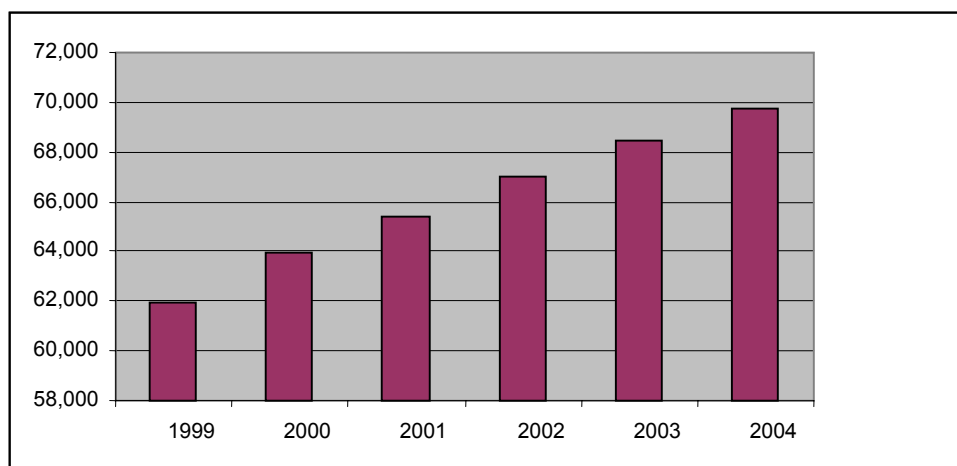
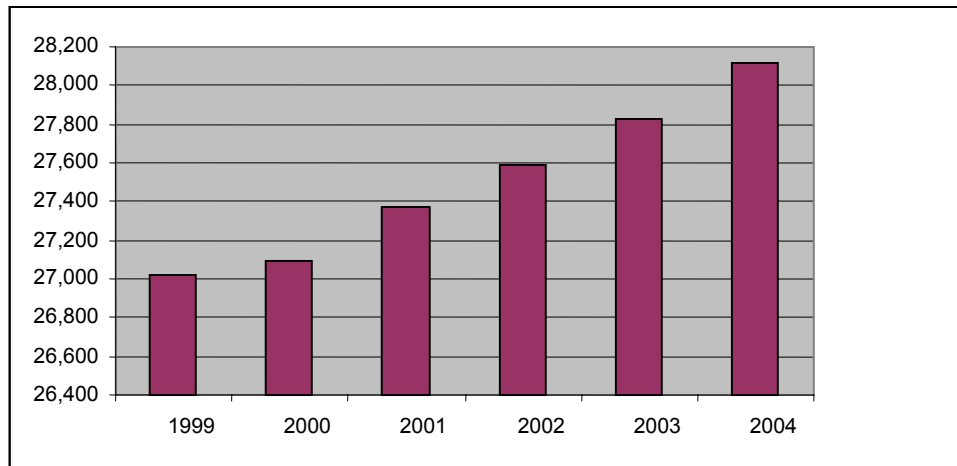


TABLE A.2.9 KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004



SOURCE: ABS 2005 and 2004a

TABLE A.2.10 KIAMA Estimated resident population 1999-2004

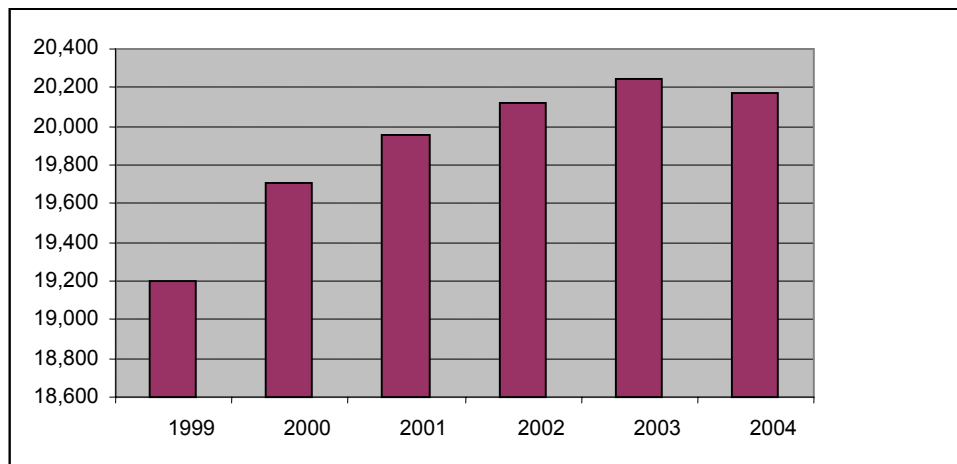


TABLE A.2.11 LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

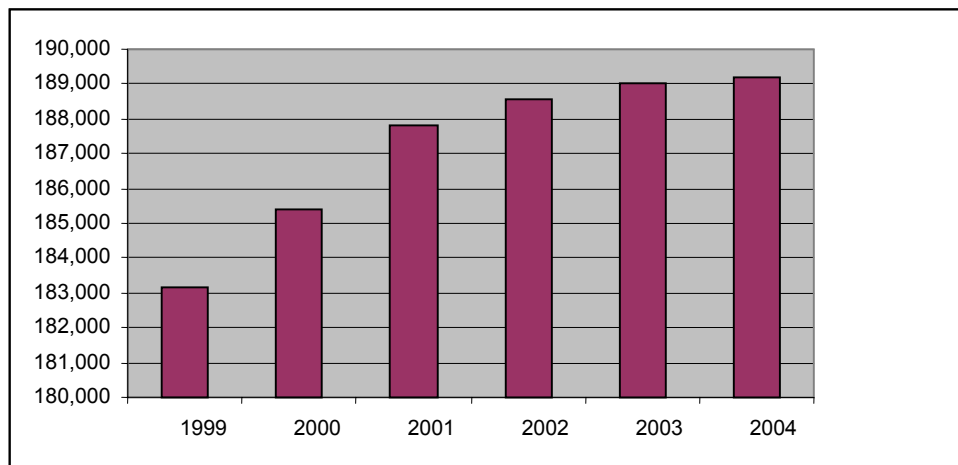


TABLE A.2.12 NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

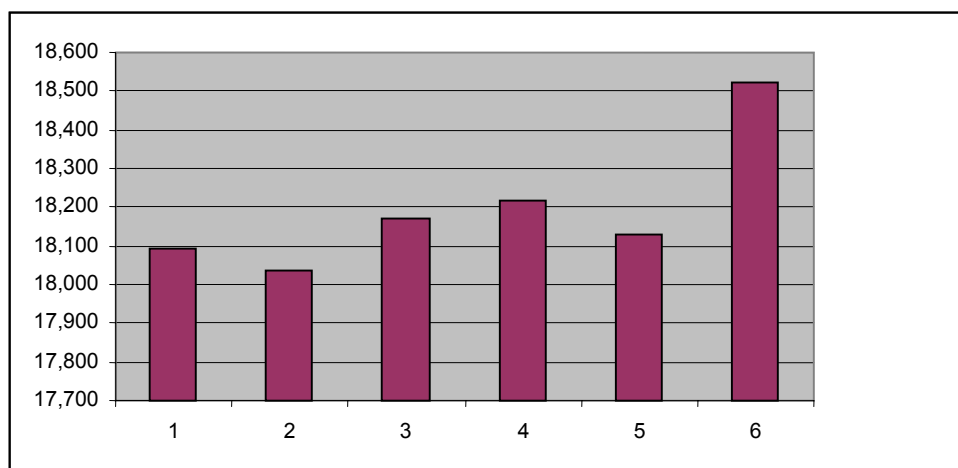


TABLE A.2.13 NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

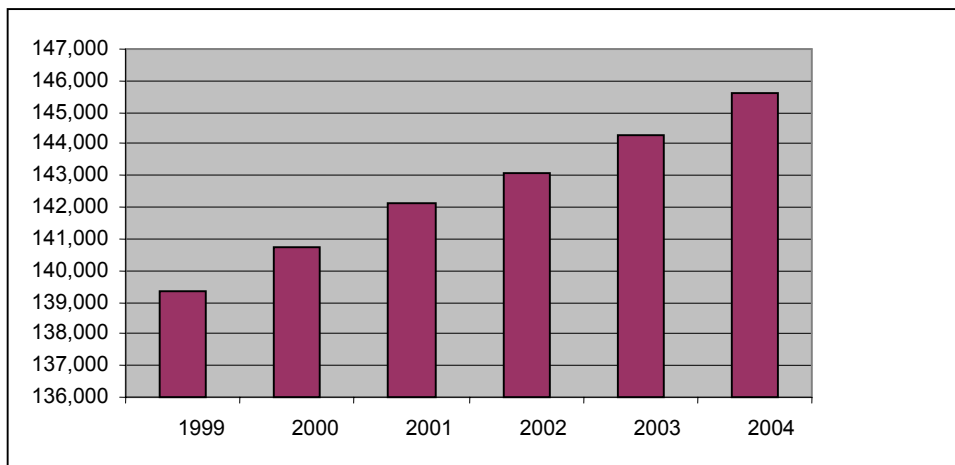


TABLE A.2.14 PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

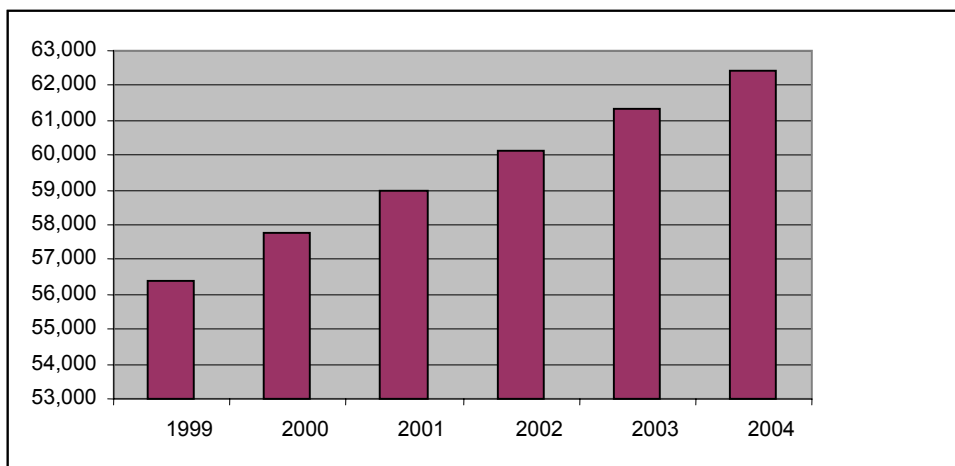


TABLE A.2.15 SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

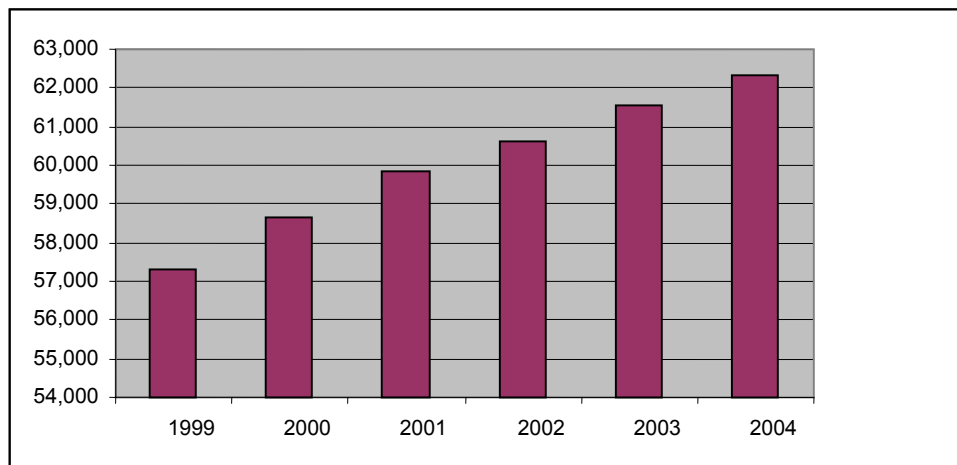


TABLE A.2.16 SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

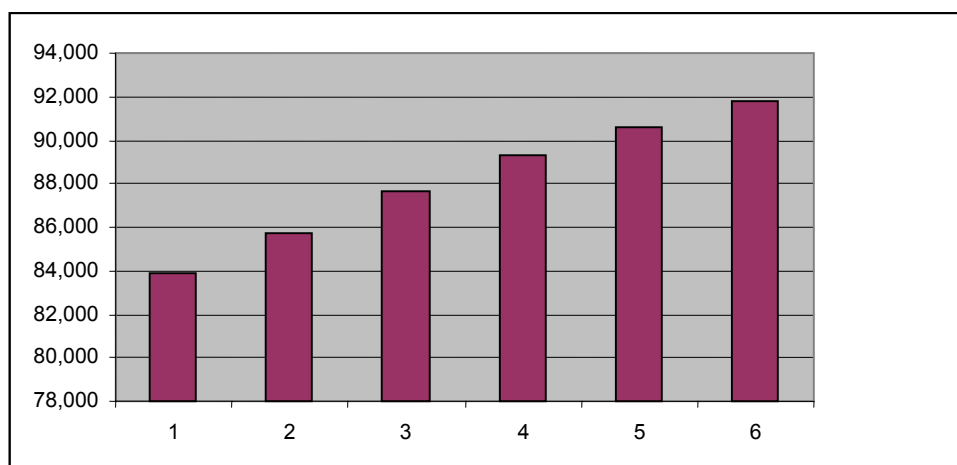


TABLE A. 2.17 TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

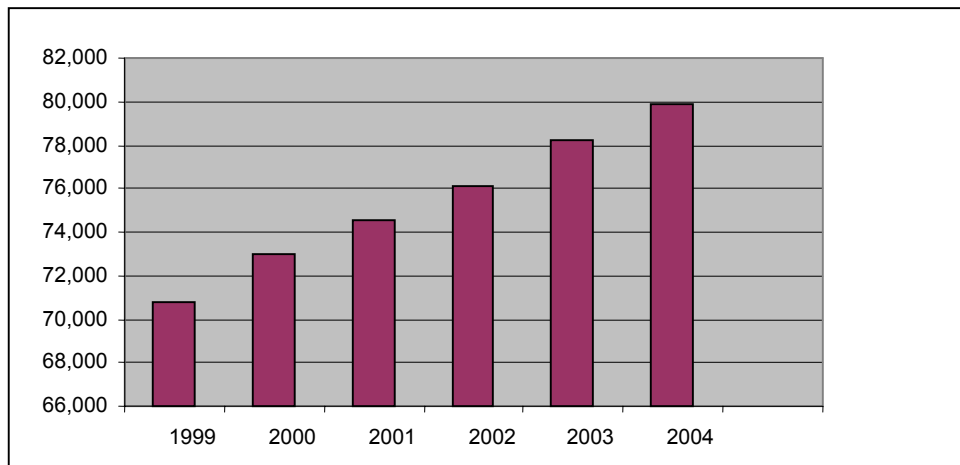


TABLE A.2.18 WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004

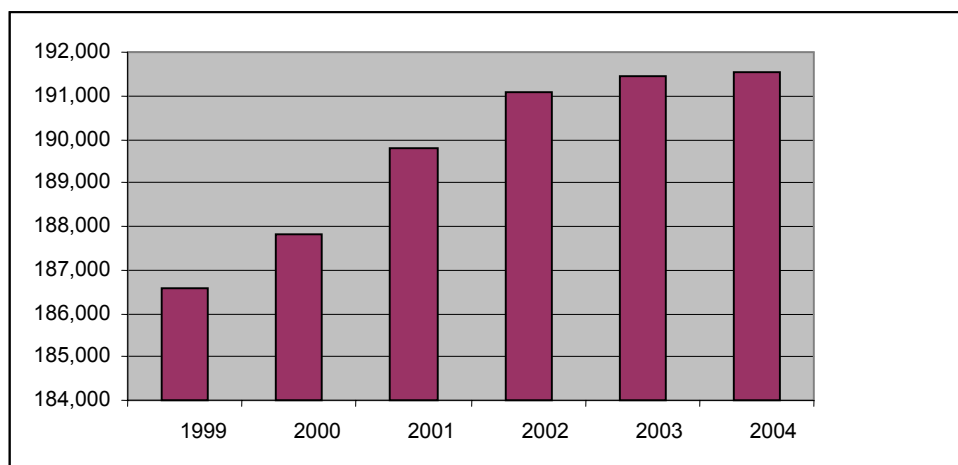
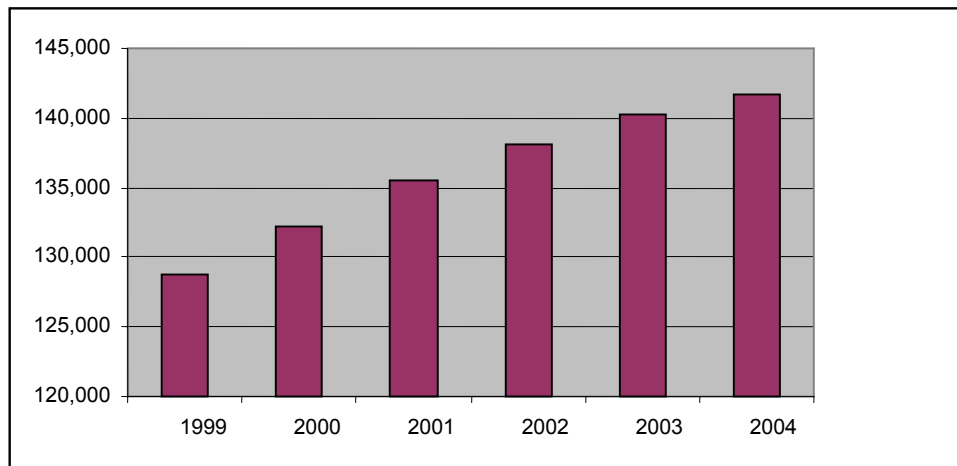


TABLE A.2.19 WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL Estimated resident population 1999-2004



Appendix 3 - Maroochydore Communiqué

On 1 and 2 February 2004, 27 CEOs from rapidly growing councils across Australia met at a Summit held at Maroochydore in Queensland, to discuss the phenomenon known as 'sea change'. This change involves the unprecedented, fundamental shift of population to coastal lifestyle areas. The combined population of Sea Change Councils is currently estimated at 4 million – about 20% of the Australian population. Sea Change Councils are experiencing the highest growth rates in Australia.

The movement of population to the coast will continue for at least the next 20 years and will create enormous demand for essential infrastructure such as roads, water, sewerage, and services such as public transport, health care, police and emergency services and education facilities. It was agreed that there is a need for improved coordination between local, State and Federal Government. It was also agreed that the participation of the public and private sectors and the community is essential in achieving successful outcomes. The following actions were endorsed:

Advocacy

- Establish a national taskforce of CEOs from Sea Change councils to assist Mayors and Councillors of their respective councils to gain the cooperation of State and Federal Governments in addressing the challenge of growth in Sea Change areas.
- Advocate the development of a specific 'Sea Change Funding Program' by Federal and State governments to assist councils and regions to deal with increasing demand associated with rapid growth.

Planning for Sustainability

- Establish a collaborative working relationship with State Governments to develop coordinated regional plans that provide:
 - a focus on sustainability of social capital, the environment and economic activity
 - greater certainty about the extent and rate of growth in sea change communities
 - joint planning of infrastructure and services
 - employment opportunities to match population growth

- Develop a framework for identifying and disseminating examples of best practice strategic planning at regional and local levels that have achieved successful outcomes for sea change communities.

Infrastructure and Services

- Conduct a detailed survey of Sea Change councils to quantify the current shortfall for infrastructure and services and to identify future needs and priorities.
- Identify alternative funding options for the timely provision of infrastructure, for example – betterment taxes, advanced developer contributions and public private partnerships.

Community engagement

- Ensure community ownership and participation in key growth decisions through exercises such as community visioning processes.

Appendix 4 - List of Funding LGAs – National Sea Change Taskforce

As at 27 May 2005

City of Albany	WA
Alexandrina Council	SA
Augusta-Margaret River Shire	WA
Ballina Shire Council	NSW
Bass Coast Shire Council	VIC
Bega Valley Shire Council	NSW
City of Bunbury	WA
Burnett Shire Council	QLD
Shire of Busselton	WA
Byron Shire Council	NSW
Caboolture Shire Council	QLD
Cairns City Council	QLD
Calliope Shire Council	QLD
Caloundra City Council	QLD
Shire of Capel	WA
Colac Otway Shire	VIC
Cooloola Shire Council	QLD
Shire of Coorow	WA
Corangamite Shire Council	VIC
Shire of Denmark	WA
Douglas Shire Council	QLD
Eurobodalla Shire Council	NSW
Gingin Shire	WA
Glenelg Shire Council	VIC
Gold Coast City Council	QLD
Gosford City Council	NSW
City of Greater Geelong	VIC
Great Lakes Council	NSW
Hastings Council	NSW
Shire of Irwin	WA
Kempsey Shire Council	NSW
Kiama Municipal Council	NSW
Kingborough Council	TAS
Livingstone Shire Council	QLD

Mackay City Council	QLD
City of Mandurah	WA
Maroochy Shire Council	QLD
Miriam Vale Shire Council	QLD
Moyne Shire Council	VIC
Nambucca Shire Council	NSW
City of Newcastle	NSW
Noosa Council	QLD
City of Onkaparinga	SA
Pine Rivers Shire Council	QLD
Richmond Valley Council	NSW
District Council of Robe	SA
Rockhampton City Council	QLD
City of Rockingham	WA
Sarina Shire Council	QLD
Shoalhaven City Council	NSW
South Gippsland Shire Council	VIC
Surf Coast Shire	VIC
City of Thuringowa	QLD
Townsville City Council	QLD
City of Victor Harbor	SA
City of Wanneroo	WA
Wellington Shire Council	VIC
Whitsunday Shire Council	QLD
Wollongong City Council	NSW
Wyong Shire Council	NSW
District Council of Yorke Peninsula	SA