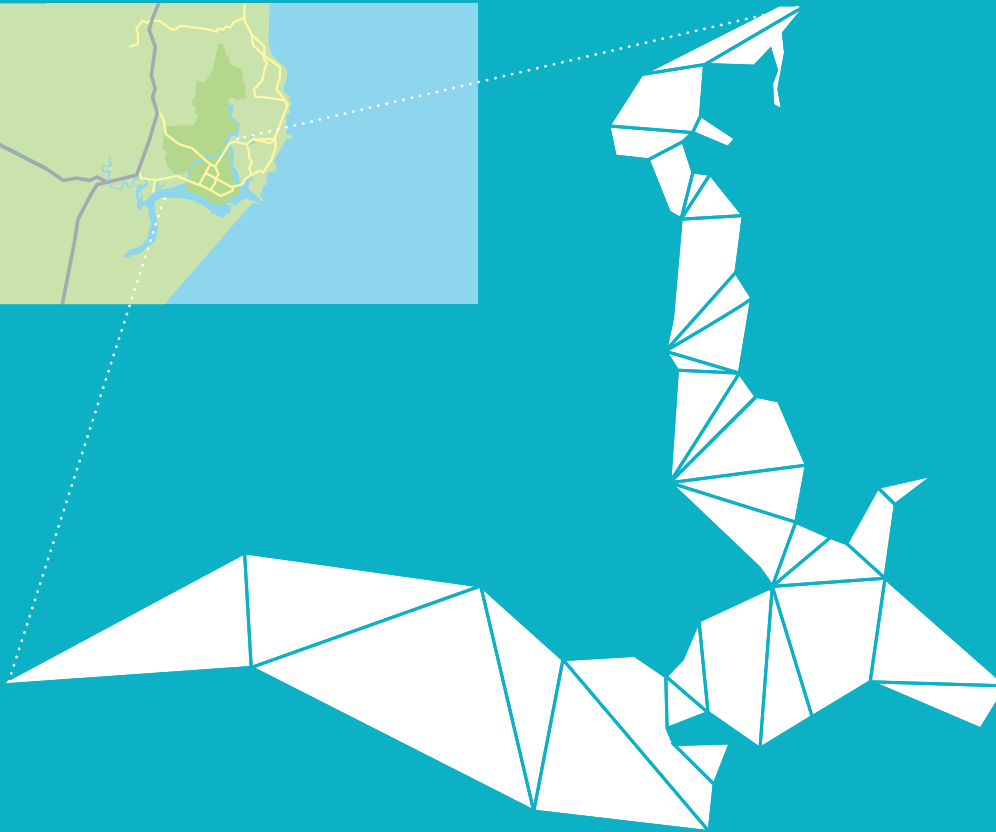


Ballina Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement

2026-2046

Living in paradise: Our vision, our future

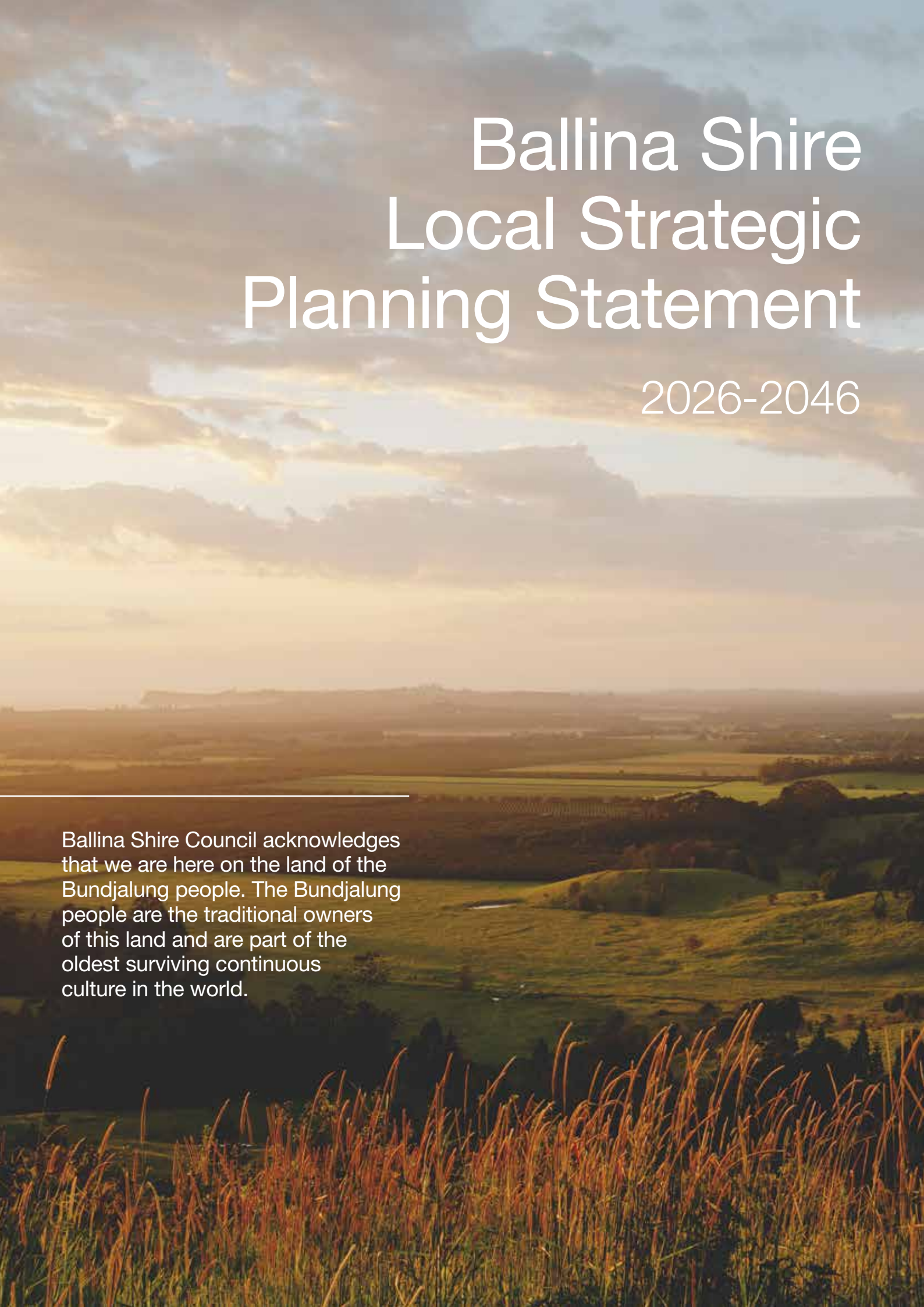


Our design rationale for this document is based on a conceptual interpretation of its contents. To symbolise the strategic community approach, we have used segmented shapes to represent the elements of the community that fit into the geographic focus – Ballina. Together, the shapes form the Ballina River map. Every element impacts on the challenges, direction and ultimately the future of its entire form – our community. We hope you enjoy the journey and the view.

Mapping

© NSW Spatial Services 2025. Although all care is taken in the preparation of plans within this document and its attachments, Ballina Shire Council accepts no responsibility for any misprints, errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. The information contained within each plan is for pictorial representation only. Do not scale. Accurate measurements should be undertaken by survey.





Ballina Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement

2026-2046

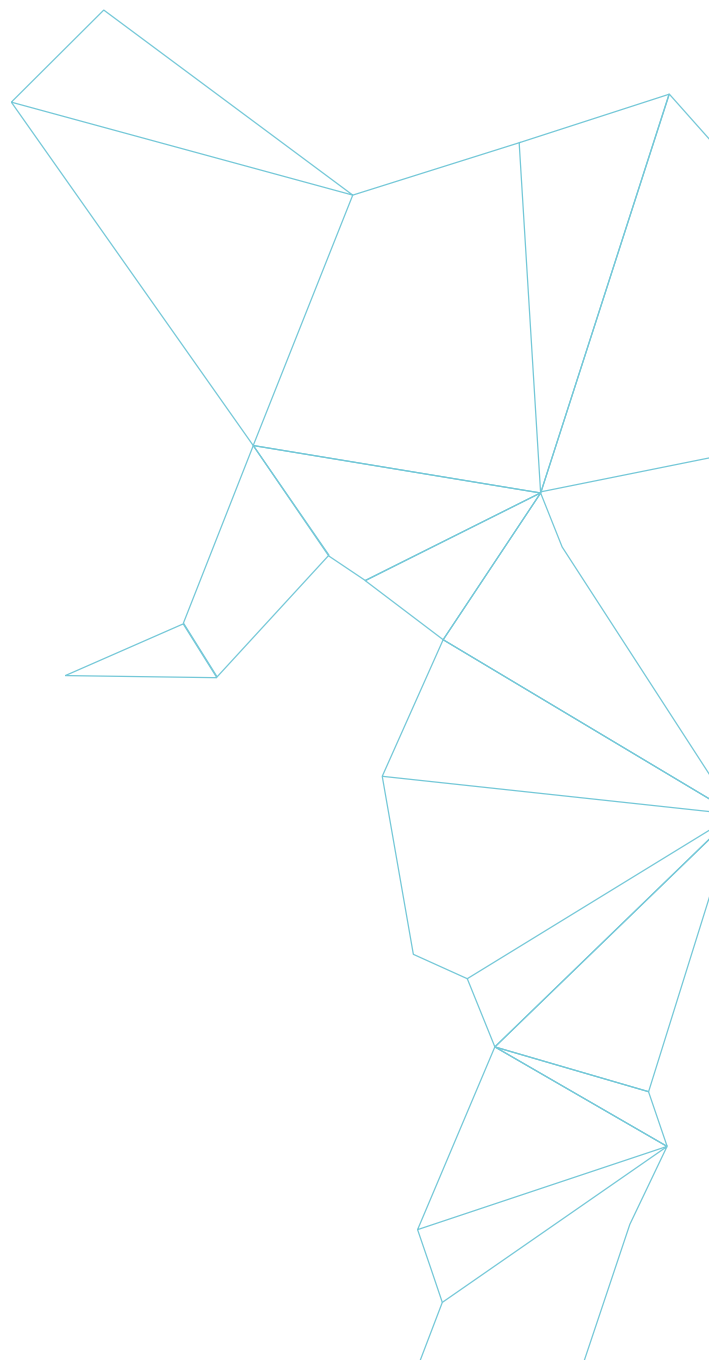
Ballina Shire Council acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people. The Bundjalung people are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world.

Table of contents

Introduction from our councillors.....	6	Economy and employment.....	43
About the plan.....	9	Economic Snapshot	44
Policy context	12	Commercial Centres.....	46
Community engagement	15	Demand for employment space.....	48
Our vision our shire.....	19	Services and infrastructure.....	56
Our vision	20	Roads and Transport.....	56
Our shire	20	Walking & cycling.....	57
Our place in the region	23	Water and Sewer Infrastructure	57
Population growth and demographics	24	Open Space and Recreation.....	58
Future housing	26	Other Community and Health Infrastructure.....	58
Greenfield Housing Sites	26	Rural land use and character	60
Infill Housing	27	Environment and climate change	62
Towns, villages and rural hamlets	34	Biodiversity.....	62
Ballina	36	Climate Change and Natural Disaster Planning	62
Alstonville	37		
Wollongbar	38		
Wardell	39		
Lennox Head and Skennars Head	40		
Rural hamlets	41		
Newrybar.....	42		

Vision, themes and planning priorities.....	66
The plan on a page.....	68
Planning theme:	
Housing and Liveable Spaces	69
Planning priority 1	70
Planning priority 2.....	71
Planning priority 3.....	72
Planning theme:	
Employment and Economy.....	73
Planning priority 4.....	74
Planning priority 5.....	75
Planning priority 6.....	76
Planning theme:	
Healthy Environment	77
Planning priority 7	78
Planning priority 8.....	79
Planning priority 9.....	80
Planning priority 10.....	82
Planning theme:	
Connected Community	83
Planning priority 11	84
Planning priority 12.....	85
Planning priority 13.....	86

Implementation, monitoring and reporting.....	87
Appendix 1:	
Strategic alignment.....	90
Appendix 2:	
Assessment of urban growth area variation principles	93



Introduction from our councillors

The Ballina Shire is one of the most beautiful places in New South Wales. Our beaches and waterways are spectacular, and the hinterland is equally as breathtaking with hidden waterfalls and creeks, and lush pastures that have sustained families for generations.

We are, however, as much defined by the strength of our community as we are of our natural environment.

As a Council it is our role to protect and enhance our beaches, river systems, bush and natural attractions whilst ensuring we foster sustainable economic development that will provide a wide range of employment and business opportunities.

We need to ensure we provide and advocate for housing, facilities, services and infrastructure that caters for the needs of all our residents, from the young to the elderly.

Living in Paradise Our Vision Our Future is an update of Ballina's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) that identifies the community's strategic planning priorities for the next 20 years. It will provide the framework for Council's planning goals, strategies, and targets.

In updating the LSPS, we referred to the things people had previously told us about what they wanted the Ballina Shire to look like in the future, and what issues are important to them.

Prior to the LSPS being finalised it will be subject to additional community consultation which will assist Council to determine the final list of planning priorities and associated actions.

Living in Paradise Our Vision Our Future is Council's commitment to working in partnership with our residents, community groups and the State and Federal Governments to realise our vision:

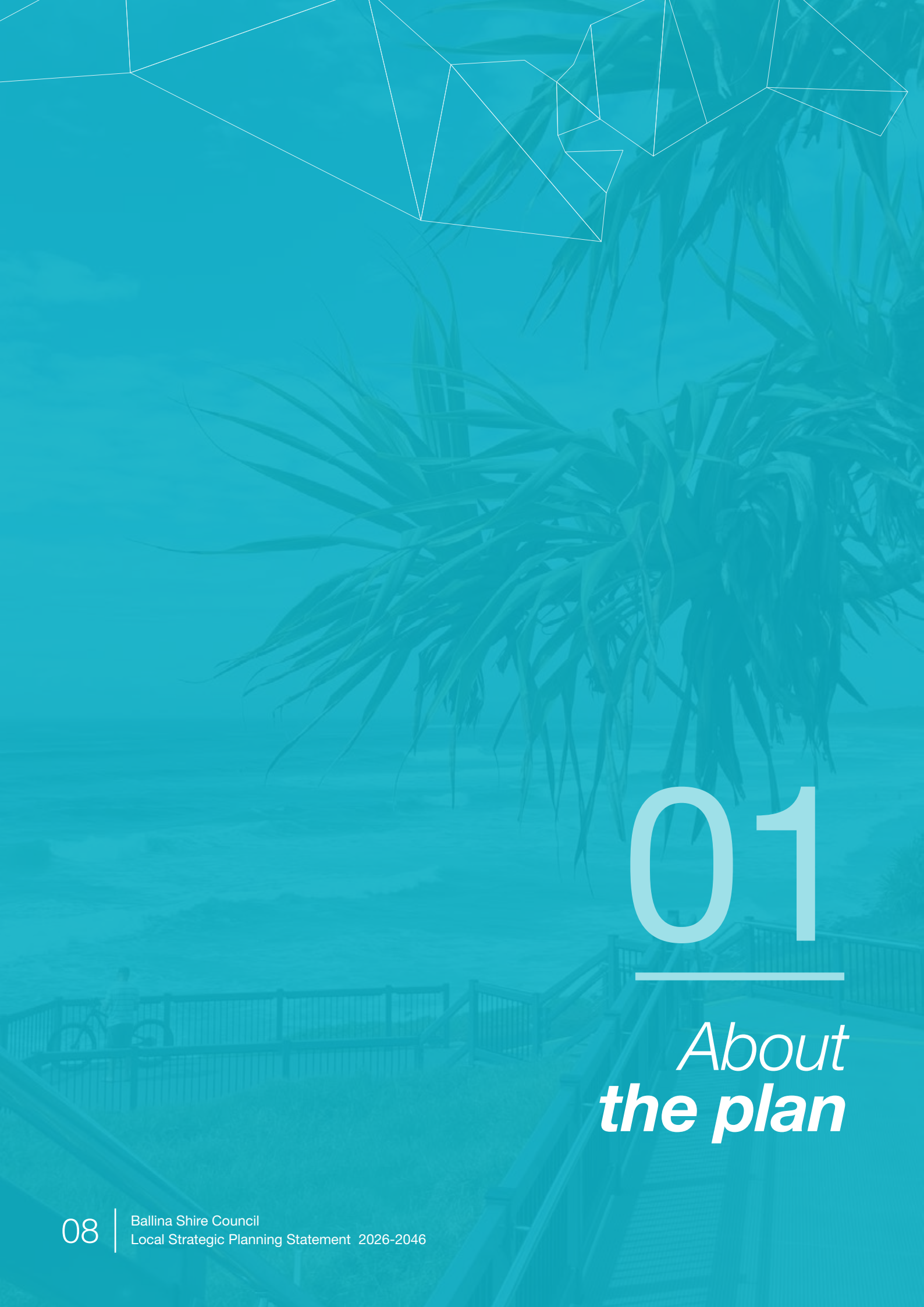
"The Ballina Shire is safe, with a connected community, a healthy environment and a thriving economy"

Our plan lays the groundwork for the Council, our community and other groups, working together, to create a shire that will deliver the best possible future.

*The Ballina Shire
is safe, with
a connected
community,
a healthy
environment
and a thriving
economy*



Pictured L-R: Cr Simon Chate, Cr Michelle Bailey, Cr Eva Ramsey, Cr Damian Loone, Cr Sharon Cadwallader (Mayor), Cr Simon Kinny, Cr Therese Crollick, Cr Kiri Dicker, Cr Erin Karsten, Cr Phillip Meehan



01

About the plan

About the plan

The first Ballina Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) was adopted by Council on 28 May 2020. It is a requirement under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) that Councils review their LSPS within 7 years and to ensure it reflects the economic, social and environmental priorities of the community.

The revised LSPS sets strategic land use planning priorities to 2046 and aligns with objectives in the *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* (NCRP) and Ballina Council's *Community Strategic Plan* (CSP) and the *Delivery Program and Operation Plan* (DPOP).

The LSPS reflects and builds on planning work that Ballina Council has undertaken over many years and is found in various other plans, studies, and strategies that are referenced and summarised within this document. It also suggests future amendments to statutory planning controls such as the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) and Ballina Shire Development Control Plan 2012 (DCP), as well as infrastructure contribution plans.

The LSPS will be considered when any other planning documents are reviewed and updated to ensure strategic consistency.

Since its adoption in 2020, Council has completed 13 of the 56 actions identified to implement Ballina's planning priorities at that time, with many other actions commenced and ongoing. Since 2020 Ballina Shire has experienced natural disasters including the 2022 floods, the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent population spike through increased migration. We have also been impacted by the national housing crisis that has seen the affordability and availability of housing become a major issue for people of all ages.

This review and update of the LSPS reflects these and other changes that were expressed as community priorities through consultation activities. It also reflects a range of other strategic planning work undertaken and adopted by Council since 2020.

The community vision that "*The Ballina Shire is safe, with a connected community, a healthy environment and a thriving economy*" remains the same.



The main changes in this draft LSPS include:

- ▶ Slightly modified Planning Themes, including a new 'Housing and Liveable Places' theme.
- ▶ Modification and consolidation of the Planning Priorities from 14 to 13.
- ▶ New actions that align with the revised planning priorities.
- ▶ Updated growth area maps and the *Growth Management Strategy* (2012) has been superseded and incorporated into the LSPS.
- ▶ Updated data and maps on the proposed location of future residential growth and new housing over the forecast period.
- ▶ Updated data and maps on the demand for new employment land and options for potential sites
- ▶ Updated housing, demographic and forecast growth data post the 2021 Census to reflect anticipated growth to 2046.
- ▶ Updated community engagement section to reflect the findings from engagement activities undertaken in late 2024 to early 2025.
- ▶ Updated references to the revised *North Coast Regional Plan* endorsed and published by the State Government in 2022.
- ▶ Updated alignment and references to the *Community Strategic Plan* (2025 – 2035).
- ▶ Relevant Council strategies are reflected including the Housing Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Destination Management Plan and others such as contributions plans.
- ▶ Updated section on town and village place-based strategies.

The LSPS consists of descriptions, maps, diagrams and figures which provide context and direction for land use decision making in Ballina Shire.

The purpose of the LSPS is to:

- ▶ provide a 20-year land use vision for Ballina Shire,
- ▶ outline the characteristics which make our area special,
- ▶ identify our shared values to be enhanced or maintained,
- ▶ direct how future growth and change will be managed,
- ▶ implement the *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* where relevant to our area, and
- ▶ identify further detailed strategic planning that may be needed



02

Policy context

Policy context

The Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) gives effect to the *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* (NCRP), implementing the directions and actions at a local level. It recognises the growing regional importance of Ballina in terms of residential development, transport, tourism, retail, health, financial and professional services.

The LSPS is also informed by other statewide strategies including:

- ▶ *The NSW Housing Strategy (Housing 2041),*
- ▶ *Future Transport Strategy*
- ▶ *NSW Net Zero Plan*
- ▶ *NSW Climate Adaptation Strategy*

as well as other regional strategic policies including:

- ▶ *Northern Rivers Regional Economic Development Strategy (2023)*
- ▶ *NSWDPI Right to Farm Policy*
- ▶ *NRJO Strategic Regional Priorities (2022 – 2024)*
- ▶ *NSW OEH North Coast Enabling Regional Adaption Report (2019)*

The LSPS works with Council's *Community Strategic Plan* (CP), which has a similar but broader purpose on how Council will work to meet the community's needs. The CSP is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993* and identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future. Objectives identified in the CSP, and the priorities and actions identified in the LSPS are translated into activities to be undertaken by Council in its Delivery Program and Operational Plan (DPOP), which is reviewed annually with progress reports provided quarterly.

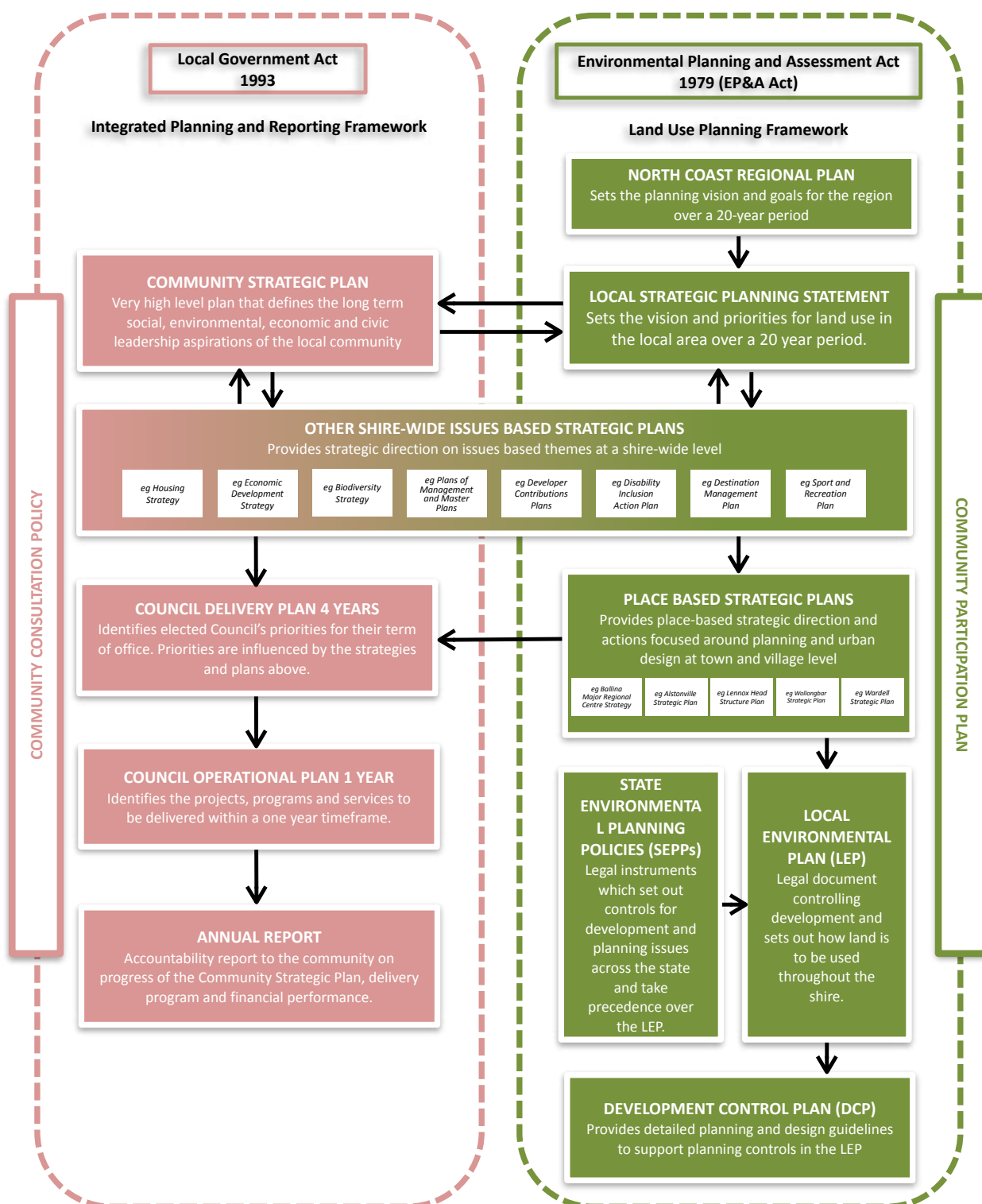
The LSPS reflects planning priorities in Council's local placed-based and other strategies including the Ballina Major Regional Centre and Employment Land strategies, Lennox Head, Alstonville, Wollongbar and Wardell place plans, Biodiversity Strategy, Housing Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Destination Management Plan and others.

A table showing the 'line of sight' between these key documents is provided at Appendix A and is also represented in Figure 2.0.

The revision of the LSPS was guided by the *Ballina Shire Growth Management Strategy (2012-2031)* ('the GMS') which has provided the framework for managing growth and land release areas for new residential, commercial and industrial purposes across Ballina Shire. The revision of the LSPS and a review of the GMS has now combined these documents into a single land use strategy.

The LSPS shows Ballina Council's 'Strategic Urban Growth Areas' (SUGAs) in non-urban parts of the shire that appear, at a broad strategic level, to have potential to accommodate future urban growth. These strategic growth areas will be subject to detailed consideration through the statutory rezoning process prior to the land being available for development.

As our population increases, the qualities that make our Shire special, such as our productive farmland and our natural environment will need to be conserved. The LSPS details some of the strategies required to ensure this is achieved. The planning priorities and actions will provide the rationale for decisions about how we use our land to achieve the Ballina community's broader goals.





03

Community engagement

Community engagement

Development of the original LSPS in 2020 was based on community engagement that had occurred in association with the *Community Strategic Plan (2017)* and placed based strategic plans for Ballina (2015), Wardell (2015), Alstonville (2017) and Wollongbar (2019). Since that time further engagement activities have been undertaken for the Lennox Head Strategic Plan (2023) and the Ballina Housing Strategy (2024).

From October 2024 to February 2025 Council ran a detailed community engagement program to build a comprehensive picture of the needs and desires of the Ballina community over the upcoming decade to update its Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The key themes to emerge from these engagement activities were:

- ✓ Cost and availability of housing, and how future development or growth will be managed from an environmental or lifestyle / character perspective,
- ✓ The importance of beaches and waterways, including their condition, accessibility and facilities that enable their enjoyment, and
- ✓ Infrastructure to meet existing and future populations, from basic needs such as transport networks, water and sewer services, through to those that provide for community wellbeing, such as recreational, sporting and cultural assets.

The CSP engagement included:

500+ randomly selected residents contacted via phone

173 survey responses via Your Say

394 targeted youth survey responses

92 responses via short answer questions, face-to-face engagement and written submissions or drawings.



Community priorities

- ▶ Protect the environment and live sustainably
- ▶ Balancing housing and population growth
- ▶ Enhance waterways and recognise their risks
- ▶ Demonstrate leadership and communication
- ▶ Connect and support all communities
- ▶ Enhance community safety
- ▶ Improve community recreational infrastructure
- ▶ Encourage vibrant foreshores and town centres
- ▶ Provide safe and effective transportation networks

Protect the health of our waterways and natural assets.



What people said

“More affordable housing is needed.”

“Increase parkland/leisure space on all future housing developments.”

“We need seniors living area in the centre of town”

“



The deliberate development of local outdoor shared spaces and active recreation areas has been wonderful...

”

“



We love the bike tracks, community and natural spaces.

”

“I’d love to see a diverse community with a good mix of people and housing options.”

“We need to manage development and population growth”

“The communities of Wollongbar & Alstonville want the buffer between them retained.”





04

Our vision
our shire

Our vision our shire

Our vision

The vision reflects the community's priorities and sets an overarching goal as we plot a course for Ballina Shire's future to 2046.

The Ballina Shire is safe, with a connected community, a healthy environment and a thriving economy

Our shire

Ballina Shire is in one of the fastest growing parts of regional New South Wales. Growth is being driven largely by tourism and lifestyle migration, particularly from the Sydney metropolitan area.

Our main town and commercial centre is Ballina, which is supported by other small towns and villages including Lennox Head, Alstonville, Wollongbar and Wardell. There are also several small villages and localities in the rural hinterland, such as Tintenbar and Newrybar.

Ballina Shire's beautiful natural environment of coastline, waterways, rainforests, wetlands, and the rural hinterland are the foundation of its appeal as a popular residential and tourist destination. Additionally, the mild subtropical climate, moderate rainfall and productive soils provide the foundation for a diverse and productive agricultural base.

Our coast, the Richmond River and the Alstonville Plateau and escarpment are the standout geographic features in the Shire. Their associated waterways, natural habitats, farming landscape and cultural and heritage values, along with the beaches and ocean, help to define our place and communities.



88%
(431 km²)

of land zoned for rural use and environmental protection



3.7%
(1846 ha)

of land zoned for parkland, National Parks and Nature Reserves



3.5%
(1712 ha)

is water / waterways



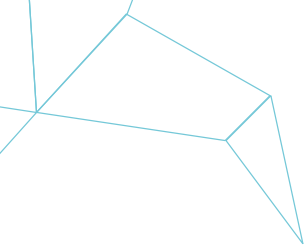
4.2%
(2063 ha)

of land zoned for residential use



0.89%
(437 ha)

of land zoned for employment and infrastructure



Ballina Shire
Land area
491km²





Our shire continued

Ballina Shire is well serviced by high quality infrastructure including the Pacific Motorway and the Bruxner Highway, the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport, parks and modern sporting facilities such as the Ballina Indoor Sports Centre and other critical urban services such as the NBN and state of the art wastewater treatment facilities. Ballina Shire's urban centres are well designed, with good connectivity (by roads and pathways) and abundant open space.

The Pacific Motorway provides a two-lane separate motorway linking Ballina with the Gold Coast (1 hour) and Brisbane (2 hours). South East Queensland had a population of 3.8 million at the 2021 Census, which is forecast to increase to 6 million by 2046¹. This is an extra 2.2 million residents, or a 57% increase, providing the Ballina Shire with a huge and growing marketplace on its doorstep.

Ballina Byron Gateway Airport (BBGA) provides direct jet access to Sydney and Melbourne. Each year, our busy regional airport supports around 635,000 commercial passengers – this is expected to increase to over 900,000 by 2040.

We are proud of Country and our strong sense of place. The Shire is rich in highly valued Aboriginal cultural heritage sites as well as iconic sites of environmental and historical significance. The acknowledgement of contemporary Aboriginal identity, history, culture and presence in the community is important to our Aboriginal community and acknowledges the more distant past.

Our community places a very high cultural value on the natural environment and other outdoor environments, as these features underpin our lifestyle. These include conservation areas, beaches and foreshores, parks, walkways and cycle ways as well as the wharves and jetties enable boating and fishing activities. We aim to foster cultural activity that promotes the heritage, stories and unique features that are the Ballina Shire and make the Shire an attractive place to live and visit.

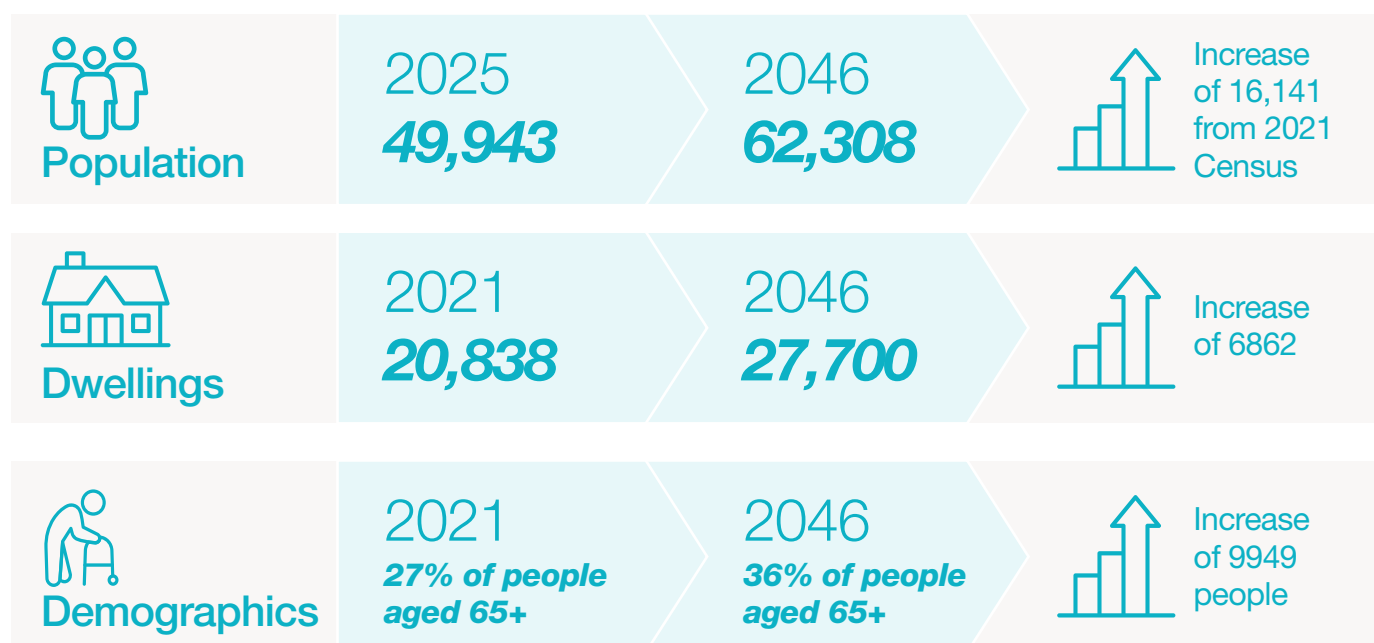
Our social environment is also seen as a key strength. The general friendliness of our community as well as diverse level of skills and education of our residents are valued by the community.

Our place in the region

Ballina Shire is in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, which is part of the wider North Coast Planning area as shown in Figure 4.0. Ballina is located 780 km (8.5 hours drive) north of Sydney and 230 km (2 hours drive) south of Brisbane.



Population growth and demographics



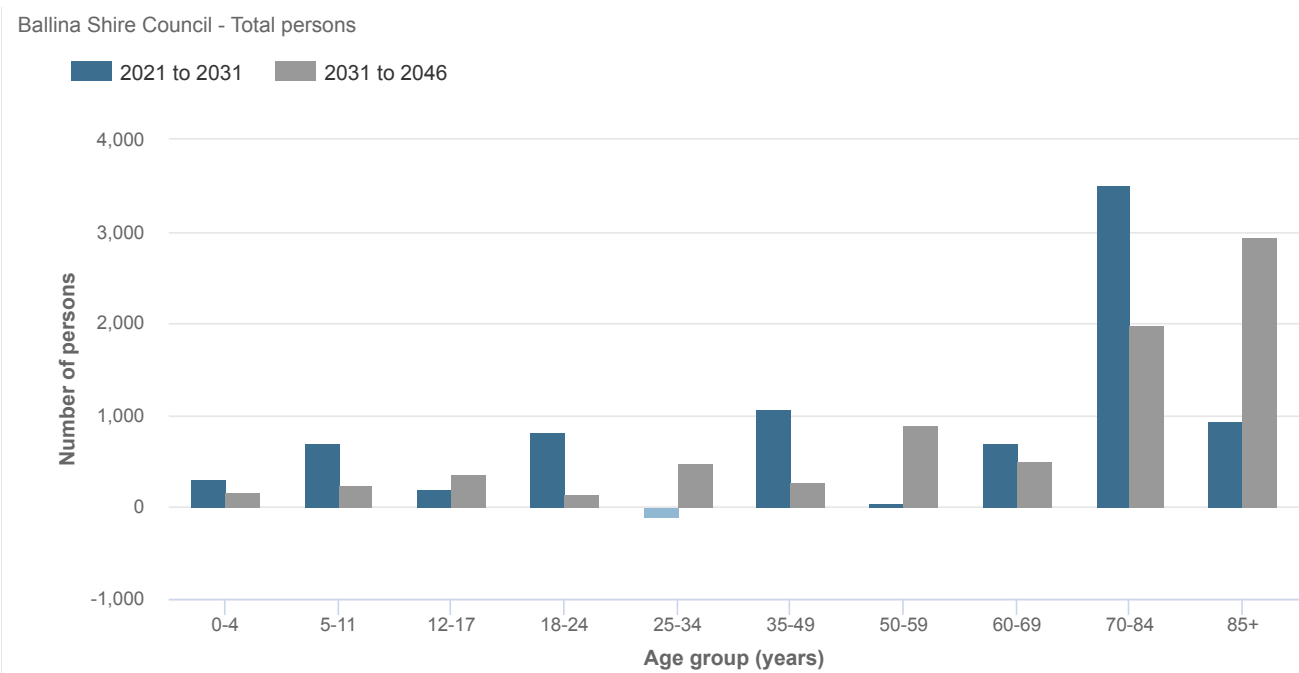
Ballina Shire is continuing to experience relatively high population growth. Between 2011 and 2021 the population grew by 5449 people (13.3%) from 40,747 to 46,196. Over the 25 year period from 2021 to 2046 Ballina's population is forecast to grow to by a further 16,141 people to 62,308 which is an annual increase of 1.21%².

Ballina also has an ageing population. By 2046, 36% of our residents are expected to be over the age of 65 years (up from 27.1% in 2021). Figures from the 2021 census show the dominant age group for people in Ballina Shire was 65 to 69, which accounted for 7.4% of the total population. The largest increase in persons between 2021 and 2031 is forecast to be in ages 75 to 79, which is expected to increase by 1,448 people and account for 6.8% of the total population. The largest 5 year age group in 2031 is anticipated to be 70 to 74 years, with a total of 3,997 persons. By 2046, 9.1% of the population (5671 people) will be aged over 85 years or over.

Between 2021 and 2031, the age structure forecasts for Ballina Shire Council indicate a 13.7% increase in population under working age, a 40.2% increase in population of retirement age, and an 8.4% increase in population of working age³.



Forecast change in age structure - service age groups



To support the housing needs for this increased population, a further 6863 dwellings is likely to be required. This is an average of 275 new dwellings per annum. Ballina Shire Council has, over many years, identified sufficient land for housing (both greenfield and infill), supported by appropriate levels of civil and social infrastructure including water and sewerage, roads, recreation, and community facilities.

Greenfield Housing Sites

There is sufficient greenfield land to meet projected demand for the next 20+ years, which equates to between 2800 and 5400 new dwellings.

Undeveloped residential zoned land is available at Lennox Head, Skennars Head, Kinvara, Cumbalum, West Ballina and Wollongbar. As of 2025 Ballina Shire has just under 400 hectares of vacant residential land available for 'greenfield development'. Of this, 190 hectares had development approval for residential subdivision and arrangements in place for the delivery of infrastructure. An estimated dwelling yield based upon 8 - 15 dwellings per hectare has been provided in the following table:

It is also important to progressively examine options for new land supplies (considering the various advantages and disadvantages) to ensure a platform for residential development in the period beyond the current land supply capacity. Ballina Council has identified approximately 650 hectares as Strategic Urban Growth Areas (SUGAs). These areas could potentially yield a further 1000+ residential lots over the longer term, subject to land constraints.

A review of the suitability of the SUGA areas was undertaken in 2023 including community and stakeholder consultation. The result of the review was that some areas were removed or refined to meet contemporary planning principles regarding environmental constraints and infrastructure requirements. The revised SUGA maps were endorsed by Council and the Department of Planning and have been updated within the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP). These areas will be subject to further detailed investigations of constraints such as biodiversity values, flood and bushfire risk at the time that rezoning for future housing is considered.

Council will also review the option for a third village on the Alstonville Plateau in the longer term if current identified areas are not suitable to meet future demand for housing.

Table 1
Residential Land potential dwelling yield

<i>Location</i>	<i>Residential Zoned 'greenfield' sites</i>	<i>Potential dwelling yield</i>
West Ballina	3.7 ha	29-55
Cumbalum	100 ha	800-1500
Kinvara Area	136 ha	1088-2040
Lennox Head	52.6 ha	420-789
Skennars Head	16ha	128-240
Wollongbar	50.4 ha	403-757
Ballina Shire Total	358.7ha	2868 - 5381

Infill Housing

The *Ballina Shire Housing Strategy*, adopted in May 2024, outlines Council's role in addressing local housing challenges over the next 20 years. The strategy did not update land release areas but instead focuses on actions related to housing diversity, infrastructure capacity, affordable housing, and medium to high-density development within existing areas.

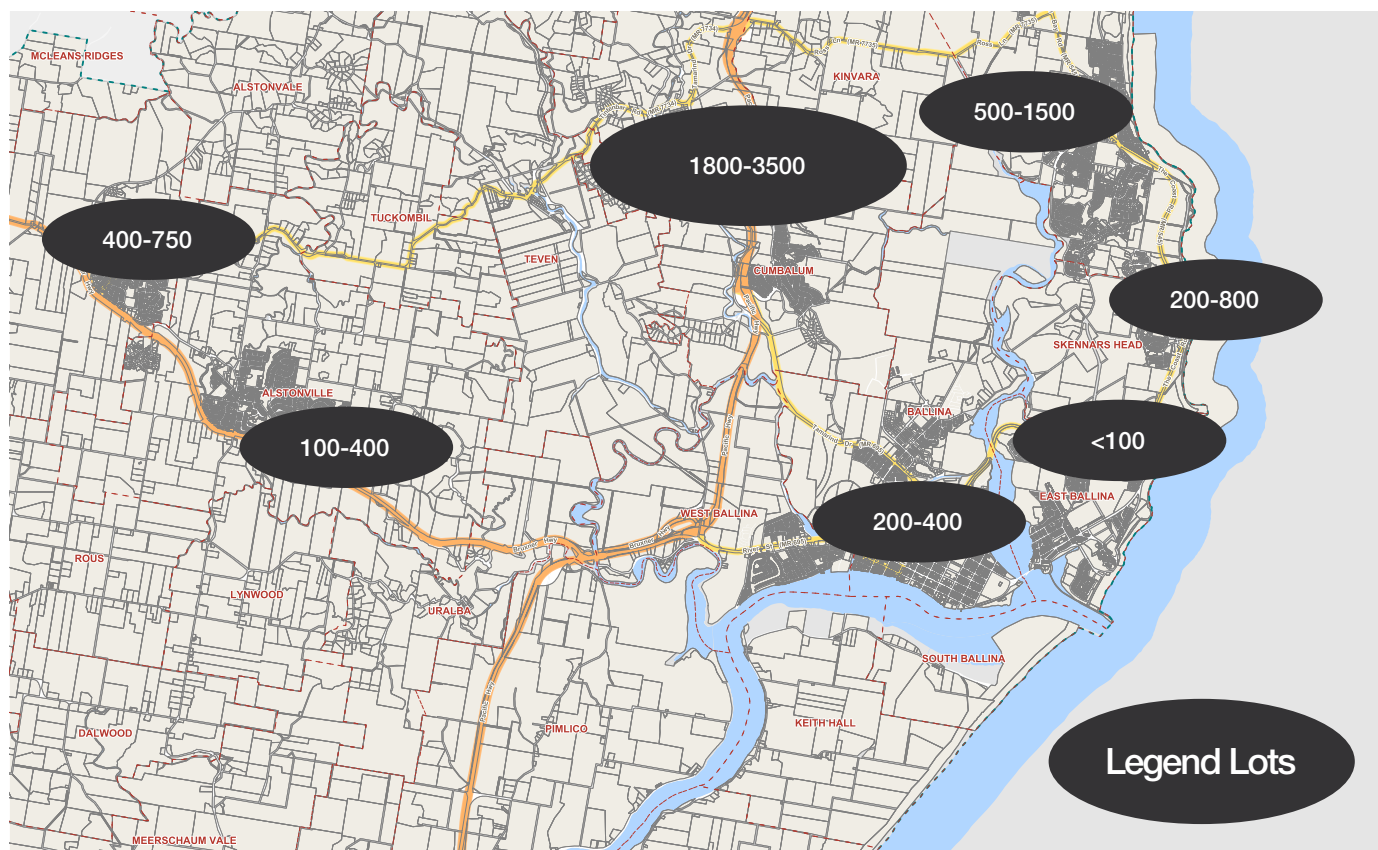
Data from the 2021 Census shows 66% of dwellings across Ballina Shire had only one or two permanent occupants, with an average of 2.34 persons per household. Yet there is a continuing preference for the market to build 3+ bedroom houses. The Housing Strategy aims to increase the mix of housing options to ensure new housing meets the needs of smaller households and the financial capacity of the population, including key workers and low-income households.

In 2024, a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) amendment concerning dual occupancies and

semi-detached dwellings was introduced that facilitates these types of housing in areas zoned R2 Low Density Residential.

Ballina's Housing Strategy identifies a range of further actions for Council to undertake to ensure future housing is available, diverse, walkable and resilient. Increased density in the form of dual occupancy and multi-unit housing will be required and encouraged within established residential areas that have existing social and physical infrastructure, as well as proximity to shops and services.

In existing population centres such as the greater Ballina urban area, Lennox Head, Alstonville and Wollongbar, Council will investigate increasing density provisions and ensuring there is suitable infrastructure capacity; investigate opportunities for housing projects on Council-owned land and establishing community housing trusts, as well as advocating for affordable housing within State and Federal government frameworks.



Forecast dwellings and development

Table 2 (below) and Figure 6.0 (on previous page) show the anticipated location and number of all new dwellings (greenfield and infill) over the 25 year forecast period.

Figures 7-10 show existing residential areas, undeveloped residential zoned land and Strategic Urban Growth Areas (SUGAs). These maps represent the long-term development and land release strategy of Council to meet anticipated population growth, along with associated strategies to increase infill development within existing population centres.

NOTE: Any proposals at North Kinvara (CURA B) and Tintenbar (CURA C) seeking a residential zoning for future urban development are required to demonstrate that essential services can be both economically and practically provided to enable the orderly development of the land. This information must be provided prior to the Gateway determination point in the planning proposal process.

Table 2
Forecast dwellings and development

	2021		2046		Change between 2021 and 2046	
Area	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ballina Shire	20,837	100.0	27,700	100.0	+6,863	+32.9
Alstonville	2,687	12.9	3,086	11.1	+399	+14.9
Ballina (Island)	3,915	18.8	4,077	14.7	+162	+4.1
Ballina (North)	1,126	5.4	1,281	4.6	+155	+13.8
Cumbalum - Tintenbar	1,093	5.2	3,892	14.1	+2,800	+256.2
East Ballina	2,838	13.6	2,848	10.3	+11	+0.4
Lennox Head	3,240	15.6	4,703	17.0	+1,463	+45.1
Skennars Head	551	2.6	1,605	5.8	+1,054	+191.3
Teven - Newrybar - Rural North	998	4.8	998	3.6	0	0
Wardell - Rural South	1,514	7.3	1,585	5.7	+71	+4.7
West Ballina	1,528	7.3	1,746	6.3	+218	+14.3
Wollongbar - Mcleans Ridges	1,348	6.5	1,879	6.8	+531	+39.4



Residential Growth Areas Cumbalum / Kinvara / Tintenbar area

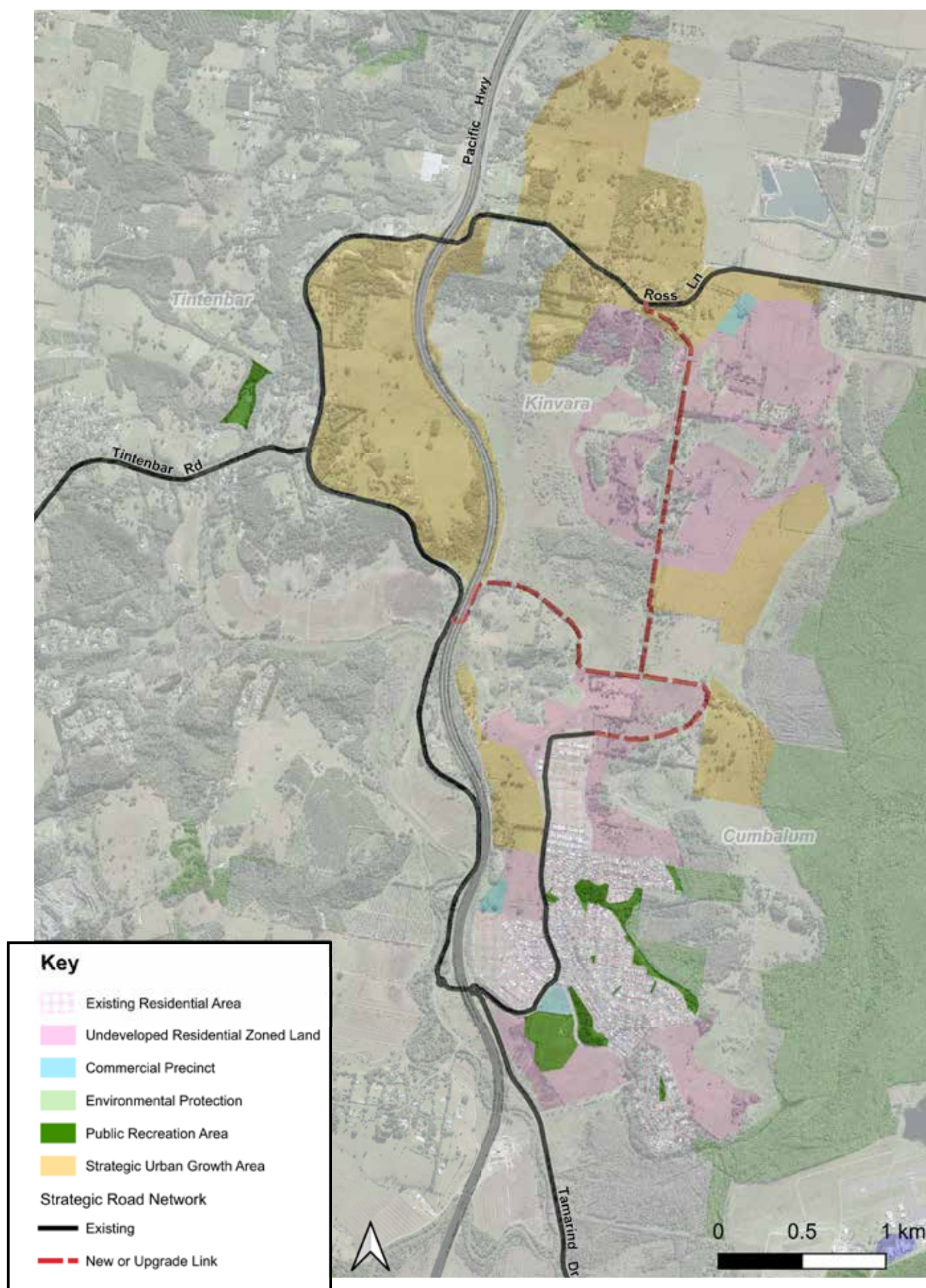


Figure 7.0
Residential Growth Areas
Cumbalum / Kinvara / Tintenbar area

Residential Growth Area Ballina



Figure 7.0 (b)
Residential Growth Areas
Ballina

Residential Growth Areas Lennox Head / Skennars Head area

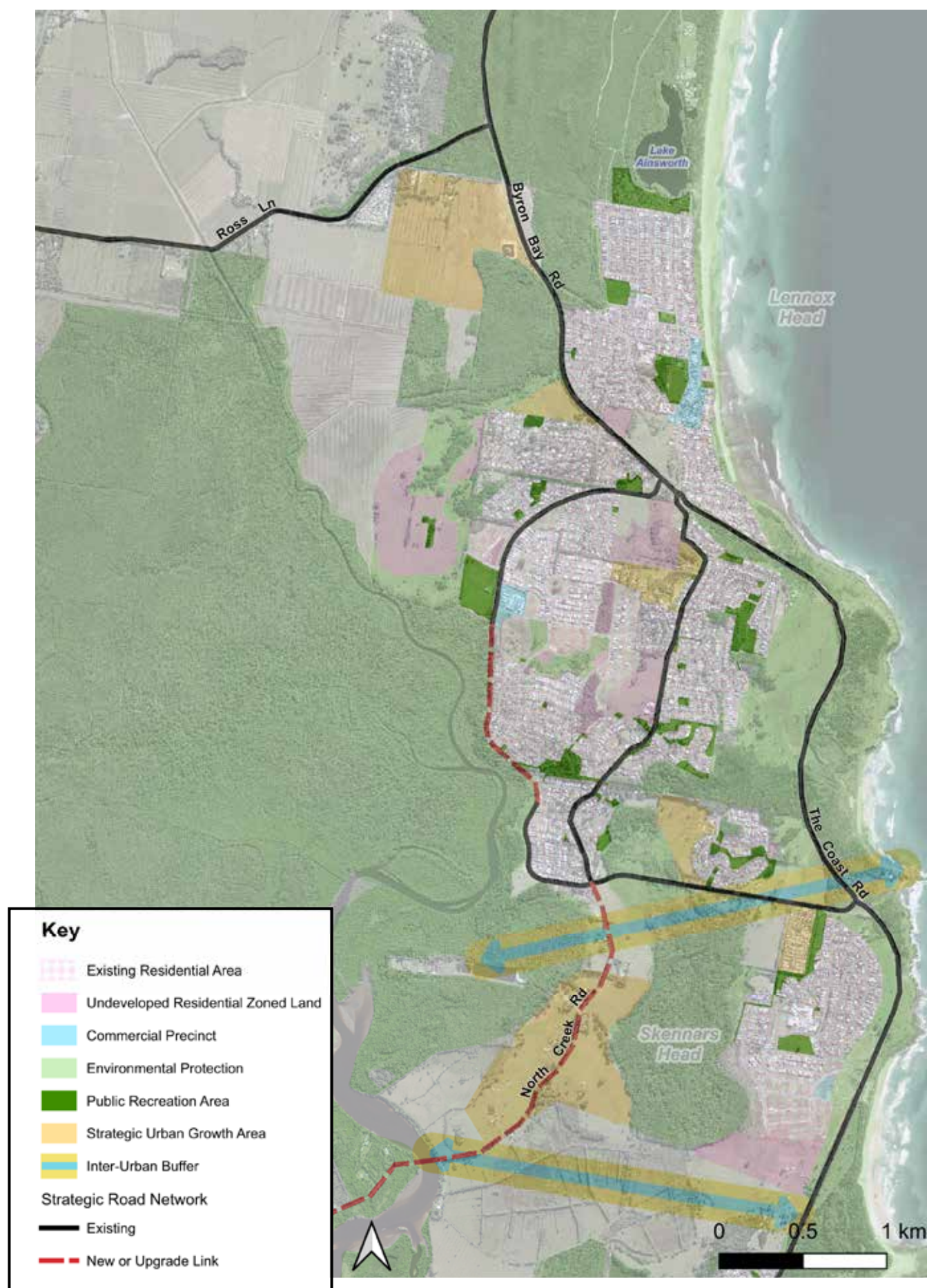


Figure 8.0
Residential Growth Areas
Lennox Head / Skennars Head area

Residential Growth Areas Wollongbar / Alstonville area

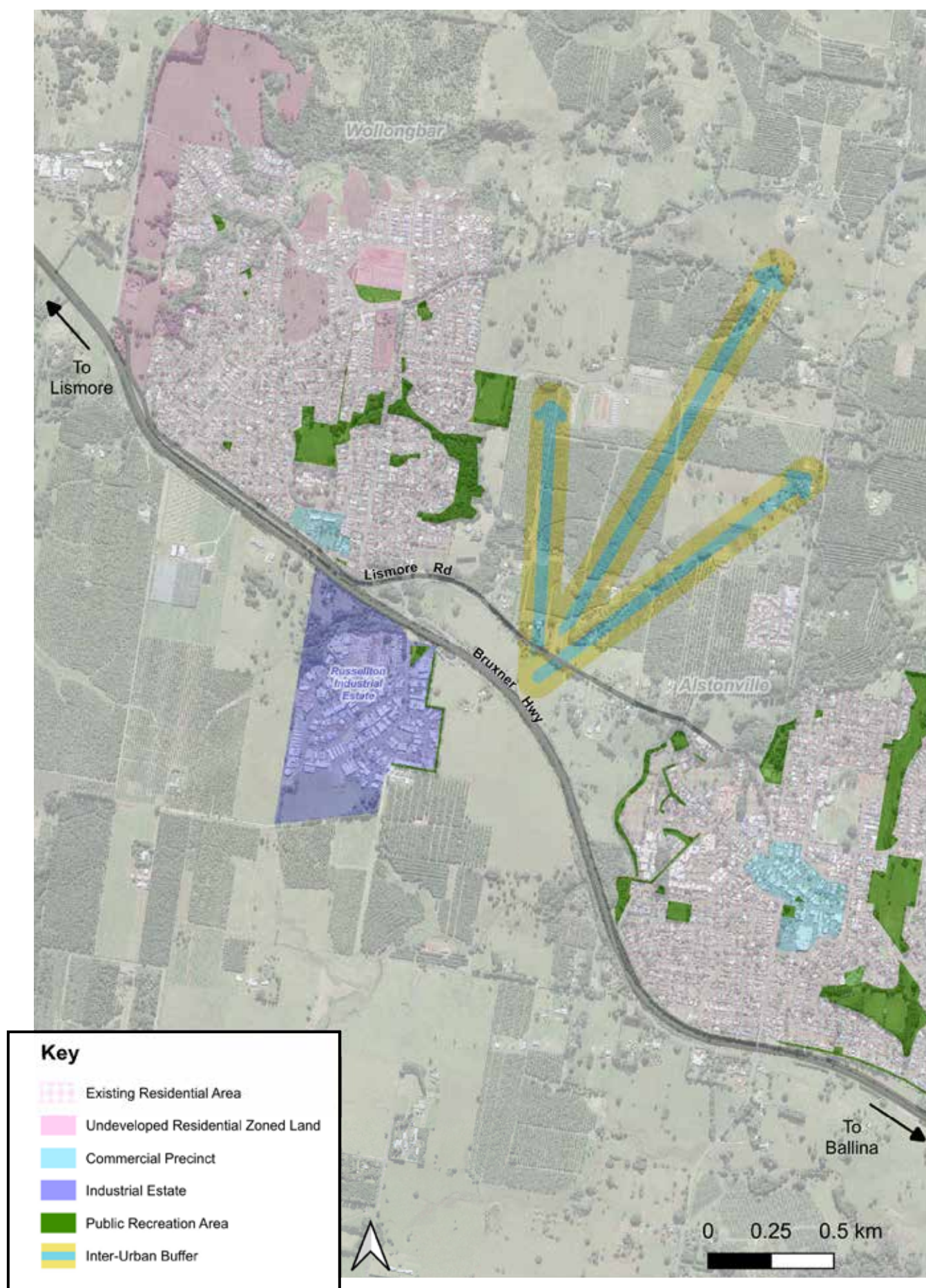


Figure 9.0
Residential Growth Areas
Wollongbar / Alstonville area

Residential Growth Areas Wardell

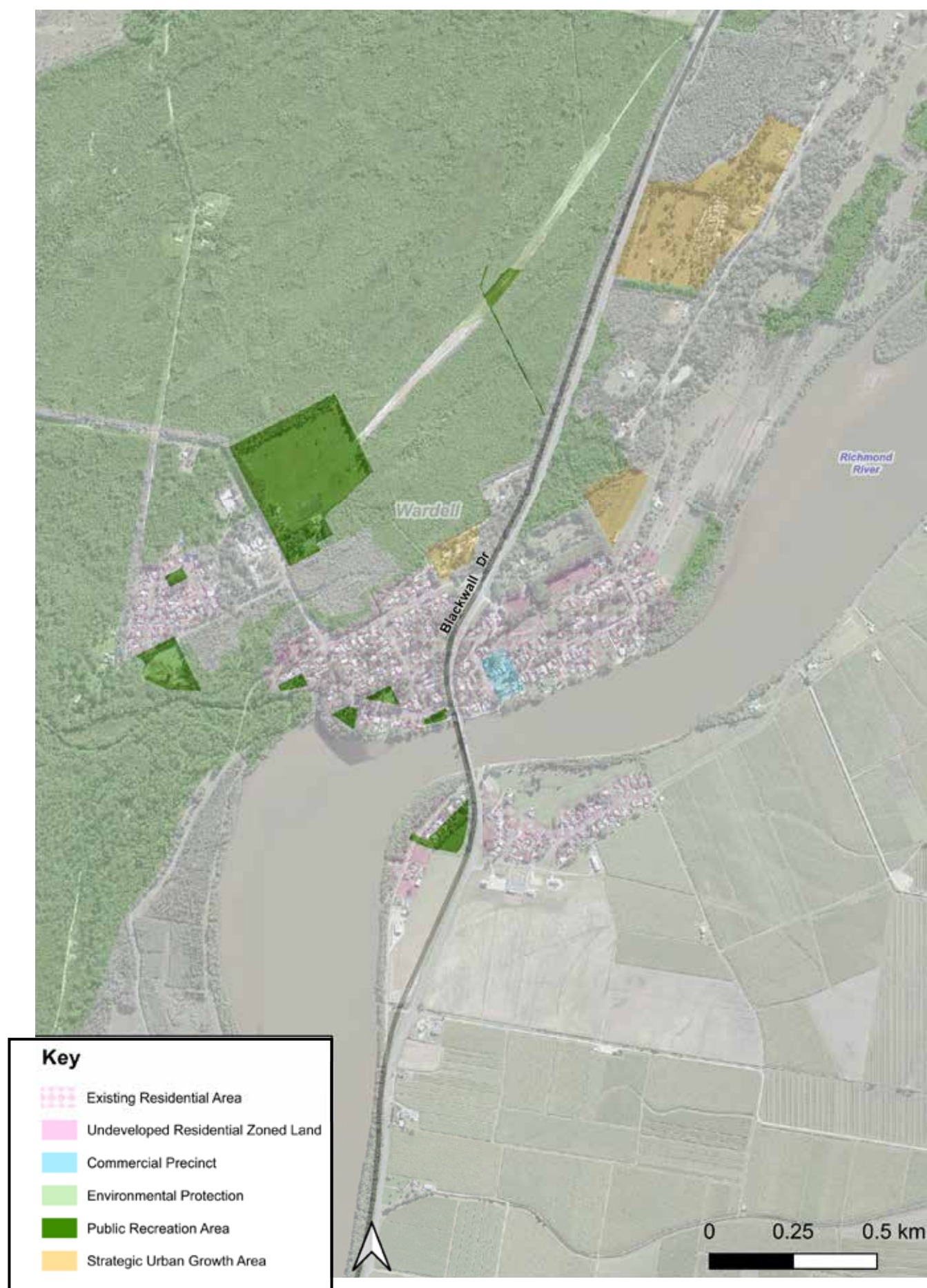


Figure 10.0
Residential Growth Areas
Wardell

Towns, villages and rural hamlets

Ballina Shire Council has undertaken extensive community engagement and planning work to ensure that the character and qualities of our towns and villages is maintained and enhanced.

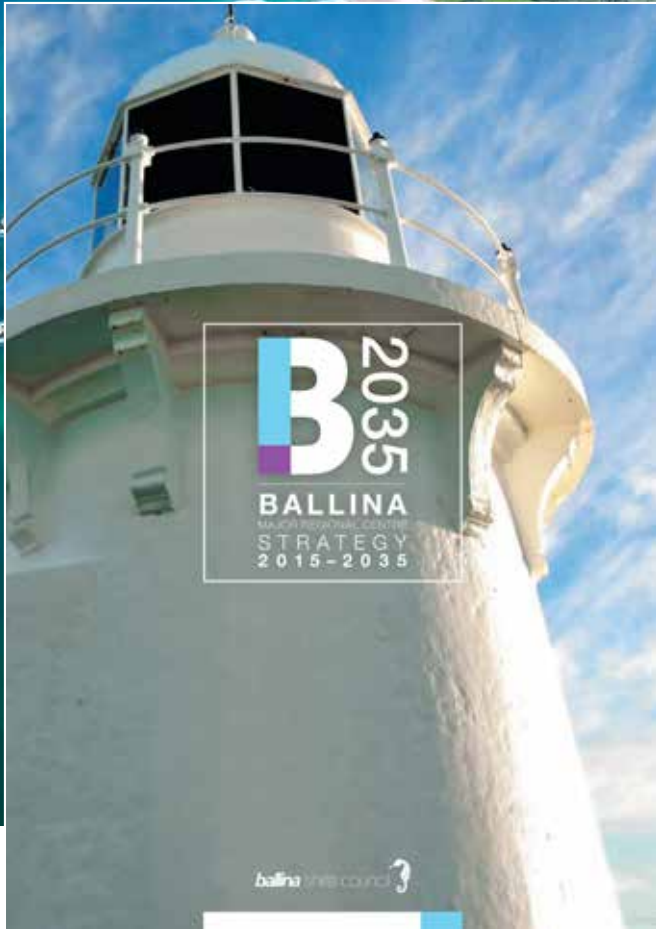
A series of localised strategic plans have been developed and adopted to provide a framework for future works and decision making in relation to these areas.

Place based strategic plans are monitored annually for progress and specific actions are incorporated within the Delivery Program and Operating Plan. Each placed based strategic plan is periodically reviewed at a recommended 10 yearly interval. A summary of the key elements for each of the towns and villages and the relevant placed-based strategic plan is provided below.



Place based plans





Ballina

Ballina's main urban centre, incorporating East and West Ballina, will continue to be the residential and commercial heart of the shire. This area contains Ballina's Town Centre, the Kerr Street and River Street Retail Precincts, the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport, Southern Cross Industrial Estate, Ballina Hospital as well as key sporting, recreational, community and education facilities and established residential areas.

The *Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy* (BMRCS) was prepared in 2015 to respond to the NSW Government's *Far North Coast Regional Strategy (2008 – 2031)* that designated Ballina as a Developing Major Regional Centre. The most recent *North Coast Regional Plan (2041)* designates Ballina as the only Strategic Centre

on the Far North Coast, with Tweed Heads and Lismore identified as Regional Cities.

The area identified within the BMRCS will support future growth, but future climate impacts need to be understood and managed. There is a strong overlap with the priorities and actions contained within the revised LSPS.

The BMRCS is due for periodic review to ensure priorities and actions for this area are up to date and consistent with other strategic planning documents.



Alstonville

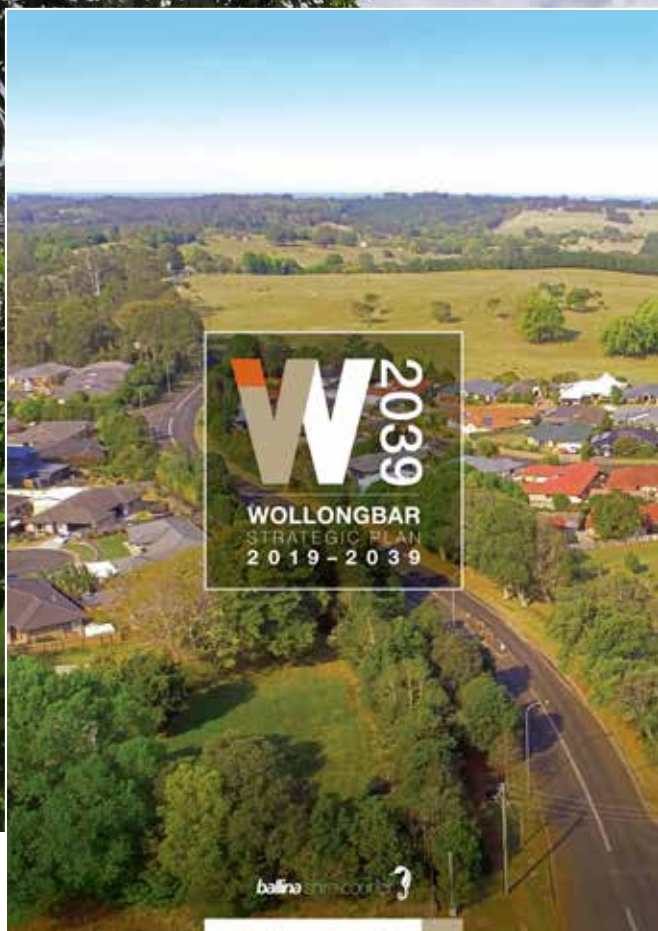
Alstonville village has a population of 5912 people and is serviced by a commercial precinct, primary and secondary schools and a range of open space and sporting facilities. It is characterised by its elevated plateau location with rural vistas, low rise development, it's commercial centre and timber buildings with local historic value.

The *Alstonville Strategic Plan 2017 - 2037* (ASP) applies to the urban areas of Alstonville north of the Bruxner Highway and identifies the limited opportunity for new housing which will come from increased density rather than through new greenfield release areas.

The existing village character and maintaining the urban

buffer between Alstonville and Wollongbar were identified as important to the community and are reflected within the ASP.

The ASP contains 19 actions including a range of beautification and pathway improvements. Eight actions have been completed by 2025 with others commenced and ongoing.



Wollongbar

Wollongbar had a population of 3261 at the 2021 Census and is estimated to have an annual population growth of 1.5% from 2021 to 2031, with an estimated 4600 people living there by 2046⁶. This relatively high projected population growth can be accommodated on existing vacant residential zoned land and through increased density.

Wollongbar has a higher level of housing affordability (compared to Ballina and other coastal areas). It is serviced by a small commercial precinct, a sports field complex located to the east of the village, a primary school and TAFE.

The *Wollongbar Strategic Plan 2019 – 2039* (WSP) applies to the urban area north of the Bruxner Highway as well as the Russellton Industrial estate south of the highway. One of the key strategic actions of the WSP is to retain the inter-urban buffer between Wollongbar and Alstonville and to discourage urban style developments in the rural area between the villages. Providing additional employment land within the Russellton Industrial Estate for additional local job opportunities was identified as an emerging issue, along with enhanced community infrastructure.

There are 13 actions included in the WSP, with three having been completed by 2025 and others commenced and ongoing.



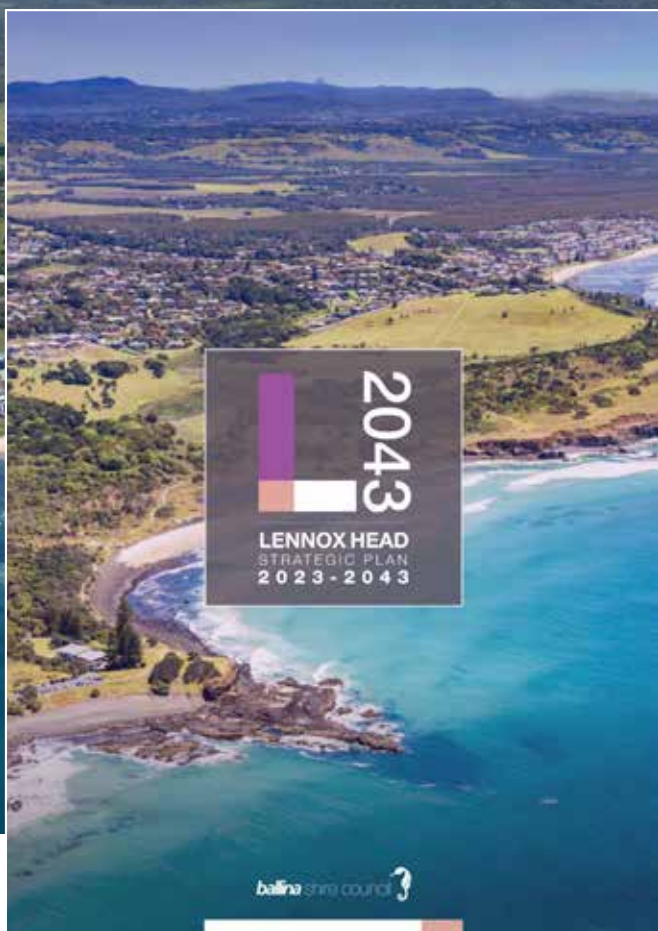
Wardell

Wardell village is located on the banks of the Richmond River, with the majority of houses and the small commercial precinct located north of the river, and a smaller number of houses on the southern bank. The greater Wardell area has a population of 830 people, with 10.8% identifying as Aboriginal⁷.

The *Wardell Strategic Plan 2015 – 2035* (WSP) provides a framework for potential growth beyond its current limits. Areas identified as Strategic Urban Growth Areas (SUGAs) in the Ballina LEP 2012 were somewhat reduced as part of the 2023 review but are likely to allow for a modest growth, subject to detailed assessment of bush fire risk, flooding, ecological and other environmental factors.

The WSP includes 29 actions including beautification projects, tourism opportunities, accessibility and staged development. Nine actions had been completed in 2025 with many others commenced and ongoing.

A *Wardell Village Centre Revitalisation Master Plan* was also adopted by Council in 2023 which provides a range of detailed design works to improve public amenities and connectivity to the river.



Lennox Head and Skennars Head

The greater Lennox Head and Skennars Head area is home to 9378 people⁸. It is characterised by rugged coastline, pathways with ocean views, residential neighbourhoods buffered by rural lands, local centres, low rise development and special places including Lake Ainsworth, Lennox Headland, the surf beaches and Lennox village shops.

Lennox Head / Skennars Head had population increase of 19% (an additional 1446 people) from 2016-2021 and is expected to experience ongoing growth over the forecast period to a projected 16,799 people by 2046⁹.

The *Lennox Head Strategic Plan 2023 – 2043* (LHSP) applies to the greater area of Lennox Head and Skennars Head and includes character statements for the distant geographical communities of North Lennox, Lennox

Head Village, West Lennox, East Lennox, Skennars Head and North Creek, with future planning objectives established for each area.

The LHSP focuses on guiding the development and management of Lennox Head over the next two decades, aiming to balance growth with the preservation of the town's natural beauty and community character.

The LHSP outlines Council's priority actions for the area based on the population projections. The LHSP updated Council policy regarding Strategic Urban Growth Areas, removing areas that are no longer appropriate or that have already been developed.

Many of the 34 actions within the LHSP are focused on local placemaking to improve access to and amenity of existing natural assets and community facilities.



Rural hamlets

Ballina Shire also contains several small rural hamlets that are dispersed across the landscape and contribute to the character of the area. In 2014 Ballina Council prepared Rural Settlement Character Statements for nine rural hamlets that defines each areas key features and the qualities that make them special to the local community at that time. The areas covered are Newrybar, Tintenbar, Fernleigh, Meerkschaum Vale, Rous, Rous Mill, South Ballina, Empire Vale / Keith Hall and Patchs Beach.

No expansion of these hamlets is proposed and generally, no subdivision of lots is permissible for these areas, with additional housing limited to existing vacant lots that have a dwelling entitlement (under the provisions of the LEP), and new dual occupancies on lots that have an existing dwelling.



Newrybar

A Streetscape Master Plan for Newrybar (adopted by Council in July, 2025) proposes changes to traffic and parking conditions, additional pedestrian connections and other amenity improvements that are in keeping with the community's vision for Newrybar to be a *'welcoming and vibrant village where character, community, and creativity flourish. An intimate, walkable destination that honours its artisanal spirit, local produce, and deep connection to the natural landscape'*

The historic character of the village and a range of commercial and community activities makes Newrybar attractive to both residents and visitors. Council will consider amendments to planning controls that enable some expansion of these enterprises and allow additional land uses where it is demonstrated that proposed commercial activities are in keeping with the character of the village, environmental attributes, the vision expressed in the streetscape masterplan and can be accommodated by existing infrastructure.

Figure 11.0
Overview of the Newrybar Streetscape Master Plan

⁸ ABS Estimated Residential Population, 2023

⁹ All population forecast data in the LSPS is from forecast.id.com.au/ballina

Economy and employment

Gross Regional Product

\$3.04
billion

2023



Local Jobs

22,730

2023



Local
Businesses

5181

2024

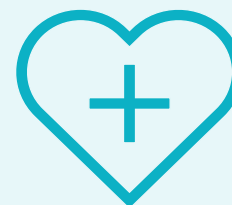


Largest Employer

Health care &
Social assistance

4132

2022/23



Key industries

Tourism generates

\$210 million
per annum

2022/23



Agriculture, Forestry
& Fishing generates

\$166 million
per annum

2022/23



Construction generates

\$225 million
per annum

2022/23



Retail trade generates

\$222 million
per annum

2022/23





Economic Snapshot

Ballina has a diverse industry base including health care and social assistance, construction, tourism, agriculture, forestry and fishing and manufacturing.

Ballina Shire's annual Gross Regional Product was estimated at \$3.04 billion in 2022/23 and supported an estimated 5181 local businesses, which provided 22,730 local jobs.

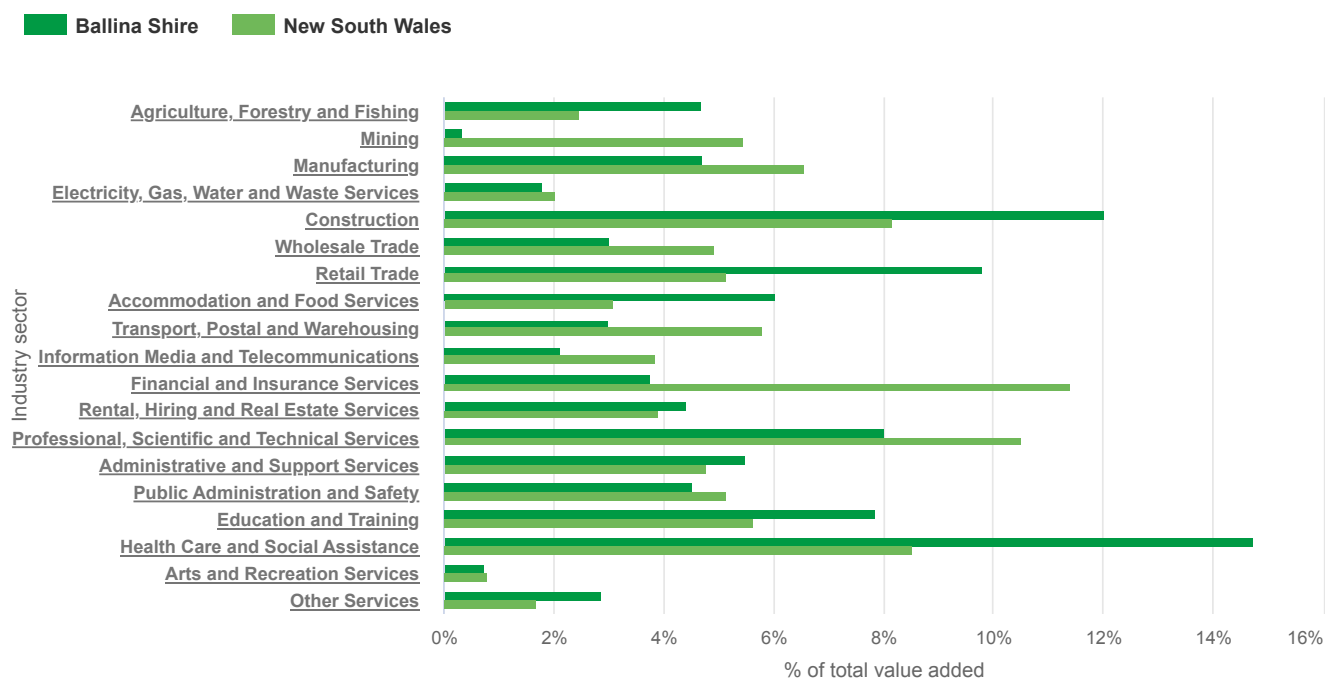
Health Care and Social Assistance is the highest gross value added (GVA) industry in Ballina Shire, generating \$323 million GVA in 2022/23 and providing 4,132 jobs. GVA is a measure of an industry's contribution to the economy measured by subtracting the cost of the inputs into production from gross revenue.

The services sector accounts for the majority of jobs in the Shire, with 18.2% of the workforce employed in health care and social assistance jobs and 11.9% employed in the retail sector.

Health Care and Social Assistance is anticipated to experience ongoing growth due to Ballina Shire's ageing demographic profile. Tourism is also expected to increase significantly due to the growth of South Eastern Queensland and active marketing of Ballina as a premier destination within NSW.

The diagrams below display a comparison of the value added per industry sector and the changes that have occurred in the 5 year period between 2017/18 to 2022/23.

Value added by industry sector 2023/24

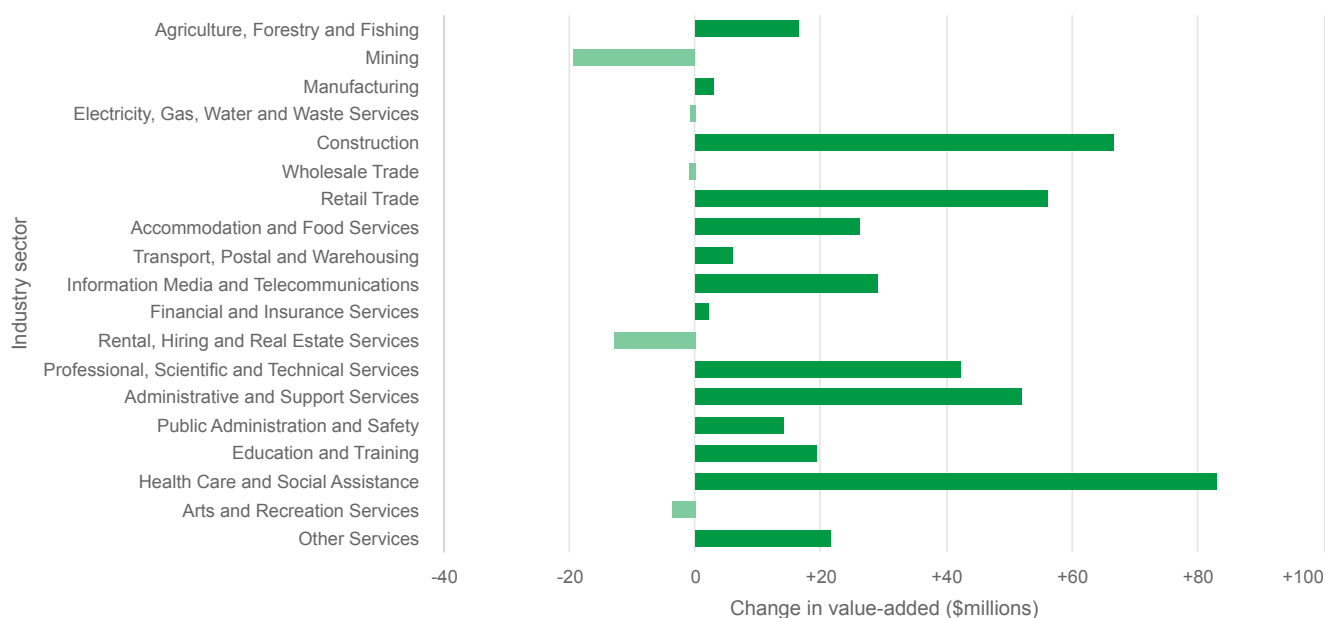


Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2025. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

.id informed decisions

Change in value-added by industry sector, 2017/18 to 2023/24

Ballina Shire



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2025. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

.id informed decisions

Figure 12.0
Ballina's industry sectors shown as a percentage
of Value Added productivity 2023/24

Figure 13.0
Growth in GVA by industry sector
between 2017/18 and 2023/24.



Commercial Centres

The *Ballina Shire Economic Development Strategy (2019)* identifies key drivers for future economic growth as well as Ballina's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Fundamental to the strategy is the long-term planning for commercial and industrial development within a hierarchy that establishes Ballina Town Centre and the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct as the primary retail centres for the Shire. The strategy indicates that these facilities should be protected and consolidated at the top of the retail hierarchy.

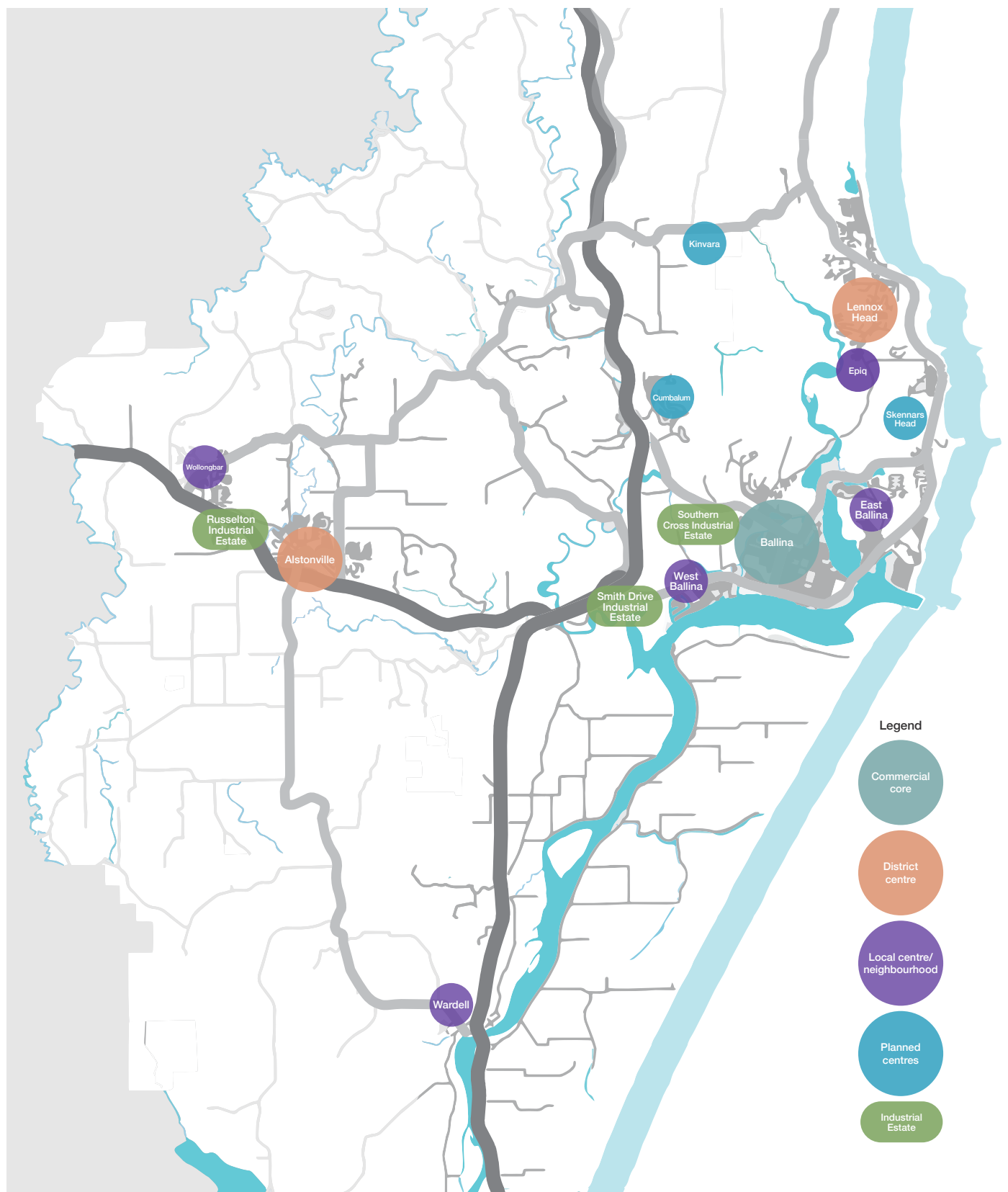
Surrounding localities include a variety of smaller scale commercial areas in East Ballina, West Ballina, Lennox Head (including the Epiq retail precinct), Alstonville and, Wollongbar. Modest levels of retail services are also provided in the Shire's rural villages such as Wardell, Newrybar and Tintenbar. Additional retail facilities of a neighbourhood/local scale are planned for the Cumbalum urban release area and the Skennars Head area in the future.

The Southern Cross and Smith Drive industrial estates in Ballina and the Russellton estate at Alstonville provide the majority of industrial employment lands, with bulky goods and other large retailers at the western end of River Street.

The commercial and industrial hierarchy is shown in Figure 14.0



Commercial and Industrial Hierarchy in Ballina Shire





Demand for employment space

The *Ballina Commercial Centres and Employment Lands Strategy 2019* (Hill PDA) forecasts demand and supply of commercial and industrial land within Ballina Shire to 2041.

The forecast demand for commercial and industrial space / land included:

- ▶ 48,500m² of additional retail space,
- ▶ 37,000m² of additional office space, and
- ▶ Up to 50ha of additional industrial zoned land.

No new land releases were recommended to deliver the additional retail and office floor space estimated to be required to 2041. This is based on the anticipated capacity in currently zoned business areas. This position will continue to be periodically monitored to ensure there is sufficient supply to meet demand as circumstances and assumptions change over time.

A scoping proposal for an area of approximately 1.4ha bounded by Kerr, Bentick and Burnet Streets that is currently used for a range of commercial, residential and other uses was received in May 2025. The proposal seeks a change of zone from residential (R2) to employment (E3 Productivity Support). Council will consider this proposal as part of a wider precinct plan to look at the potential for a range of uses in a key strategic location.

A regional study of supply and demand for employment lands (*Northern Rivers Employment Land Study, Hill PDA, 2023*) indicates there is significant demand for

industrial land uses such as manufacturing, transport and warehousing and wholesalers. The report recommends that a further 106ha of new employment land should be investigated for rezoning across the Northern Rivers region and that Ballina consider an additional 26-30 hectares to meet demand forecasts¹¹.

The previous LSPS (2020) identified the bulk of the supply for future industrial land uses in Ballina was anticipated to come from the existing and proposed expansion of the Southern Cross Industrial Estate. However environmental and flooding constraints mean the development potential of the 35ha expansion area is severely limited. Council resolved in March 2025 not to pursue rezoning and to investigate additional sites, whilst retaining the Southern Cross expansion area within the strategic planning framework.

Hill PDA's 2023 report also found that three other potential industrial land sites (at Ferngrove Drive, West Ballina, land adjacent to the racecourse and land adjacent to the Clark St industrial precinct) were all constrained by flood risk and are unlikely to be developed.

Other potential industrial sites that need further evaluation as to suitability, are located west of Lennox Head (18-50ha), an expansion of the Russellton estate at Alstonville (23ha) and land north of Wardell. Council also resolved in March 2025 to consider the SUGA land at Skennars Head for its employment land potential. These sites will be subject to further evaluation of site constraints and may satisfy demand in the medium to long term.

Table 3 and Figures 15-19 show the location of potential new employment lands.



Table 3
Potential Employment Land Sites

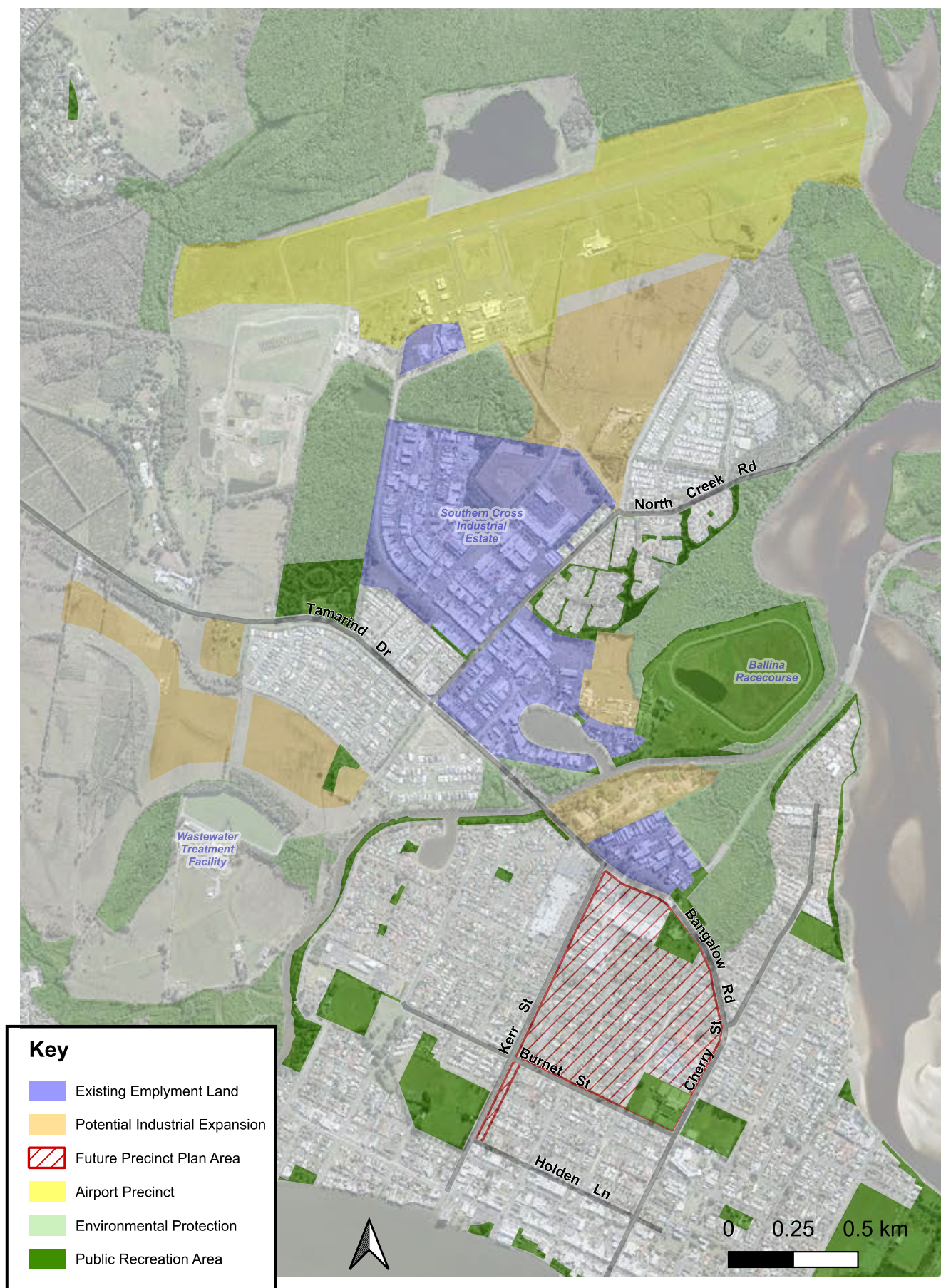
Location	Area of zoned employment land	Vacant land	Potential future growth area	Comments
Kerr St precinct	0ha. Currently zoned R2, R3 & E2	N/A	N/A	A precinct plan will examine the potential for a mix of residential, commercial and other uses.
Southern Cross Ballina	76 ha E4 General Industrial	<6 ha Vacant zoned land at the northern end of Boeing Ave has approval for a specialist retail centre on a 2.5ha site. The vacant lots on the opposite 3.2 ha site were released in 2025.	Approx. 35ha identified as SUGA	The SUGA area is subject to considerable flooding and ecological constraints. Council has resolved not to progress with rezoning and the site will not be developed in the short to medium term.
Smith Drive West Ballina	15ha E4 General Industrial	Approx. 7ha DA approval for a bulky goods retail centre has been granted on one site, with site filling approved on the other vacant parcel.	N/A	No further expansion is proposed due to flooding constraints.
Ballina Racecourse adjacent land	0ha Currently zoned RU2	N/A	Approx. 6ha identified as SUGA.	Land contains a range of existing uses associated with horse racing. Site is flood prone and adjacent to wetland area.
Clark Street expansion area Ballina	0ha Currently zoned RU2	N/A	Approx 6ha identified in NCRP.	Land owned by State Government and part leased to council for depot purposes. Site is impacted by flooding and contamination constraints.

Table 3 Continued

Potential Employment Land Sites

Location	Area of zoned employment land	Vacant land	Potential future growth area	Comments
Ferngrove Drive Ballina	0ha Currently zoned RU2	N/A	Approx 36 ha identified as SUGA.	Site is impacted by flooding, with approximately 4ha identified for future residential development. The remainder of the site is significantly constrained and may have little to no yield for employment land due to flood characteristics and proximity to residential development.
Teven Road Transport Logistics Hub	17ha Additional Permitted Use provision	N/A	N/A	A landscape supply business and warehouse storage facility currently occupy part of the site. Freight transport facilities and warehouse or distribution centres are currently permitted on this site with development consent. A rezoning to general industrial use may be considered by Council to support further development in this area, or further Additional Permitted Uses (APU's).
Russellton Estate Alstonville	40ha E4 General Industrial	The final stage of existing E4 zoned land (approx. 5 ha) is due for completion in 2025.	Approx 25ha identified in the Wollongbar Strategic Plan.	Land located to the east of the existing estate is identified for further evaluation as to its suitability for future rezoning and expansion of industrial land. See Appendix 2 and separate addendum for an assessment of urban growth variation principles from NCRP 2041.
Ross Lane Lennox Head	0ha Currently zoned RU2	N/A	Approx 21ha identified as employment land investigation area in the NCRP (2041).	A SUGA area of approximately 54 ha has been identified around Ross Lane and Byron Bay Rd. The site is impacted by flooding. Infrastructure servicing including sewer and roads are required, with Hill PDA's analysis indicating this is likely to be a long-term development site. A structure plan to determine preferred land uses and infrastructure requirements is recommended.
North Creek Rd, Skennars Head	0ha Currently zoned RU1.	N/A	Approx 61 ha. Identified as SUGA.	The site is identified as a residential growth area. However, Council resolved to investigate additional sites for employment land including this site at Skennars Head. Construction of the North Creek Rd upgrade and bridge, or an alternative road network upgrade would be required to service the site. A potential long term development site if other employment land options are found to be unsuitable.
Blackwell Dve, Wardell	0ha Currently zoned RU2	N/A	Approx 13ha identified as SUGA.	The site is identified as a residential growth area. However, it may also be suitable for employment land. Further investigations are to be undertaken regarding site constraints and infrastructure requirements to determine future use.

Ballina Potential Employment Expansion Areas



West Ballina Potential Employment Expansion Area



Alstonville Potential Employment Expansion Area



Lennox Head / Skennars Head Potential Employment Expansion Areas



Figure 18.0
Lennox Head / Skennars Head
Potential Employment Expansion Areas

Wardell Potential Employment Land Expansion Area



Services and infrastructure

Roads and Transport

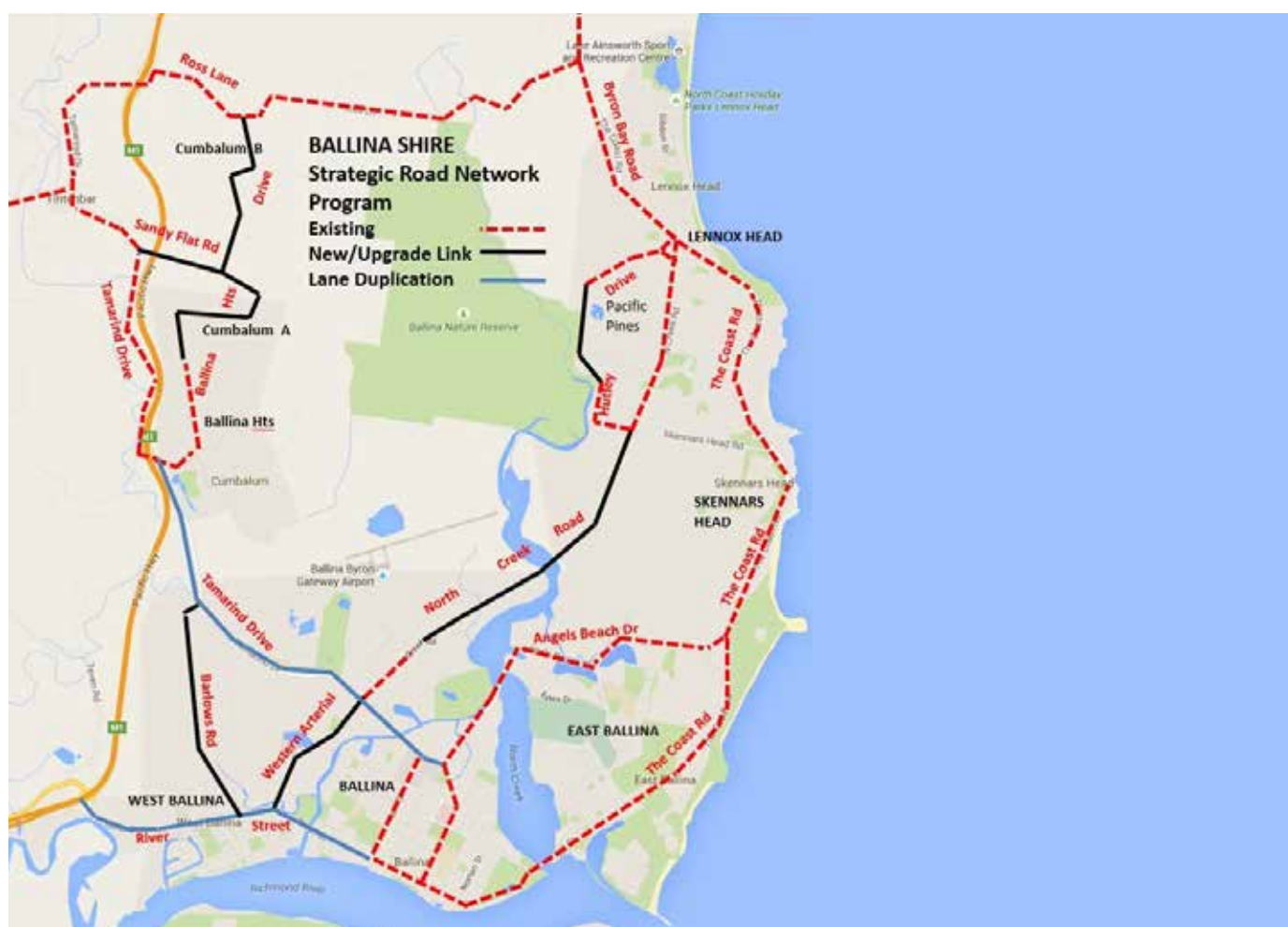
Ballina is well serviced by road and air transport infrastructure including the upgraded Pacific Motorway that bypassed the town centre and provides links to Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Sydney, whilst the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport provides passenger services to Sydney and Melbourne.

Ballina Council has prepared a Marina Master Plan to encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of the West Ballina Trawler Harbour Site for an enhanced marina

and associated infrastructure that could include future commercial and residential development.

Where new residential or employment land development will generate additional traffic into the road network, developers are required to provide road upgrades and/or a monetary contribution so that Council can undertake future works to provide a safe and efficient road network.

Future road links and the distribution of costs is identified in the *Ballina Shire Roads Contributions Plan (2021)*. Figure 20.0 shows the location of current proposed major roadworks. A review of the Ballina Road Network Strategic Traffic Model is being undertaken in 2025 which will look at road network demand to 2046. At the completion of this review, it is likely the Roads Contributions Plan will also be updated.



Walking & cycling

There is an extensive network of walking and cycling paths across Ballina Shire, with over 50km identified in Council's 'Cycleways and Shared Paths' map and information brochure. The provision of new facilities is guided by structure plans within the Development Control Plan for new greenfield land release areas and is otherwise guided by the *Ballina Shire Council Bike Plan (2017)* and the *Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (2018)* for existing urban areas. An update of both of these plans is a recommended action of the LSPS.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Rous Water is the regional body responsible for the supply of water and operates Ballina and Lennox Head's main water source, Emigrant Creek Dam. *Rous Regional Supply: Future Water Project 2060* identifies options to ensure regional water security to 2060.

Ballina Council is responsible for the provision of water infrastructure from Rous Water's storage facilities to lots with a water connection. The cost of new water supply infrastructure is attributed through a Development Servicing Plan (DSP) to new development requiring the provision of the water. The DSP was most recently updated and adopted by Council in June 2024. Rous Water also supply customers directly with drinking water in some rural areas.

Wastewater and non-potable recycled water infrastructure is provided by Council, with the cost of new infrastructure attributed to new development requiring wastewater disposal and treatment. The DSP for wastewater infrastructure was also updated and adopted by Council in June 2024.

Outside of urban centres and areas directly supplied by Rous Water, individual landowners are responsible for the provision of water and on-site wastewater management systems.





Open Space and Recreation

Ballina Shire is well serviced with public open space with 1846 hectares currently zoned for recreational use, National Parks and other nature reserves. This includes some 400 hectares of parks (including 29 sports parks for formal team sports), 38 bushland reserves and eight beaches.

An audit of Ballina's existing open spaces and community facilities and an analysis of future need based upon population projections was undertaken in 2022. This identified that in the key growth areas of Cumbalum and Kinvara, the provision of suitable playing fields, local parks and walking tracks had been incorporated into existing infrastructure planning provisions.

A further \$41 million in new and improved open spaces facilities has been identified to be delivered by 2036, with \$17 million of this attributable to new development and the remainder to be funded by Council and grants.

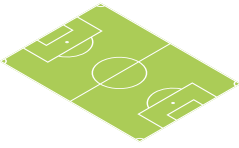
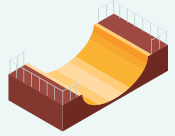
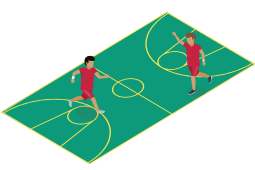
A range of site-specific Master Plans and Plans of Management guide future development and management of important public spaces.

Council is also developing a *Place and Public Realm Framework* that will apply to all Council owned and managed land including roads/streets, open spaces and linear corridors. The framework aims to better manage the amenity and function of these public spaces and sets principles and targets to provide greener streets, better connected pedestrian and cycle routes through urban landscapes and easy ways to follow them, as well as identifying more ways to celebrate local stories and places.

Other Community and Health Infrastructure

The Ballina District Hospital is a community hospital that provides a wide range of public healthcare services. The NSW State Government has committed \$2 million to redevelopment planning of the hospital and NSW Health are exploring a range of options to ensure hospital services in Ballina are fit for purpose to meet future demand.

The shire is well serviced for primary and secondary education facilities, as well as TAFE campuses at Ballina and Wollongbar.

	29 Sports parks	• AFL • Athletics • Baseball and softball • Cricket • Cricket nets • Croquet • Football (Senior) • Football (Junior) • Touch Football • Hockey • Oztag and Touch Football • Rugby League • Rugby Union
	4 BMX/ Skate parks	• 1 Mountain bike facility • 3 skate and BMX facilities
	45 Play spaces	• 45 existing playgrounds
	2 Outdoor exercise facilities	• 2 existing facilities
	2 Surf clubs	• 2 surf clubs owned by Council but managed by Council appointed service providers/ SLSC
	2 aquatic facilities	• 2 inland pools • 1 ocean pool being investigated by a community ocean pool committee
	2 Indoor recreation centres	
	6 Lawn sports and golf	
	0 Outdoor multi-purpose courts	• 2+ planned full size outdoor multipurpose courts • 2 half courts and basketball hoops, plus 1 planned • 3 Hit-up walls • 43 other courts in the LGA (code specific or indoors)



Rural land use and character

Of the Ballina Shire's 491 square kilometres, 88% of the land is zoned for rural or environmental uses. Our rural and environmental land contributes to the scenic amenity and beauty of the region, as well as providing highly productive farming land for food production. It also provides a range of environmental services to support biodiversity and ensure we maintain healthy river systems and clean airways.

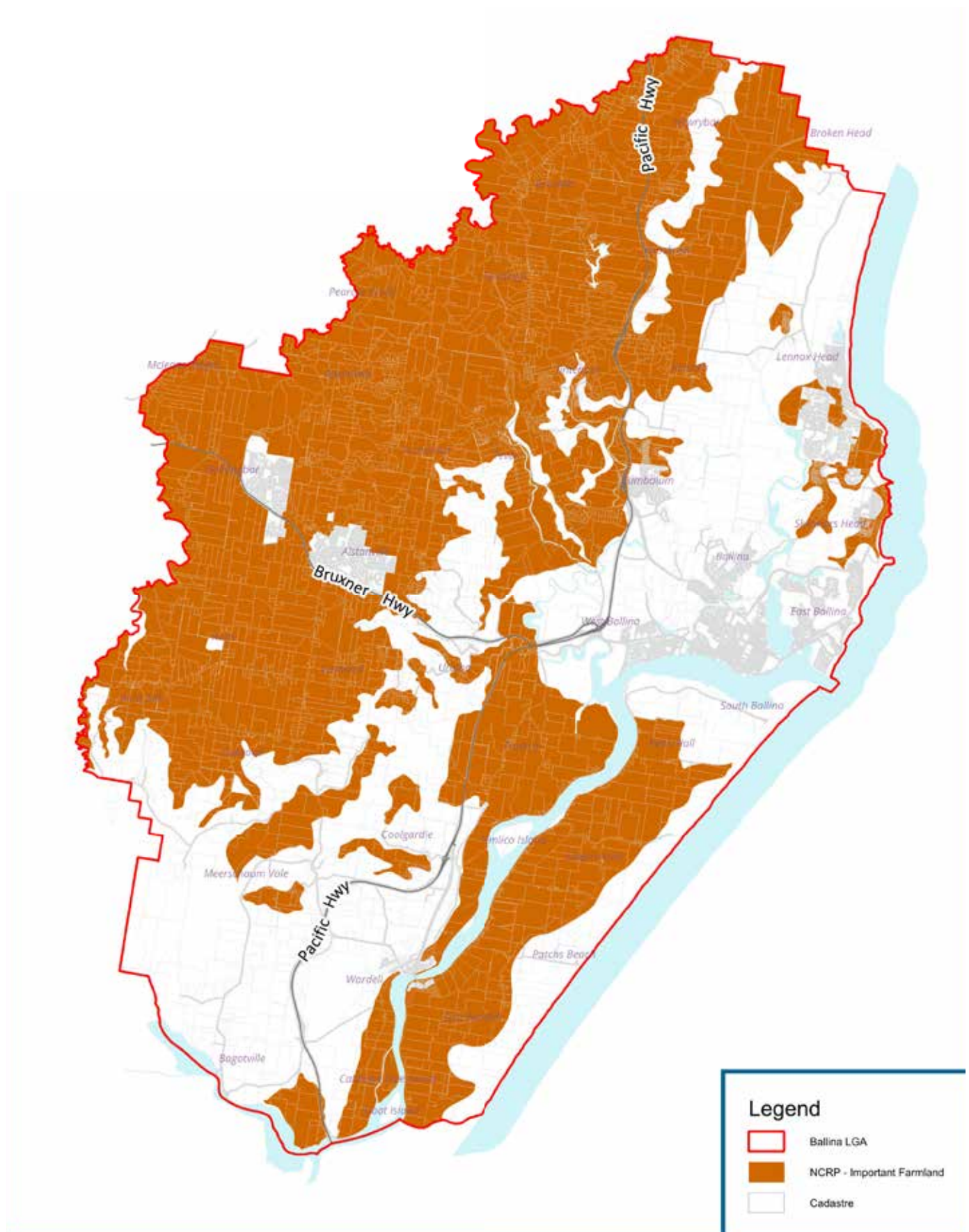
263 square kilometres of Ballina's rural area is identified as 'Important Farmland' in the North Coast Regional Plan, based upon soil classification and recommendations in the *Northern Rivers Farmland Protection Project (2005)*. Areas identified as Important Farmland will generally be protected from incompatible land uses to ensure the agriculture sector remains strong and viable in the long term.

Rural land also has an important role to play in protecting and enhancing areas of High Environmental Value (HEV) for habitat and climate refugia of endangered species and ecological communities. There are emerging opportunities for rural landowners to undertake activities that will enhance biodiversity, protect waterways or contribute to carbon sequestration that will supplement agricultural income streams.

The importance of protecting productive farmland, encouraging on-farm diversification and maintaining the character of our rural areas is reflected within the planning priorities in the LSPS.

Rural land use principles

- ▶ Encourage agricultural production and protect key productive agricultural land for food production
- ▶ Encourage on-farm diversification, sustainability and appropriate rural tourism
- ▶ Minimise the potential for land use conflict
- ▶ Maintain the character and settlement pattern of existing rural villages and hamlets
- ▶ Protect rural vistas





Environment and climate change

Biodiversity

The Northern Rivers region has long been recognised as a biodiversity hotspot with a variety of significant vegetation types including the World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests. Ballina is home to a diverse and unique array of animals (fauna) and plants (flora), including 151 fauna species that are identified as classified as threatened under State or Commonwealth legislation.

Our rural and coastal regions are a natural asset that support a diverse range of species, ecosystem functions and also contributes to the beauty and enjoyment of humans living in and visiting the area.

There are many ways in which Ballina Council can, in partnership with the community, protect, manage and enhance areas of High Environmental Value (HEV) land. Native vegetation, wildlife habitat, waterways, riparian areas and other HEV assets will be protected via planning controls and actively enhanced through on-the-ground actions, which are outlined in the *Ballina Shire Biodiversity Strategy (2023-2033)*. The *Koala Management Strategy (2017)* and the *Healthy Waterway Program* are other examples of Council working collaboratively with the community to improve environmental outcomes.

Climate Change and Natural Disaster Planning

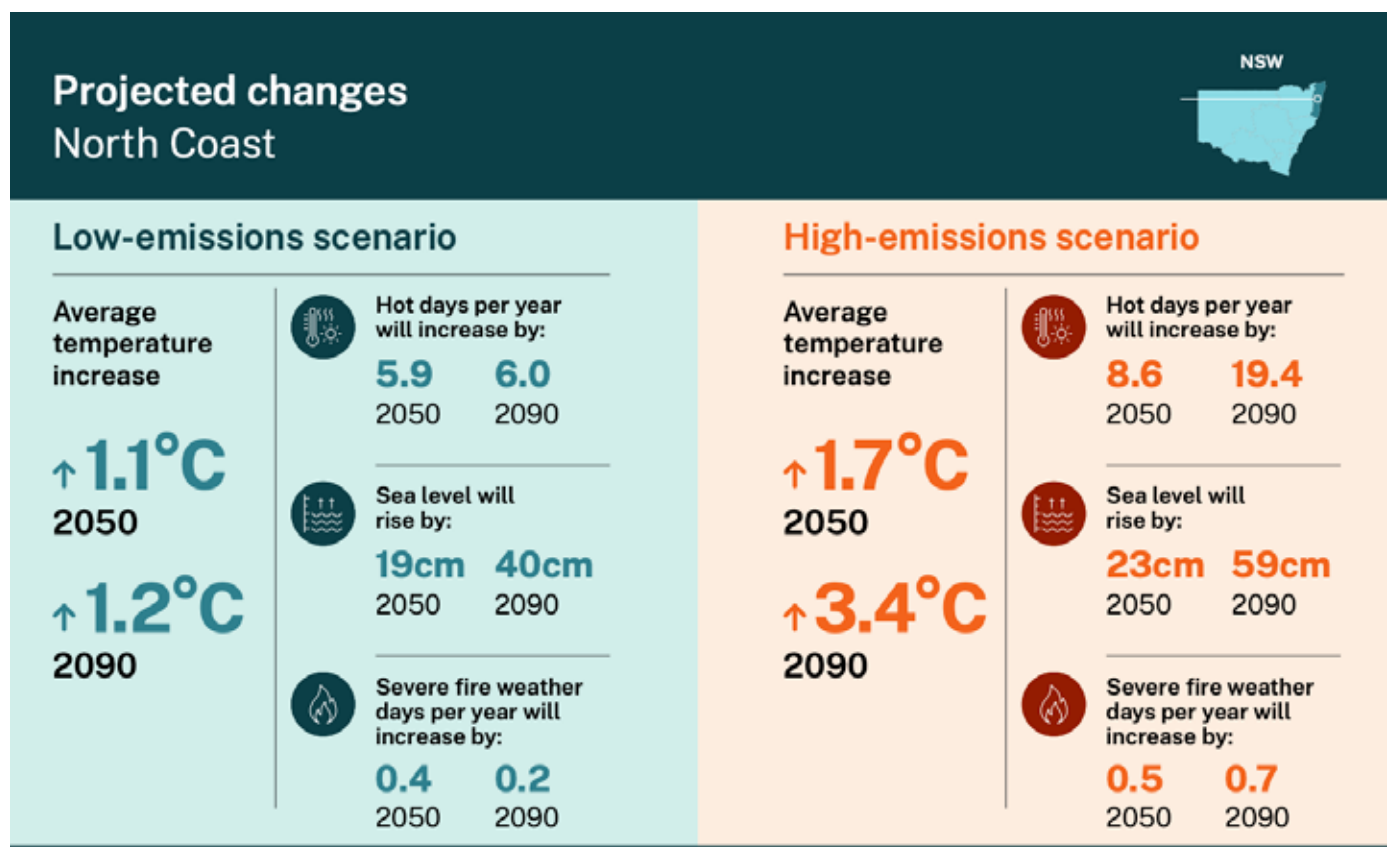
In 2019 Ballina Shire Council declared a climate emergency which, in part, calls for urgent action by all levels of government to act to meet the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C by 2100. It also acknowledges that Ballina Shire is likely to be substantially affected by climate impacts including sea level rise, bushfires, droughts and floods.

By 2046 Ballina Shire is likely to be confronting significant challenges associated with climate change. This includes impacts on our agricultural systems, natural ecosystems, regional infrastructure and health impacts on vulnerable groups (such as the ill, very young and the elderly).

The North Coast Region is projected to continue to warm by 0.7°C in the near future (2020–2039) and somewhere in the range of 1.1°C and 1.7°C by 2050, compared to recent years (1990–2009). The number of high temperature days (above 35°C) is projected to increase, along with the number of severe fire weather days, while a reduction is anticipated in instances of frost risk. The local climate is likely to be dryer and hotter and rainfall events are likely to have increased in intensity, with winter rainfall expected to decrease by 13-18% by 2090.¹²



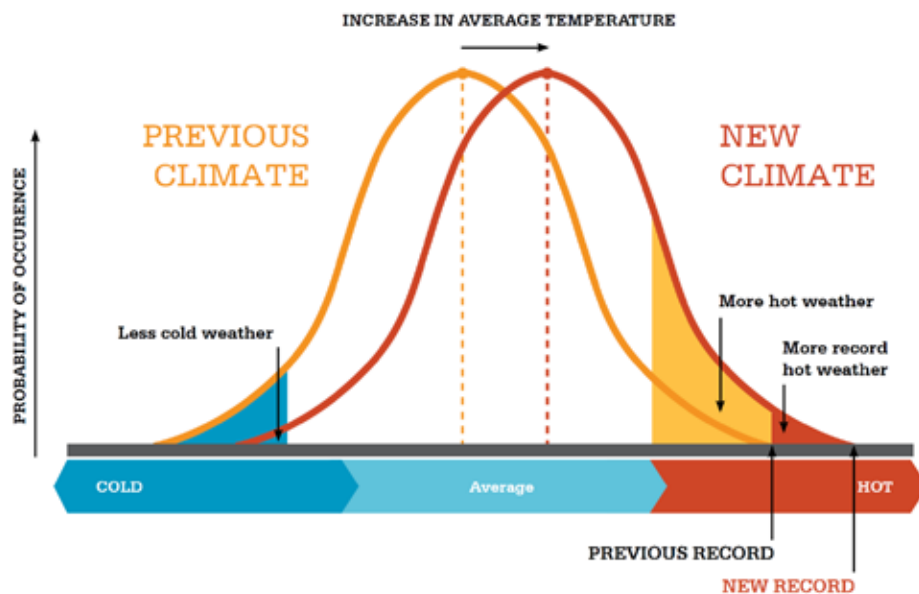
The 2024 UN Emission Gap Report indicates that the world is on track for a 2.6 - 3.12°C temperature increase this century unless drastic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions of 42% by 2030 and 57% by 2035 are made to reach the goal of the Paris Agreement.



Why does a couple of degrees warming matter?

Climate change should be regarded as a risk multiplier. That is, it exacerbates the consequences and likelihood of many existing risks. The projected increases are to average temperatures, not just a couple of degrees on any particular day.

Extreme weather events occur at the very edge of the distribution. As the graphic below shows, as the average becomes warmer, the probability of extreme weather events increases.



Some of the likely local impacts include:

- ▶ Low lying areas such as the Richmond River Floodplain may experience more frequent inundation associated with sea level rise, storm and flood events. This may impact the value of agricultural production and increase the risk of damage to property.
- ▶ Our natural environment will likely be under significant stress, leading to habitat and species loss as the climate becomes warmer and drier. The koala population of the North Coast may be critically endangered.
- ▶ Changes to infrastructure to allow better protection from climate impacts are likely to be required. Levee systems, flood control valves within stormwater systems and roads constructed to high levels, and increased water storage in tanks and reservoirs are examples of adaptation measures.
- ▶ The design of our dwellings may change in order to be more resilient to climate conditions. Changes to planning and building controls may be required to regulate increased flood and bushfire protection measures. Energy efficiency and carbon neutral measures, changes in building materials and the installation of solar panels and battery storage facilities may become the norm.

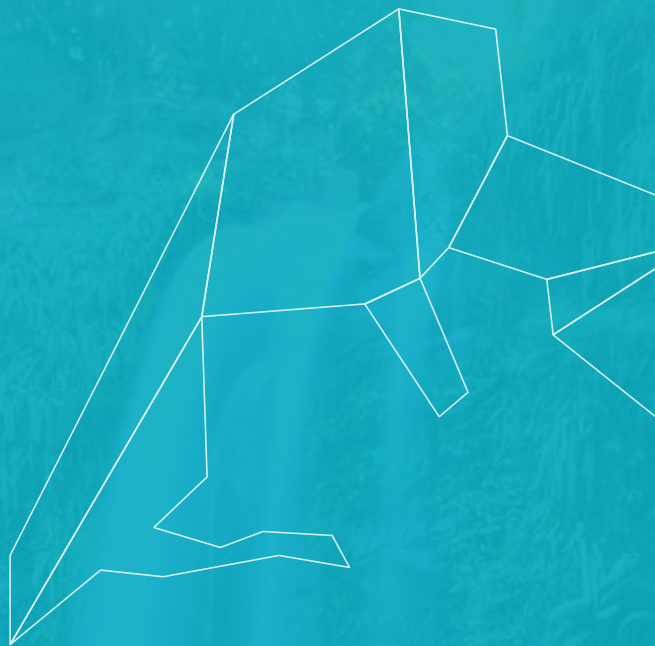
Ballina Council's *Climate Change Policy (2021)* reflects the Council's longstanding commitment to climate action, emphasising organisational emissions reductions through targeted corporate strategies. Council's *Corporate Emissions Reductions Plan (2024)* sets a policy goal of 100% renewable electricity and net zero emissions by 2030 for all Council operations. A *Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan* also sets out actions with regards to reducing the risk to Council's assets, operations and people.

With regards to planning for natural disasters, Council is guided by a range of statewide policies including the *Flood Risk Management Manual (2023)*, *Planning for Bushfire Protection (2019)* and the *Coastal Management Act 2016*.

A range of local data mapping and associated management strategies are in place that will be periodically updated as required. As knowledge and Council data sets are updated with regards to the risk from fire, flood, storms, rising sea levels and rising temperatures there is an obligation to keep the community informed through appropriate engagement activities and also ensuring best practice planning controls and decision-making processes are applied. A range of bespoke resources may be required to ensure the community is aware, prepared and more resilient to changing climatic conditions.

Ballina Council is also participating in a regional Disaster Adaption Plan (DAP), which is an initiative of the State Government through the NSW Reconstruction Authority. The DAP will guide regional initiatives to reduce risk where we can and adapt where we can't, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the CSIRO's Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative.





05

*Vision, themes and **planning priorities***

Vision, themes and planning priorities

*“The Ballina Shire is safe, with
a connected community,
a healthy environment and
a thriving economy.”*

4 themes **13 Planning priorities**



*Housing and
Liveable Places*



*Employment
and Economy*



*Healthy
Environment*



*Connected
Community*

The vision is captured in four inter-related themes that are aligned with the community's priorities in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

The four themes will be implemented through 13 planning priorities and a total of 56 actions to support and deliver the nominated planning priorities. The timing for the delivery of actions is identified as follows:

Timing:

- ▶ Immediate = Commenced
- ▶ Short Term = 0-2 years
- ▶ Medium Term = 2-5 years
- ▶ Long Term = 5 years +

The plan on a page

Vision Statement: The Ballina Shire is safe, with a connected community, a healthy environment and a thriving economy.



Housing and Liveable Places

Planning Priority 1

Encourage good urban design to support healthy, safe and vibrant lifestyles and ensure open space and public facilities meet community needs and expectations.

Planning Priority 2

Increase housing supply, diversity and affordability in existing population centres and key strategic growth areas.

Planning Priority 3

Maintain the character and settlement pattern of existing village hamlets and protect rural vistas.



Employment and Economy

Planning Priority 4

Stimulate economic activity and provide local services around major Shire infrastructure such as Ballina Hospital, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and education facilities.

Planning Priority 5

Maintain a supply of suitably located employment land, close to population centres at Alstonville – Wollongbar, and Ballina – Lennox Head, to foster local employment opportunities and reduce journey to work travel distances.

Planning Priority 6

Maximise proximity to growth in South East Queensland for future housing and tourism opportunities and leverage the Pacific Motorway, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and digital technologies for employment opportunities.



Healthy Environment

Planning Priority 7

Provide leadership in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Planning Priority 8

Identify and manage risks from natural hazards and ensure adaptation strategies are in place.

Planning Priority 9

Ensure biodiversity values, waterways, drinking water catchments and riparian areas are protected and enhanced.

Planning Priority 10

Protect productive agricultural land and encourage on-farm diversification.



Connected Community

Planning Priority 11

Ensure high quality transport networks including roads and walking and cycling paths are planned for and provided.

Planning Priority 12

Support a regional approach to the sustainable release of land for housing and industry as well as the location of key industries, infrastructure and other inter-Council issues.

Planning Priority 13

Protect and celebrate Ballina Shire's culture and heritage.

Planning themes

Housing and Liveable Places



Planning theme

Housing and Liveable Places



Planning priority 1

Encourage good urban design to support healthy, safe and vibrant lifestyles and ensure open space and public facilities meet community needs and expectations.

Rationale

Ballina Shire will experience significant growth in the period to 2046 and there is a responsibility to ensure new development complements and enhances the local character of the different towns and villages across the shire, and that housing is suitable for the sub-tropical climate.

Infrastructure that encourages active travel, with appropriate rest areas and shade, needs to be prioritised when designing large trip generating developments. Active travel enhances the opportunities for chance encounters between members of the community, encourages healthier lifestyles and contributes towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Access to areas of open space, sport and recreation facilities and other community facilities such as libraries, community halls and childcare enhance the liveability of our Shire and underpins social cohesion and local character. Good urban design that incorporates public spaces that cater for multiple users and a diverse population can also facilitate encounters between people and foster a greater sense of community.

Ballina Shire has over 700 hectares of public open space and 27 publicly accessible community spaces, all of which contribute to the physical, recreational and mental wellbeing of our residents. Maintaining and extending a diverse range of open spaces and public facilities will help address major national health issues including social isolation and obesity in the population. Opportunities to exercise, to experience nature and to participate in social activities within your local community are key factors in ensuring long-term health benefits. Council has a role

to play in ensuring open spaces and public facilities are provided in suitable locations, are well managed and maintained, and respond to the changing demographics and other needs of the community.

In 2022, Ballina Council undertook an audit of its future needs for open spaces and community facilities. The findings have been incorporated into an infrastructure delivery plan that identifies over \$80 million in capital works (\$41.5 million in open space and recreation facilities works and \$38.7 million in community facilities) to be delivered between 2022 and 2036. A full list of proposed works and locations can be found in Council's *Open Space and Community Facilities Contributions Plan* which identifies that \$25 million of the cost of delivering these works is attributable to new developments.

Actions to support planning priority 1

No.	Action	Timing
1.1	Implement the delivery of works identified in the Ballina Shire Open Space and <i>Community Facilities Contributions Plan (2022)</i> .	Ongoing
1.2	Implement and update as required Council's <i>Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2023-2026)</i> and <i>Active Aging Plan (2015)</i> .	Ongoing
1.3	Prepare a <i>Place and Public Realm Framework</i> and ensure its principles and commitments are met in the design and delivery of all works within Council owned and managed land.	Ongoing
1.4	Implement actions across villages and towns identified in local place-based strategies.	Ongoing
1.5	Review and update place-based strategies every 10 years.	Ongoing

Planning theme

Housing and Liveable Places



Planning priority 2

Increase housing supply, diversity and affordability in existing population centres and key strategic growth areas.

Rationale

Ballina’s total population is anticipated to grow by 13,265 people between 2025 and 2046. Residential growth areas including Strategic Urban Growthy Areas (SUGAs) are shown in Figures 7-10 on pages 29-32.

The largest population growth is expected to occur in the ‘seniors’ (70-84 year old) age range. The forecast is for an additional 4,101 people in this range by 2046, which is a 20.1% increase¹³.

A diversity of housing types helps cater to the housing needs of people at different stages of their lives. Of dwellings built between 2016 – 2021, 75% had three or more bedrooms, yet 66% of households had only one or two permanent residents. As our population continues to age, residents will be seeking more choice in the type of housing that they want to live in. The ability to be able to age in place and find suitable housing that meets their needs will become an increasingly high priority for many of the Shire’s residents.

The provision of safe and secure housing is one of the building blocks for a fair and equitable society. House building also plays a significant role in the economy. In Ballina Shire, the construction industry represents approximately 11.7% of the Shire’s workforce, with jobs in related professional services such as finance and real estate comprising a further 8.6%. The ability to attract workers to service our growing and ageing population will also require housing to be at a price point that is comparable with earning capacity.

This planning priority aims to encourage greater housing choice to provide housing that meets the needs of smaller households and changing demographics in locations that have access to key services.

In 2024 Ballina Council adopted a Housing Strategy that identifies a range of outcomes and includes 24 actions to be undertaken under the following four guiding principles:



Actions to support planning priority 2

No.	Action	Timing
2.1	Implement actions within the <i>Housing Strategy (2024)</i>	Ongoing
2.2	Report progress on the <i>Housing Strategy</i> and periodically update as required.	Ongoing
2.3	Work with landowners in Strategic Urban Growth Areas (refer to maps) to better understand site constraints and opportunities, as well as infrastructure needs in order to progress rezoning for new housing.	Short – Long Term
2.4	Implement housing initiatives identified in place-based strategic plans.	Ongoing

Figure 23.0
Ballina Housing Strategy principles

¹³All population forecast data in the LSPS is from forecast.id.com.au/ballina

Planning theme

Housing and Liveable Places



Planning priority 3

Maintain the character and settlement pattern of existing village hamlets and protect rural vistas.

Rationale

New housing will predominantly be located in existing urban centres and identified greenfield sites.

In 2014 Ballina Council prepared Rural Settlement Character Statements for nine rural hamlets that defines each area's key features and the qualities that make them special to the local community at that time. The areas covered include Newrybar, Tintenbar, Fernleigh, Meerscham Vale, Rous, Rous Mill, South Ballina, Empire Vale / Keith Hall and Patches Beach. The character of these existing rural hamlets will be preserved and generally, there will be no further subdivision of lots within these areas.

Council is investigating the merits of allowing detached dual occupancies in a water catchment area in the 1987 LEP.

Expansion of existing commercial operations on rural land in village hamlets will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The visual impact of new development should not dominate the landscape when viewed from surrounding rural areas. Future development of rural land that is currently identified as a SUGA, particularly areas in the vicinity of the Pacific Motorway, will be required to consider the visual amenity of development and noise impacts from the highway. Rural inter-urban buffers and/or scenic ridgeline controls may be incorporated into DCP controls to ensure urban development does not dominate the landscape.

Actions to support planning priority 3

No.	Action	Timing
3.1	Implement the Streetscape Master Plan for Newrybar and consider amendments to planning provisions relating to commercial activities within the village where such uses can be demonstrated to be in keeping with the community vision, village character and the environmental and infrastructure characteristics of the area.	Ongoing
3.2	Monitor and amend LEP and DCP planning controls as required to ensure new greenfield sites are appropriately screened and do not dominate the landscape in rural areas.	Ongoing
3.3	Identify scenic landscapes and other places with special rural character to ensure they are appropriately protected.	Ongoing

Planning themes

Employment and Economy



Employment and Economy



Planning priority 4

Stimulate economic activity and encourage local services around major Shire infrastructure such as Ballina Hospital, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and education facilities.

Rationale

As the shire's population grows and ages, there will be a need for more local jobs. The *Ballina Commercial Centres and Employment Lands Strategy (Hill PDA, 2019)* estimates that the largest growth sector will be in the health and education sectors and other special purpose uses.

The NSW Government included \$2 million in the 2022-23 budget for redevelopment planning of the Ballina District Hospital. Ballina Council has identified that precinct planning should be undertaken to ensure opportunities for expansion and location of associated facilities such as specialist medical facilities and housing opportunities are considered. Appropriate changes to planning controls may be required as a result of the precinct planning.

The Ballina Byron Gateway Airport is a major economic driver and long-term planning to facilitate future growth is required.

The preparation of precinct plans for our main educational facilities may also identify opportunities for complementary uses such as research and innovation centres and other commercial and community opportunities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place for the shared use of the Ballina Indoor Sports Centre (BISC) with Ballina Coast High School. Further MoUs with Education NSW for the shared use of education facilities with the wider community may present further commercial and/or community benefits.

Note: Precinct Plans will be submitted to DPHI to invite review and feedback.

Actions to support planning priority 4

No.	Action	Timing
4.1	Prepare a precinct plan for land in proximity to Ballina Hospital, and incorporating St Andrews Village, Ballina Central Shopping Centre, Biala Special School, Super Amart and the Cherry Street Sports Club. The precinct would have an area bounded by Burnett Street, Cherry Street, Bangalow Road, and Kerr Street. Residential areas on the eastern side of Kerr St south of Burnett Street will also be included.	Short Term – Medium Term
4.2	Collaborate with NSW Health to ensure Ballina District Hospital services are fit for purpose, meet community need, and are sustainable into the future.	Ongoing
4.3	Prepare precinct plans for land adjoining Ballina Shire TAFEs and school facilities.	Long Term
4.4	Collaborate with NSW Education on a priority plan and Memorandum of Understanding for the shared/ joint use of educational facilities within the Shire.	Short Term – Long Term
4.5	Monitor airport upgrade requirements and ensure planning controls are compatible.	Ongoing

Employment and Economy



Planning priority 5

Maintain a supply of suitably located employment land, close to population centres at Alstonville – Wollongbar, and Ballina – Lennox Head, to foster local employment opportunities and reduce journey to work travel distances.

Rationale

There is a regional shortage of suitable employment lands to meet forecast demand, with a recommendation that Ballina considers an additional 26-30 hectares be identified for future employment lands.¹⁴

Sites for potential employment land expansion are identified in Table 3 and Figures 15-19 on pages 49-53.

Providing opportunities for local jobs also assists to reducing the dependency on the car as method to journey to work, and / or reduces the distances travelled.

In 2021:

- 31.5% of workers travel outside of the Ballina Shire for work, predominantly to Lismore and Byron.
- 62.4% of workers live and work within the Ballina Shire.

Actions to support planning priority 5

No.	Action	Timing
5.1	Work with landowners and relevant State Government agencies to facilitate rezoning of additional industrial land adjoining Russellton estate at Alstonville.	Short Term
5.2	Work with landowners of land identified as a SUGA area at Ross Lane, Lennox Head to identify infrastructure needs in a structure plan and progress rezoning for employment purposes.	Short – medium term
5.3	Undertake detailed site constraints and opportunities analysis with landowners of other SUGA lands identified in Ballina and Wardell for potential employment use to determine their suitability for future development.	Medium Term
5.4	Work with landowners in the Teven Road area to understand constraints, opportunities and infrastructure requirements for a potential rezoning to support general industrial uses or further Additional Permitted Uses (APU's).	Short – Medium Term
5.5	Continue to identify options for additional employment land to meet projected demand.	

Employment and Economy



Planning priority 6

Maximise proximity to growth in South East Queensland for future housing and tourism opportunities and leverage the Pacific Motorway, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and digital technologies for employment opportunities.

Rationale

South East Queensland's (SEQ) population is anticipated to grow by 57% to 6 million by 2046 which provides a large potential marketplace for our Ballina businesses.¹⁵

The *Shaping SEQ 2023* strategy prioritises infill and consolidation, with compact housing to limit urban sprawl. This means that very little greenfield land releases will occur in SEQ over the coming decades. Demand for land release areas in Ballina Shire will come under increasing pressure due to the lack of supply in SEQ.

The Gold Coast airport is also undergoing a \$500 million redevelopment and is expected to see visitors double from 6.2 million in 2024 to around 13 million annually by 2044, potentially doubling the 400 weekly passenger flights across Australia, New Zealand and Asia¹⁶. This may have impacts on the Ballina Byron Gateway airport which will require close ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Given the economic development potential associated with fostering closer economic ties between Ballina Shire and SEQ, it is considered important that potential opportunities continue to be monitored and explored.

As opportunities to work from home continue to be incorporated into work practices in industries that do not require employees to be physically present in a workplace, and for increased flexibility to become the norm, there will be increasing opportunities for people in professional industries to relocate for lifestyle reasons. Access to digital technologies, Ballina's coastal lifestyle and proximity to major airports and the Pacific Motorway presents an opportunity to grow the number

of people working for a range of businesses that are not geographically located here.

The Ballina Byron Gateway Airport supports more than 600,000 commercial passengers each year, with growth to 900,000 anticipated by 2040. The airport and the visitor economy are important economic drivers with \$210 million in "value added" tourism sales in 2022/23, directly employing 1300 people, and indirectly a further 806¹⁷. Ballina's visitors have fluctuated over the past... decade, but the five-year average is for 347,874 annual domestic overnight visitors, staying an average of 3.1 days. A further 475,970 day-trippers came to Ballina each year, predominantly from South East Queensland and regional NSW. The Ballina Coast and Hinterland Destination Management Plan (2021-2030) has a goal of attracting \$450 million per annum in overnight visitor expenditure by 2030, with a particular focus on increasing the mid-week overnight visitation rates.

Actions to support planning priority 6

No.	Action	Timing
6.1	Maintain a watching brief for opportunities provided by the increased connectivity to South East Queensland.	Ongoing
6.2	Maintain a watching brief to monitor the manner in which the Gold Coast Airport impacts on the future development of the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport	Ongoing
6.3	Implement and report on actions in the <i>Destination Management Plan</i> to grow the visitor economy.	Ongoing
6.4	Maintain a watching brief on opportunities provided by digital technologies and their impact on land use planning strategies.	Ongoing

¹⁵ShapingSEQ, 2023, South East Queensland Regional Plan 2023, Queensland Government

¹⁶Gold Coast Airport, Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2024

¹⁷<https://economy.id.com.au/ballina/tourism-value?Tourismtype=2>

¹⁸<https://economy.id.com.au/ballina/tourism-visitors-nights?Tourismtype=2>

Planning themes

Healthy Environment





Planning priority 7

Provide leadership in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Rationale

Climate related impacts are already being observed in our community, economy and environment. These include threats from natural hazards such as bushfire, heatwaves, coastal erosion and inundation, drought, flooding, cyclones and storms. Other seasonal changes will also be exacerbated by climate change. Council will attempt to manage the impact of climate change on its assets and services and attempt to facilitate our communities and individuals to be better prepared and more resilient to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.

The *North Coast Enabling Regional Adaption region report (2019)* provides a strong evidence base for identifying adaption pathways and opportunities to minimise climate impacts on local communities.

Ballina Council's Climate Change Policy (2021) identifies areas where Council can influence Climate Change action. There is a strong focus on reducing the organisation's greenhouse gas emissions with a commitment to net zero by 2030, including the use of 100% renewable energy by 2030. This commitment has been turned into a detailed action plan (*Council's Corporate Emissions Reductions Plan, 2024*).

Council has also developed a *Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan (2024)*. This primarily focuses on risks to Council's assets and operations, but also addresses land use planning matters. It details a range of current and future adaptation actions and will be periodically reviewed and updated.

Beyond concern for the Council's assets and operations, a future risk and adaptation process could address shire-wide risks and adaptation planning to ensure that the community across the whole LGA is resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.

This will involve engagement with other levels of government, utilities, emergency services, businesses and community groups.

Actions to support planning priority 7

No.	Action	Timing
7.1	Implement actions and update as required by the <i>Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaption Plan</i> .	Ongoing
7.2	Provide timely and up-to-date information and other resources to ensure the community is aware, prepared and more resilient to changing climatic conditions.	Ongoing



Planning priority 8

Identify and manage risks from natural hazards and ensure adaptation strategies are in place.

Rationale

The risk from fires, floods, droughts, storms, rising sea levels and rising temperatures pose a significant ongoing risk to our communities, to individuals and to assets and infrastructure.

The role of identifying and managing risks and ensuring short and long-term adaptation strategies are in place is the responsibility of all levels of government and a coordinated approach will be required.

Strategic land-use planning is one of the tools to help address risk associated with natural hazards to ensure the impact on future development is limited. Adaptation strategies are required to ensure critical infrastructure and services are as resilient as possible to the impacts of climate change.

Actions to support planning priority 8

No.	Action	Timing
8.1	Update bushfire mapping in partnership with the Rural Fire Service to ensure future risk is understood and incorporated into the planning framework.	Short Term
8.2	Update the Ballina Floodplain Risk Management Plan to reflect current flood risk modelling and NSW policy directives.	Immediate
8.3	Review LEP and DCP controls following updates to floodplain, bushfire and coastal management risk mapping to incorporate updated risk projections, including climate change scenarios and relevant State Government directions to avoid and manage vulnerable areas and hazards.	Short – Medium Term
8.4	Contribute to the development and implementation of a regional Disaster Adaption Plan.	Ongoing

Healthy Environment



Planning priority 9

Ensure biodiversity values, waterways, drinking water catchments and riparian areas are protected and enhanced.

Rationale

The Far North Coast of NSW is one of the most biodiversity rich regions in Australia. But the historical clearing of the Big Scrub Rainforest and subsequent land uses have led to fragmentation and a proliferation of invasive weed species.

Statewide biodiversity legislation requires a hierarchical process of “avoid, minimise, offset” when it comes to assessing a development’s impact on biodiversity. This means development applications must demonstrate they have avoided and minimised impacts on areas identified as being of high environmental value before a process of offsetting or replacing can be implemented.

Beyond limiting the impacts of future development, there is an urgent need to repair and improve our natural environment. Ballina Shire *Biodiversity Strategy (2023-2033)* identifies 72 actions to be undertaken in partnership with the community, under the following four themes:

Actions to support planning priority 9

No.	Action	Timing
9.1	Implement and report on actions in the Biodiversity Strategy to protect, enhance and improve biodiversity across the shire.	Ongoing
9.2	Finalise shire-wide Biodiversity and High Environmental Value mapping, to be incorporated into the Statewide mapping and /or local planning overlays.	Short Term
9.3	Continue the review of Deferred Matter areas and ensure appropriate zoning is applied for High Environmental Value (HEV) areas.	Ongoing
9.4	Prepare biodiversity development controls and guidelines in the DCP.	Short Term
9.5	Update and implement the <i>Koala Management Strategy (2017)</i> .	Ongoing

Through planning measures and on-ground activities, Ballina Council will conserve and enhance our important environmental assets for the community and for future generations.



Protect

Protect biodiversity values in Ballina Shire through strategic and statutory planning and local policy processes.



Manage

Ensure that the natural environment in Ballina Shire is being managed to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity.



Enhance

Enhance and conserve biodiversity in urban and rural areas through revegetation and habitat rehabilitation.



Collaborate

Collaborate with stakeholders and the community to encourage participation and engagement in conservation initiatives, whilst raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town with houses and boats along a shoreline. In the foreground, a ferry with yellow ramps is carrying several cars across a body of water. A large white speech bubble with green quotation marks is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

Protect the health
of our waterways
and natural
assets.



Planning priority 10

Protect productive agricultural land and encourage on-farm diversification.

Rationale

Large areas of the Ballina Shire are identified as 'Important Farmland' as shown in Figure 22.0 on page 59, providing highly productive farming land for food production. Existing and future agricultural uses are to be facilitated within the planning framework.

Lawful agricultural practices should be undertaken without conflict or interference arising from complaints from neighbours or other adjacent land users. The NSW Government's 'Right to Farm' policy enshrines this objective and provides a range of measures to manage the rights and responsibilities of landowners. Council's planning controls will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure they reflect best practice.

Ballina Shire's agricultural output in 2020/21 was valued at \$102 million, with nuts accounting for 40.6% of economic value and nurseries / cut flowers accounting for a further 40.2%. As the climate changes, new threats and opportunities will emerge and having areas of viable farming land with access to water will be a strategically important resource.

Agricultural activities are subject to seasonal variation, climatic shocks and international market forces that make the financial security and viability of farming increasingly difficult. We want to ensure rural landowners have the opportunity to diversify their income streams through a range of appropriate land uses that do not affect the agricultural viability of land. The ability to diversify will assist the long-term viability of rural land to support agriculture alongside emerging opportunities such as (but not limited to) biodiversity offsetting, carbon sequestration and agritourism.

Actions to support planning priority 10

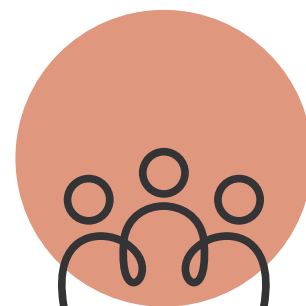
<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Timing</i>
10.1	Monitor and maintain planning controls that minimise land use conflict in rural areas to ensure agriculture is protected.	Ongoing
10.2	Maintain a watching brief on emerging opportunities for on-farm diversification and respond to emerging issues as required.	Ongoing
10.3	Consolidate Rural Land Use Policy into a single reference document inclusive of a statement of key rural planning principles for Ballina Shire.	

Planning themes

Connected Community



Connected Community



Planning priority 11

Ensure high quality transport networks including roads and walking and cycling paths are planned for and provided.

Rationale

Fast, safe and efficient vehicle transport networks support businesses, residents and visitors to move around the Ballina Shire and beyond. Ballina Shire has an extensive road network with the State Government, through Transport for NSW (TfNSW), responsible for managing State roads including the Pacific Highway which serves as the major north – south link to Brisbane and Sydney, and the Bruxner Highway which provides an east-west corridor to Lismore, Casino and across the range to Tenterfield. Ballina Council is responsible for over 660 kilometres of regional and local roads which connect our local towns, villages and rural areas.

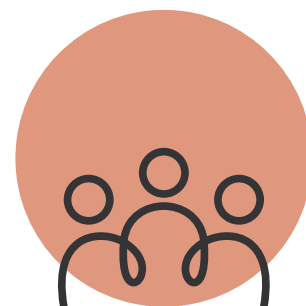
As we transition to Net Zero, the prevalence of electric vehicles (EVs) and e-micromobility is anticipated to grow exponentially. All new light vehicles sold in Australia are expected to be electric by 2035 and the CSIRO forecasts that 97% of all vehicles on the road will be electric by 2050¹⁹. Transitioning our fuelling habits and infrastructure will be a major priority over the forecast period with the need for a significant roll out and investment in EV charging stations.

Council also maintains bridges, car parks, bus stops, cycleways and a large network of footpaths and shared paths across the shire. Active transport including walking, cycling and other forms of micromobility will be increasingly important for social, recreational and health reasons as well as for commuting. Ensuring high quality networks are planned for and delivered will continue to be a priority for Council to 2046.

Actions to support planning priority 11

No.	Action	Timing
11.1	Update the Ballina Strategic Road Network model to incorporate all future growth areas to ensure future road requirements are understood and planned for.	Immediate
11.2	Update the Ballina Shire Roads Contributions Plan to ensure new development adequately contributes to funding road network upgrades.	Short Term
11.3	Investigate whether major walking and cycle paths should be incorporated into a revised Roads Contributions Plan.	Short Term
11.4	Update DCP design guidelines to ensure active travel infrastructure is provided around major trip generators such as schools, retail hubs, hospitals and large residential developments.	Short Term
11.5	Investigate opportunities for the delivery of EV charging stations throughout Ballina Shire.	Short Term
11.6	Update the <i>Ballina Bike Plan (2017)</i> and <i>Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (2018)</i> (PAMP), incorporating principles from the <i>Place and Public Realm Strategy</i> to ensure there are measurable targets for the provision of new walking and cycling facilities.	Short Term
11.7	Delivery of the Bike Plan and PAMP is incorporated into DPOP to ensure timely delivery and commitments within the <i>Place and Public Realm Framework</i> are met.	Ongoing
11.8	Investigate opportunities to deliver parking and charging points for e-bikes in town centres.	Ongoing

Connected Community



Planning priority 12

Support a regional approach to the sustainable release of land for housing and industry as well as the location of key industries, infrastructure and other inter-Council issues.

Rationale

Council recognises that some issues impacting Ballina Shire also affect the broader region and would benefit from the development of regional strategy responses. Negotiating a regional approach may also avoid duplication of resources and may assist to preserve our unique North Coast environment.

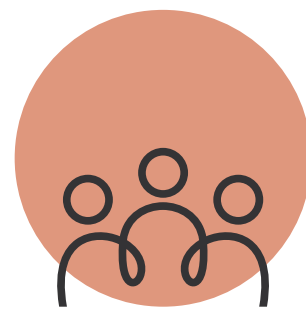
Ballina Council is a member of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) which is made up of the seven councils in the North Coast region. It has a strong advocacy role and is able to negotiate directly with NSW State and Commonwealth Governments on regional issues and to unlock associated grants and other funding opportunities.

In 2024 the NRJO engaged the CSIRO team undertaking the Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative flood modelling project to deliver a Regional Vision and Masterplan.

Actions to support planning priority 12

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Timing</i>
12.1	Collaborate with the NRJO and neighbouring Councils on regional and intra-regional housing and employment land delivery and industry development based on an environmentally sustainable growth model.	Ongoing
12.2	Collaborate and advocate with the NRJO on regional priorities and projects.	Ongoing
12.3	Participate in the development and delivery of a Regional Vision and Masterplan.	Short - Long Term
12.4	Engage directly with State Government agencies, on an as-needed basis, on regional issues of significance to Ballina.	Ongoing

Connected Community



Planning priority 13

Protect and celebrate Ballina Shire's culture and heritage.

Rationale

The expression of European and Indigenous culture and heritage throughout the Ballina Shire contributes to an understanding of the past and underlies our sense of place. Culture and heritage can be widely defined to include everything from the natural landscape to the architecture of the built environment, as well as cultural activities and institutions such as markets, galleries and museums.

From a land use planning perspective, non-Indigenous heritage items are generally identified in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) with controls in place to ensure the heritage significance is conserved whilst allowing appropriate contemporary changes. Indigenous heritage sites are required to be identified in consultation with the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council and protected where a change of land use is being proposed, such as through a rezoning application or a significant new development proposal.

Beyond the mechanisms of the planning system to identify and protect areas of significant cultural and heritage importance, Ballina Council seeks to create vibrancy in the community through the celebration of culture through events, public art and other activities that bring people together.

Actions to support planning priority 13

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Timing</i>
13.1	In conjunction with Indigenous knowledge holders, provide cultural signage to share stories with visitors and residents in places of significance.	Short-Long Term
13.2	Establish mechanisms to work with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and other Aboriginal organisations to ensure local knowledge and culture is preserved and incorporated, where appropriate, into planning frameworks.	Short – Long Term
13.3	Develop and deliver public art that celebrates local culture.	Medium-Long Term
13.4	Develop and deliver a cultural strategy to promote local arts and culture.	Short – Medium Term
13.5	Partner with community organisations to deliver a wide range of cultural events.	Ongoing
13.6	Monitor and maintain local heritage provisions within the planning framework.	Ongoing



06

*Implementation **monitoring and reporting***

Implementation, monitoring and reporting

Section 3.9(2)(d) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) requires Council to identify how it will monitor and report on the implementation of actions contained within its LSPS.

The LSPS communicates the long-term land use strategy for the Ballina Shire LGA over a 21-year planning horizon. To realise this strategy, a series of amendments to other Council plans which provide the delivery framework for Council's strategic planning will be required. These plans and their functions are described below:

Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

LEPs are the principal statutory document which establishes the planning controls for an LGA. Through zoning, development standards and other local provisions the LEP provides the legal framework to ensure development is appropriate and reflects the communities' vision for land use in the LGA.

Development Control Plan

Are non-statutory plans that provide detailed planning and design guidelines, and development controls to support the LEP.

Contributions Plan

Part 7 of the EP&A Act 1979 gives Council the power to collect contributions from developers toward public infrastructure required as a consequence of their development.

LEP amendments

Changes to development controls or land use zoning through amendment of the LEP may be required before a development application can be submitted to enable proposed development that aligns with the strategic planning directions in the LSPS.

Amendments to the LEP are subject to planning proposals in accordance with section 3.4 of the EP&A Act. A planning proposal to amend the LEP may either be initiated by Council or by applicants. Alignment to the strategic direction within the LSPS and the strategies that it references will be a significant consideration when determining whether an LEP amendment will proceed. A Planning Proposal needs to be supported by both the elected Council and also by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. A description of the stages and the benchmark timeframes for LEP amendments can be found in the Department of Planning's *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* (2023).

DCP amendments

Ballina Council's Development Control Plan is divided into chapters that relate to different aspects of Council's development control framework. Some chapters are general in nature, others relate specifically to geographical locations or to particular types of development (e.g. industrial development) or particular planning issues (e.g. floodplain management). These DCP chapters are periodically updated to reflect community expectations and best practice planning processes in accordance with the EP&A Regulations.

Contributions plan amendments

Ballina Council currently has five contributions plans for:

- ▶ Cumbalum Urban Release Area Precinct A (2015)
- ▶ Car Parking (2014)
- ▶ Open Space and Community Facilities (2022)
- ▶ Heavy Haulage (2019), and
- ▶ Roads (2021)

These will be updated as required in accordance with the EP&A Act and associated Regulations.

Monitoring, implementation and review

Council will monitor, review and report on its LSPS to ensure that its planning priorities are being achieved through the existing *Integrated Planning and Reporting* (IP&R) framework under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

In accordance with the IP&R Framework, actions within the LSPS will be incorporated into the Delivery Program and Operation Plans of Council, which is reviewed annually with progress reports provided quarterly.

Section 3.9 of the EP&A Act requires Councils to review their Local Strategic Planning Statements at least every 7 years. Therefore, the next review of the LSPS will be prior to 2032.

Funding and investment

The LSPS will play an important role in Council's resourcing strategy, with preparation of strategies and studies required by this plan funded in the 4-year delivery program and annual operational plans.

Governance arrangements and partnerships

Existing governance arrangements including collaboration with the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils will be utilised to support effective approaches to cross boundary issues such as biodiversity, housing and industrial land supply.

The need to work effectively with other councils in the region recognises the wider role that Council's strategic planning and decision-making plays in achieving the objectives of the North Coast Regional Plan 2041. It also recognises the potential impact that strategically important decisions taken by Council regarding critical infrastructure, environmental issues, housing, investment and a range of other topics covered in the LSPS may have on the plans of neighbouring councils.

These valued cross boundary partnerships will also support Council to realise its vision by driving efficiencies in accessing government funding, attracting inward investment and accessing a wider field of expertise.

The LSPS also provides a framework for the coordinated action of many other partners in delivery. Council will continue to work hard to establish effective partnerships with State government agencies and other organisations to support the realisation of the plan.

Appendix 1

Strategic alignment

Section 3.9(2)(b) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* (EP&A Act) requires Council to identify how Planning Priorities are consistent with any strategic plan applying to the area (North Coast Regional Plan, 2041) and the applicable community strategic plan (CSP) (Ballina Council CSP, 2025-2035)

Theme - Housing and liveable places

LSPS Planning Priority	North Coast Regional Plan	CSP sub-themes
Planning Priority 1 Encourage good urban design to support healthy, safe and vibrant lifestyles and ensure open space and public facilities meet community needs and expectations.	Objective 18: Plan for sustainable communities.	CC1 We feel safe and resilient.
Planning Priority 2 Increase housing supply, diversity and affordability in existing population centres and key strategic growth areas.	Objective 1: Provide well located homes to meet demand.	LP1 Liveability is high across Ballina Shire.
Planning Priority 3 Maintain the character and settlement patten of existing village hamlets and protect rural vistas.	Objective 20: Celebrate local character.	HE3.2 Minimise negative impacts on the natural environment.

Theme - Employment and economy

LSPS Planning Priority	North Coast Regional Plan	CSP sub-themes
Planning Priority 4 Stimulate economic activity and provide local services around major Shire infrastructure such as Ballina Hospital, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and education facilities.	Objective 14: Deliver new industries of the future.	LP2 We are an attractive destination.
Planning Priority 5 Maintain a supply of suitably located employment land, close to population centres at Alstonville – Wollongbar, and Ballina – Lennox Head, to foster local employment opportunities and reduce journey to work travel distances.	Objective 11: Support cities and centres and coordinate the supply of well-located employment land.	LP3 We support business diversity, sustainability and choice.
Planning Priority 6 Maximise proximity to growth in South East Queensland for future housing and tourism opportunities and leverage the Pacific Motorway, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport and digital technologies for employment opportunities.	Objective 12: Create a diverse visitor economy	EL3.2 Encourage a networked and adaptive approach to meeting regional challenges.

Theme - Healthy environment

LSPS Planning Priority	North Coast Regional Plan	CSP sub-themes
Planning Priority 7 Provide leadership in mitigating and adapting to climate change.	Objective 5: Manage and improve resilience to shocks and stresses, natural hazards and climate change.	EL1 Decision-making is inclusive, transparent, and underpinned by sustainability.
Planning Priority 8 Identify and manage risks from natural hazards and ensure adaptation strategies are in place.	Objective 5: Manage and improve resilience to shocks and stresses, natural hazards and climate change	EL1.2 Involve our community in the planning and decision making processes of Council.
Planning Priority 9 Ensure biodiversity values, waterways, drinking water catchments and riparian areas are protected and enhanced.	Objective 3: Protect regional biodiversity and areas of high environmental value.	HE1 We protect, respect, and enhance our natural environment.
Planning Priority 10 Protect productive agricultural land and encourage on-farm diversification	Objective 8: Support the productivity of agricultural land.	HE2.2 We use our resources wisely

Theme - Connected community

LSPS Planning Priority	North Coast Regional Plan	CSP sub-themes
Planning Priority 11 Ensure high quality transport networks including roads and walking and cycling paths are planned for and provided.	Objective 15: Improve state and regional connectivity.	LP3.1 Enhance transport and other business networks.
Planning Priority 12 Support a regional approach to the sustainable release of land for housing and industry as well as the location of key industries, infrastructure and other inter-Council issues.	Objective 11: Support cities and centres and coordinate the supply of well-located employment land.	EL3 Our leaders work effectively with the community, other levels of governments and other councils.
Planning Priority 13 Protect and celebrate Ballina Shire's culture and heritage.	Objective 4: Understand, celebrate and integrate Aboriginal culture.	EL1.1 Facilitate and develop strong relationships and partnerships with the community.

North Coast Regional Plan

Ballina objectives and action

	NCRP	LSPS Alignment
Regional Priorities	Expand nature-based, adventure and cultural tourism by investigating opportunities to develop and enhance infrastructure and places which support this, including major event spaces within the shire.	Planning Priority 6
	Support a sustainable agricultural sector in farmland areas across the shire.	Planning Priority 10
Liveable and Resilient	Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards, in particular flood risk.	Planning Priority 8
	Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.	Planning Priority 9
	Promote and recognise Aboriginal culture, local character and local creativity and investigate opportunities for the provision and enhancement of cultural and community assets within the shire.	Planning Priority 13
Productive and Connected	Maximise the opportunities associated with the Southern Cross Industrial Precinct to deliver additional jobs.	Planning Priority 5
	Support employment lands and jobs at Ballina, Lennox Head and Wollongbar.	Planning Priority 5
Housing and Place	Deliver housing at Cumbalum, Kinvara, Wollongbar and Lennox Head.	Planning Priority 2
	Support the delivery of housing supply and greater diversity in strategic and local centres, including higher density housing within and close to Ballina CBD.	Planning Priority 2
	Promote social cohesion and connection through good design and place making.	Planning Priority 1
Smart, Connected and Accessible Infrastructure	Support economic growth associated with the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport.	Planning Priority 4
	Support a regional framework for employment land delivery by fostering stronger connections and collaboration at the Northern Rivers subregional level.	Planning Priority 1
	Maximise opportunities associated with growth in South East Queensland and the increased connectivity provided by the upgraded Pacific Motorway and digital technology.	Planning Priority 6

Appendix 2

Assessment of urban growth area variation principles

Ballina Council is seeking the inclusion of 23 hectares located to the east of the existing Russellton Industrial Estate to be identified within the LSPS for potential future expansion of employment lands (See Figure 17 on page 51). The land is mapped as being Important Farmland within the *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* (NCRP), which states:

It is recognised that agricultural production may not be suitable on some small pockets of mapped important farmland due to non-biophysical factors that make the land more suited to other uses. The urban growth area variation principles will continue to be used to assess the suitability of these pockets of land for non-agricultural land use.

The rationale for seeking the inclusion of the land to be identified as potential future employment land is:

- ▶ The total supply of vacant zoned industrial land within the Ballina Shire is limited to approximately 13 hectares (at Southern Cross estate and Smith Drive). Most of this land has development consent in place, limiting the availability of land for new businesses to approximately 4 hectares.
- ▶ Future employment land identified as Strategic Urban Growth Areas (SUGAs) is subject to flooding, with the exception of approximately one hectare at Ross Lane, Lennox Head. Additional land to be considered at Skennars Head would require an extension of North Creek road and construction of a bridge for access.

- ▶ A regional study of supply and demand for employment lands commissioned by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (Northern Rivers Employment Land Study, Hill PDA, 2023) recommends that a further 106 hectares of new employment land should be investigated across the Northern Rivers region in the short to medium term (0-10 years) and that Ballina consider an additional 26-30 hectares to meet demand forecasts. A similar study undertaken for the DPIE recommends investigating around 76 hectares of new employment land across Tweed, Byron and Ballina LGA's to meet forecast demand in the short to medium term.

Ballina Shire has 26,307 hectares of land mapped as Important Farmland which is 53.5% of the total land mass. The inclusion of 23 hectares adjoining an existing industrial estate is not considered to be inconsistent with Objective 8 of the NCRP to support the productivity of agricultural land.

The proposal is generally consistent with the urban growth variation principles in the NCRP as demonstrated in the table below.

North Coast Regional Plan

Urban growth area variation principles

Consideration

Response

Policy - The variation needs to be consistent with the objectives and outcomes in the North Coast Regional Plan 2041 and should consider the intent of any applicable Section 9.1 Direction, State Environmental Planning Policy and local growth management strategy.

The inclusion of the site within the LSPS, to be endorsed by the Planning Secretary, will provide consistency with Ministerial Directions 9.1 and 9.2 that address rural zones and rural lands. The inclusion is considered to be of minor significance to the overall quantum of Important Farmland within the Ballina Shire. (23 hectares represents 0.08% of the land identified as Important Farmland within the Ballina Shire).

Infrastructure - The variation needs to consider the use of committed and planned major transport, water and sewerage infrastructure, and have no cost to government. The variation should only be permitted if adequate and cost effective infrastructure can be provided to match the expected population.

The provision of water, sewer and transport infrastructure can be provided at no cost to government and will be provided in accordance with Council's existing contributions plans.

Environmental and heritage - The variation should avoid, minimise and appropriately manage and protect any areas of high environmental value and water quality sensitivity, riparian land or of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.

The site is not identified as containing areas of high environmental value or heritage.

Avoiding Risk - Risks associated with physically constrained land are identified and avoided, including:

- ▶ flood prone
- ▶ bushfire-prone
- ▶ highly erodible
- ▶ severe slope, and
- ▶ acid sulfate soils.

The site is not impacted by:

- ▶ Flooding
- ▶ Bushfire vegetation
- ▶ Landslip risk
- ▶ Steep slopes
- ▶ Acid sulphate soils.

Detailed site constraint analysis would be required as part of any future rezoning proposal.

Coastal Strip - Only minor and contiguous variations to urban growth areas will be considered within the coastal strip due to its environmental sensitivity and the range of land uses competing for this limited area.

Not applicable.

Land Use Conflict - The variation must be appropriately separated from incompatible land uses, including agricultural activities, sewerage treatment plants, waste facilities and productive resource lands.

The potential for land use conflict between an expanded industrial estate and surrounding agricultural uses, (macadamia plantations and grazing) or any future agricultural use is considered to be very low and able to be managed through design measures such as vegetated buffers.

Important Farmland - The planning area is contiguous with existing zoned urban land and the need and justification is supported by a sound evidence base addressing agricultural capability and sustainability and is either for:

- ▶ a minor adjustment to 'round off an urban boundary', or
- ▶ if demonstrated through a Department approved local strategy that no other suitable alternate land is available, and if for housing, that substantial movement has been made toward achieving required infill targets within existing urban growth area boundaries.

The proposed area is contiguous with the existing E4 General Industrial zoned land. The need is justified by the recommendations contained within the Hill PDA regional employment land supply and demand studies that have identified that there is a shortage of unconstrained employment land in the Northern Rivers region and that Ballina's future employment lands, identified as SUGAs, are subject to significant flooding and other constraints.

An assessment of Ballina's potential employment land is provided in Table 3 on pages 47-48.



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