

Northern Rivers Housing Strategy Storyboard

The purpose of the Story Board is to provide a transparent and comprehensive record of the development of a Regional Northern Rivers Housing Strategy for the 7 Northern NSW Council areas formed under NOROC (Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils). These councils are Ballina Shire; Byron Shire; Clarence Valley; Kyogle Shire, Lismore City; Richmond Valley; and Tweed Shire. The primary purpose of the strategy is to guide the development of affordable housing in the region.

The storyboard will document the development and decision-making processes begun in April 2012 and intended to conclude in December 2012 with a strategy document, it will include:

- Record of meetings and decisions of the steering committee;
- Record of meetings and negotiations with local government stakeholders;
- Record of consultations with community and non-government sector stakeholders.
- Review of existing affordable strategies of the 7 councils involved.
- Review of existing local planning framework for affordable housing.
- Review of State Government Policies;
- Record of new and emerging ideas; and
- A record of the development of new ideas.

This is an ongoing record like a newsletter or visual minutes of a process rather than a document that is changed and edited over time. It will be available at http://www.socialhabitat.com.au/?page_id=1086



Who are the consultants?

Social Habitat is an association of independent architectural, design, planning and community development professionals who live and work in the Northern Rivers region of NSW and are committed to social justice outcomes in the built environment.

Our work focuses on place making, low cost and affordable housing and the research, design and development of new types of sustainable settlement particularly focused on rural and regional Australia.

If you want more information our web address is: <http://www.socialhabitat.com.au/>. Please leave comments on our website or contact Malcolm Price M0410623348 or malcolmprice@socialhabitat.com.au

We welcome your input on the strategy!

Good Afternoon

Clarence Valley Council is seeking a skilled consultant to assist with the development of a Regional Housing Strategy and I would like to invite your organisation to submit a quote.

Project Description

Develop a Regional Northern Rivers Housing Strategy to guide future development of affordable housing. By collating existing data from local government area Housing Strategies. Completing a housing analysis for areas where there is no existing data. Establishing a Regional Steering Group to oversee the development of the Strategy and to develop partnership to deliver affordable housing projects.

A consultant will be engaged to

- collate existing Northern Rivers local government area strategies,
- complete regional housing analysis,
- identify local & state government land supply in the region,
- facilitate workshop/ community consultation 1/2 day forum
- draft Regional Strategy & Action Plan

I am required to get 3 quotes for project, please find attached a Consultant Brief. The total amount available to engage a consultant in the brief covers all costs including travel. I will send out the brief to 2 other consultants requesting their quote by COB Monday 26 March 2012 and will notify successful consultant Wednesday 28 March 2012. If you require more information you can contact me on 6641 7207.

Regards

Naydene Beaver
Community Development Officer (Housing)
Clarence Valley Council

Clarence Valley Council submitted a successful submission to Northern Rivers Regional Organisations of Councils (NOROC) to fund a pilot project; Northern Rivers NSW Regional Housing Strategy.

1. Introduction

NOROC allocate resources to develop a Regional Housing Strategy focused on the provision of affordable housing and decide Clarence Valley Council will auspice the project.

Expression of Interest process started March 12th 2012

4th April 2012 – The expression of interest submitted by Social Habitat was accepted.

Project funded by NOROC and auspiced and managed by Clarence Valley Council.



noroc



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Initial Consultants Meeting Notes

Date: 19 April 2012

1. Introduction
2. Consultant's Agreement signed by Social Habitat and Clarence Valley Council
3. Stakeholder & Consultation Plan
 - The Project Management Group (PMG) consists of Des Schroder, Brent McAlister, Robin Spragg and Naydene Beaver. Naydene is main point of contact. Information will be shared by email and meetings can also be via teleconference.
 - The Steering Group will involve representatives from all 7 local governments in Northern Rivers, Department of Planning & Infrastructure, Housing NSW. 2 or 3 meetings will be held at different locations between Grafton and Tweed. The first meeting will be held in June 2012. Consultants will also meet with individual representatives to gather information required prior to the first meeting. Discussion about how the Draft NR Regional Affordable Housing Strategy will be endorsed by the 7 different local Councils and NOROC, agreement will need to be made on how the Strategy will be endorsed.
 - Contact List of PMG and Steering Group was given to Consultants additional contacts for Department of Planning & Infrastructure and Housing NSW need to be added to the list. A letter of introduction to be drafted. Provisional Steering Committee is Robin Spragg and Ian Lonsdale (TSC), Brent McAlister (LCC), Joanne Petrovic (RVC), Lachlan Black (KSC), Naydene Beaver & Des Schroder (CVC), Ray Darney (ByronSC), Simon Scott (Ballina SC) & Deborah Kuhn (Regional Asset Manager Housing NSW)
 - There was some discussion about involvement of all Community Housing Providers now operating in Northern Rivers NSW, currently there is: Community Housing Limited, Patrick Yeung; North Coast Community Housing; John McKenna; & Horizon Housing Company, Jason Cubit
 - Other stakeholders to consider: Real Estate Agents & Developers; Service Providers; Target Groups; Centrlink; & Mission Australia.
4. Regional Housing Analysis

Discussion about work that CVC is doing with Department of Planning & Infrastructure. Des is involved in an Affordable Housing SEPP Review Working Group. Naydene is part of a Local Affordable Housing Strategies – Pilot Local Council Working Group. This group is working on creating a template that Council can use to develop local strategies. Dept. of Planning is working on a e-Tool for gathering useful demand and supply data. Not sure of the timeframe to launch the template and e-tool. Naydene to find out. This tool may be of assistance for the Regional Housing Analysis if available.
5. Review Planning Policies and mechanisms

Consultants indicated that they have started reviewing local affordable housing strategies. They will let Naydene know if they required any particular documents that they are unable to find via the internet.
6. Land Supply – Consultants to work on identifying land supply, Naydene to provide contact details for Deborah Kuhn, Regional Asset Manager Housing NSW. Discussion related to Clarence Valley - Capital cost of land is \$80,000 – market \$130,000 – S.94 \$10,000 - registered housing providers do not have to pay in the CVC area. How can land be cheaper? Within a standard development model there is little opportunity to create “affordable Housing” unless land was bought before 2000.

2. Initial Scoping

19th April 2012 – Initial Consultants Meeting, present were Des Schroder (CVC), Naydene Beaver (CVC), Toni Appleton (SH), Jim Benton (SH), Malcolm Price (SH) and Malcolm Scott

26th April 2012 – Discussion with Trish Evans from Northern Rivers Social Development Council. Malcolm Price & Toni Appleton present. Suggestion RDA Northern Rivers be consulted

Draft of Objectives of Project (for comment and discussion)

1. Profile of the Region including Historical, Environmental and Settlement Characteristics Affecting Housing Provision

- Examination of the critical environmental and climatic characteristics that have, and continue to affect the nature of settlement and by extension the cost and viability of housing.
- Examination of the historical reasons for the pattern of settlement and assessment of how this affects the provision of housing now;
- Examination of low cost housing solutions of the past and an assessment of how well these mechanisms could serve in the present and future.

2. Analysis

Analysis of housing in the Northern Rivers including:

- An understanding of development cost structures including:
 - cost and accessibility of land;
 - cost and size of constructing housing;
 - cost and flexibility of planning rules and other regulations;
 - cost and accessibility of money; and
 - cost and flexibility of infrastructure provision.
- The nature and limitations of existing housing stock;
- Who is in housing stress?
- In which areas is the most stress occurring?
- Who is trying to do something about it?

This will be based on existing local government information and 2011 census information.

3. Review

Review existing planning policies and strategies relevant to local government areas in the Northern Rivers.

- What is working and what is not?
- What are the impediments and can they be realistically overcome?

4. Consensus

That a consensus can be achieved across the seven LGA's of the Northern Rivers;

5. Advocacy and Education

Create an advocacy and education tool to feed into policy development within NSW and Commonwealth Governments. Continue work of local government and housing networks to raise awareness of the issue.

6. Useful Tools

Develop useful accessible affordable housing tools that will be useful to local government, state government, housing developers and community members, these include:

- Land register of suitable land owned by local government, the crown, and private interests;
- Description of new or existing development mechanisms that might be suitable for affordable housing and possibly be used for pilot projects, eg. Community Land Trust.

7. Action Plan

The strategy to be accompanied by a prioritised action plan, and also include around five clear initiatives that are articulated in greater detail and therefore can be initiated quickly if there is the will and available resources.

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Northern River Housing Forum - Effective Partnerships for Service Delivery and Action

May 9th 2012, Ballina

Attending from Social Habitat, Jim Benton, Malcolm Price and Malcolm Scott

The forum focused on service integration and how housing services might work more effectively across the Northern Rivers. Early sessions showcased the successes of services in finding accommodation for the most at need and high risk clients. The work of Ontrac, NCCHC and the presentation by Eva Gerencer from the Western Sydney Community Forum highlighted the need to involve real estate agents to procure head leases in the private market.

Malcolm Price did a brief presentation about the development of the Regional Housing Strategy. There was particular interest and questions raised around two points. These were:

- How to better utilise existing housing stock where there is maybe only a single person in a large house.
- New models for the utilisation and development of caravan parks and manufactured home parks.

There was also a question from the floor about use of rural land and intentional communities. MP



As a result of the forum we wondered whether the primary focus of the strategy should be on service delivery & homelessness or rather provision of affordable to the larger proportion of people in housing stress. MP, MS & JB

Meeting with Melanie Thomas on May 10th

Attending from Social Habitat, Jim Benton and Malcolm Price

Adds were observed in the three Echoes a couple of months ago which spoke of a means by which consumers could influence the Stereotyping of house buyers, and which invited interested people to contribute their statistics to a paper. At Southern Cross University, Malcolm and I met with the PhD. Student Melanie Thomas who is behind this.

Melanie is conducting a study of the types of choices and preferences which will drive the market, primarily for “Y gen” home buyers.

Listening to her, we found ourselves with the impression that she, although a young woman, was as surprised as were we, to find that Gen Y made no concessions to the present state of world economies and that they aspired to “McMansion” type homes. Despite their inability to afford it, they were steadfast in thinking that double incomes and the falling market would deliver their aspirations.

She suggested that the images that GenY associated with the sort of housing they sought, were media driven.

Perhaps alternative advertising might conjure ideas of different housing, which hold attraction to peoples of varying income groups. Investment in such places could eventually provide cheaper rents.

Melanie offered her corroborative material to our study. Jim Benton

Meeting with Tweed Shire Council

Malcolm Price and I met with Iain Lonsdale and Robin Spragg at the Tweed Chambers on Thurs 10th.

Iain indicated that Tweed Shire Council plans to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy although an Adaptable Housing Strategy is an earlier priority.

Robin expressed an interest in greater use of caravan and manufactured home parks, which were focussed on providing for the needs of locals, rather than increasingly catering only to travellers and tourists.

Several options for seeking available land for that purpose were discussed, and services and transportation needs arose as their most significant requirements. These were not deemed as too inhibiting and various products and methods were detailed.

Some examination of the management and profitability of caravan parks could be efficacious. Robin pointed to the very large resident population of the Tweed, around 4000 permanent residents. Shining sufficient light on the many closures elsewhere, might clarify alternatives to ill-advised strategies.

We dwelt on Multiple Occupancy as a possible cheaper rural land tenure. But, the spectre intrinsic to M.O. of inadequate distribution of equities, liabilities and responsibilities dampened further constructiveness in that area.

Discussion moved to possibilities of making cheaper land available for housing development, and Iain directed us to the Tweed Settlement Strategy. Several large approved residential developments such as Cobaki Lakes and Nightcape Village were discussed in regard to council’s efforts to provide affordable housing within these developments. Iain also showed us examples of some of the lot size and house configuration innovation which developers are attempting to get prices down into an affordable range, this included small lots and zero allotments. The most affordable housing is likely to be small dwellings on inland lots in some form of strata title.

Land fragmentation was discussed as a specific Tweed Shire issue, over 65% of all land is 10acres or less in size. Repeated subdivision has so reduced many rural holdings that the council will consider zoning changes. This advent *could* facilitate future village developments with cheaper land possibilities.

Tweed Shire had an active Granny Flat policy even before the affordable rental housing SEPP came out and they have never charged extra \$94 or \$68 contributions. Iain said he would try and track down the number of secondary dwellings approved.

Iain strongly recommended NSW State Government to institute an education program. Designed to go out to all Local Government, such an instructional package could set out cost saving measures and go so far as to authorise Councils to commit a percentage of approved developments to affordable housing

He also felt the wording in the regional plan should be far more specific and supportive of affordable housing, this would enable local model provisions of a certain % of affordable housing specific to each LEP in each LGA. In general Iain felt the state government needed to empower Councils more so that they could develop local solutions to affordable housing which he felt locality based LEP’s and DCP’s mechanisms could drive.

Jim Benton and Malcolm Price

Following the meeting Iain and Robyn forwarded three documents

A Framework for Tweed Affordable Housing Strategy - Discussion Draft 2008

Affordable Housing Options for Tweed Shire Council by Judith Stubbs (PP pres August 2011)

COBAKI Estate Affordable Housing Study, Leda Manorstead Pty Ltd (November 2010)

3. Initial Meetings

Jim and Malcolm attended information night Tallowood Ridge May 3 7PM where there was a presentation by Kevin Doodney from Future Housing Taskforce (small report on next page)

Apology to Kyogle Shire which was mistakenly omitted from description of stakeholders in the initial draft of page 1 of Storyboard. This has been corrected. Kyogle Council is an equal stakeholder in the development of this strategy with the other 6 councils of the Northern Rivers region.



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Tallowood Ridge Information Night, Mullumbimby, May 3 7PM

Jim and I responded to a full page advertisement in the Byron Shire Echo May 1 advertising an information night entitled “How to afford your own home” it was associated with a new residential development Tallowood Ridge near Mullumbimby.

The purpose of the evening was to promote Tallowood Ridge, this summary will only deal with issues relevant to the development of the housing strategy.

Kevin Doodney of Future Housing Taskforce

Key points of presentations and associated website include:

- Northern Rivers is the most expensive regional real estate in Australia.
- In 2001 the median house price was 4.7 times the average annual income. In 2011 it was 7.3 times.
- In 1950 the average home was 115m². Today it's 250m².

There was an analysis of income required to support a range of mortgage products, (see example) showing that the standard housing industry products are not affordable and without a large amount of equity, it is increasingly difficult to get a loan.

The conclusion of this industry insider was that the standard housing industry products of a free standing house on a suburban block is no longer affordable for most people and the market of those with enough equity to get a loan has virtually disappeared. They were therefore proposing their version of a solution they called a Dual-Key Housing Concept. Their price target is \$268,400 full turnkey.

“The Great Australian Dream is turning into A Great Australian Nightmare, with one in three young people today claiming they will never afford a home of their own. We are trying to address this on a local level.”

UTILIZING A MAXIMUM 33% OF NET INCOME



taken from <http://www.futurehousingtaskforce.com.au/afford4.php>

Luis Crestia has recently tried to sell a small House in Mullumbimby,. At the height of the market a year ago it would have sold for \$420,000, he put it on the market recently at \$380,000 (the lowest priced detached dwelling for sale in Mullumbimby).



The property is a 3 bedroom, 96sqm, free standing timber framed fibre cement cladded dwelling on 445sqm. The bank recently revalued it at \$300,000, this means that \$240,000 or 80% is the most a bank is likely to lend. \$140,000 would need to be made up by a potential purchaser. This is \$140,000 up front payment plus a weekly payment of about \$370/week (6% standard variable rate over 25 years). He had only two offers of \$330,000 and \$300,000. **Recently he took it off the market and rented it out for \$370/week.**

Extracts from **Affordable Housing Options for Tweed Shire Council** by **Judith Stubbs** (PP pres August 2011) **Analysis of last 12 months of sales data for land, houses and units for Tweed LGA:**

- **For a house/land package to be affordable for the upper end of moderate income band must = \$258,000**
 - o **No suburbs in Tweed LGA met this benchmark**
 - o **First Quartile prices in some suburbs were <\$300,000 (mainly inland and hinterland areas 12-33km from Tweed Heads)**
- **For a flat/unit to be affordable for the upper end of moderate income band also must = \$258,000**
 - o **First Quartile strata dwelling in some suburbs (TH West, Bogangar & Murwillumbah) met this benchmark**
 - o **Median strata dwelling in Murwillumbah met this benchmark**

Re houses:

- **Rawlinson's cost guide – entry level project home of 110 sq mtrs = \$150,000**
- **So land no more than \$110,000 to be AH**
- **Block TLGA 1st quartile = \$204,000**

Review of **Cobaki Estate Affordable Housing Study**, (November 2010)

Cobaki Lakes Estate exemplifies the uncertainty of developers in confronting today's changeable economic climate. In attempting to engage with an evaporating market Affordable Housing is only realisable as part of a “Housing Mix” in which more expensive products absorb some of the overall development costs. Even with substantive subsidies Affordable Housing would be unachievable without that Mix. As clearly stated in the study done for Leda Manorstead PTY. LTD; (all quoted in Italics)

“Whilst the proposed concept plan is considered in keeping with the state Government’s objectives to provide a range of dwelling types, in suitable locations at a range of affordability’s, without subsidy it cannot provide for all household incomes, especially those on low or very low income levels.”

Developers are seeking buyers to their products from ever further afield. Cobaki’s promotional material makes much of “the four lane Highway from its northern perimeter, all the way to Brisbane.” and it cites Sydney and Brisbane target markets.

The Report calls upon the State Government for clearer fast tracking of incentives, subsidies to developers and better guidelines for local Government;

“The Affordable Rental Housing SEPP 2009 affirms that the State Government is seeking ways to work with developers to provide Affordable Housing. In order to achieve this objective, the NSW State Government has identified a number of planning mechanisms may be used to encourage the provision of affordable housing. The most effective of these mechanisms however require implementation at the early stages of planning and design.”

A clearer appeal is made that suggests less equivocally that without specific early input for determining feasibility, fewer creative mechanisms can be brought to the table;

“Accordingly it may be considered a greater challenge to identify how planning mechanisms can be used to encourage / support the provision of affordable housing at the later stages of a schemes assessment without making significant changes to its design or placing significant burdens on its developer.”

Costly Economic-Planning tools could be used more often, more cheaply and more effectively in modelling possible projects, if Subsidies and fixed increments of Affordable Housing can be factored in, at the outset.

The Report places future, effective integrated housing within the powers State Government to facilitates.

“Furthermore its important to reiterate that there are no local or state statutory requirements for provision of a number or proportion of affordable housing units within a development. Rather, the Far North Coast Regional Strategy encourages a range of dwelling types and affordability’s without classification as to what levels of affordability must be addressed as part of a development.”
JB

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4. How Much to Buy a House?

The evidence suggests there is a market correction occurring right now in large parts of the Northern Rivers.

“For Planning Departments and Councils to be partners in creating healthy future communities they need empowerment by State Government in delivering some new models. “ Comment related to Cobaki Study

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Review of Far North Coast and Mid North Coast Regional Plans

Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed Councils are covered by the Far North Regional Plan 2006-31 and Clarence Valley is covered in the Mid North Coast Regional Plan 2006-31



In relation to housing policy the two plans are similar:

- There is a projected population increase of about 26% between 2006 and 2031 to about 355,000 people.
- Plans for 58,100 new dwellings to be built by 2031, which is an increase of 49% in the number of dwellings.
- There is an allocation of greater then 35% of future housing to the regional centres of Tweed, Lismore, Ballina and Grafton.
- Both plans encourage growth of non coastal centres.

On Affordable Housing – “Local government will consider a range of affordable housing strategies, including forms of low cost housing, suitable zonings and development controls to improve housing choice, and specific schemes.” FNCRP & MNCRP (same clause)

“Settlement areas will be appropriately located and designed to maximise the affordability of housing, as well as to provide the type of housing styles and dwelling mixes that are appropriate to the ageing of the population.” FNCRP & MNCRP (same clause)

“provide choice in housing form and affordability in appropriate locations that responds to changing demographics and the associated reduction in household occupancy rates” FNCRP

“The Strategy’s crucial role in creating long-term planning certainty cannot be underestimated. It recognises the need to protect the region’s coastline from excessive population pressure, provide affordable and appropriately located housing, and diversify and grow the Region’s economic base.” FNCRP

On Housing Mix - “Currently 80 per cent of all dwellings in the Region are detached houses but with demographic change and lower occupancy ratios there will need to be a greater proportion of multiunit dwellings in future to provide accessible and adaptable housing choices.” MNCRP

“Higher density living is to be encouraged around the town centres and areas of major employment.”

“The Strategy aims to achieve a more appropriate mix for future housing that reflects the Region’s changing housing needs (i.e. 60% single dwellings and 40% multi-unit for the 51 000 proposed dwellings within the Town and Village Growth Boundaries by 2031).” FNCRP

On Ageing Households - “The most significant implication of these ageing and housing trends will be that smaller households will form and a greater number of dwellings for single person and couple-only households will be needed. MNCRP

On Rural Residential Development - “Rural residential development will continue to be possible as

one form of housing choice for the Region. However any new planning for rural residential settlement should focus on land close to an existing urban settlement, away from the coast, away from areas that may in the future have value as urban expansion areas, where significant vegetation clearing would not be required and where current or potential future primary production will not be affected.” MNCRP & FNCRP (clause very similar)

“In order to limit urban growth along the coast and ensure efficiencies in land utilisation and infrastructure provision, no further rezoning for rural residential development (other than land in an approved land release strategy) will be permitted in the Coastal Area.” FNCRP

On Caravan Parks - New caravan parks and manufactured home estates where there is any potential for permanent accommodation to occur, generally should be located in urban areas.” MNCRP & FNCRP (same clause)

Much of the Far North Coast Regional Plan is predicated on its proximity to the economic activity of SE Queensland. The assumption is that it can provide affordable housing to service SE Queensland, however both plans are short of language on how this might occur, except including the assumption that land will be cheaper in Northern NSW.

The growth assumptions of these strategies, both population and increase in dwelling numbers now appear unrealistic. Growth in the period from 2006-2011 in each shire appears to reflect this. Both strategies indicate there will be a need for more dwellings and a different mix to cater for an ageing population but neither indicates how they will be paid for or how existing detached housing stock would be utilised.

A Tenants Story

“Further to our conversation at the Housing Forum in Ballina last week, here is a brief history of my experience of living in a caravan park. It started in Ballina about 16 years ago, when I had a bit of money, & was looking for a place to live around the North Coast. My sister had her own caravan + annex in Tinkerbell Caravan Park, a middle-of-the-road caravan park,& as luck would have it another van came up for sale. I found a group of fellow drinkers, & spent 4 or 5 years more or less happily until Tinkerbell was sold. A lot more could have been done defending tenant rights during this period, but the people arranging the sale used the time-honoured tactics of divide-&-conquer, plus mis-information, & my mate and I moved to Wardell & the Sandalwood Park. We had a lot more room there, room for vege gardens, throwing sticks & things for the owners dogs, + horses to talk to. We built a drinking area with table + chairs, had some local tenants plus grey nomads drop in, & I felt quite content. However, I turned 65, had to go on the pension, and applied for social housing. I got an offer pretty quickly, & moved to Lismore. While there are pretty rough parks in Ballina [2 come to mind], & tourist type parks [where if you have a van worth less than \$30,000 you are frowned upon] there are also parks where the community spirit is high, & life is bearable, even comfortable. It's not suburbia, but you can have a life, & it's infinitely better than sleeping under a bridge. Perhaps if we had parks that are dedicated to otherwise homeless people, we could eliminate some of the problems that exist in ordinary parks.[such as child bullying, drugs & alcohol abuse etc.] When I think of the way social housing is slipping behind, maybe it's worth a try.”

Peter Harris



**Peter Harris NCCHC
Tenants Council**

Project funded by NOROC and auspiced and managed by Clarence Valley Council.



5. Review of Regional Plans

Meeting with Graham Irvine, May 18th, he is a lawyer with deep understanding of multi occupancy land tenure. Recommended look at Multiple Occupancy Development in the Tweed by Woodward J. 1986, Department of Environment and Planning

If the new regional plans are to be useful in directing local government in relation to affordable housing then they should be more explicit in their language, as well as being more flexible in relation to historical forms of low cost housing such as such worker housing, rural residential and caravan parks/manufactured home estates. The Clarence Valley might be better located in the Far North Coast rather than the Mid North Coast for the purposes of these planning instruments.

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Meeting with Lismore City Council (LCC) – Friday 25th May

Attending: Brent McAllister (LCC), Steve Denise (LCC), Paula Newman (LCC), Naydene (CVC) Malcolm, Malcolm & Jim (Social Habitat)

Issues and Comments

- Global issues particularly Australian banking industry lines of credit have made low interest loans and cost of housing development more expensive.
- Need to better understand the housing market and demand and cost of housing.
- Lismore housing unique or a place of contradiction in that many professionals who work in Lismore travel and live in coastal areas, many people who live in Ballina and Casino and rural areas travel to Lismore for work.
- LCC sees rural landsharing (multiple occupancy) as a legitimate means of providing affordable housing – historic success communities still exist and appear viable.

Housing Strategy

- LCC has agreed to employ a ½ full time equivalent housing officer for 3 years to implement the recently completed Lismore Housing Study and draft Lismore Housing strategy.
LCC is open to sharing resource i.e. councils sharing housing officers, this should be seen in context of exploring models of regional resourcing, e.g. use of regional organisation like Northern River Social Development Council as a auspices body.
- LCC draft housing strategy strong emphasis on developing partnerships to promote development of affordable housing.

Land Supply and Infrastructure

- LCC in the new LEP have sought to rezone / release substantial tracts of land potentially suitable for housing to re-dress a historic supply shortage.
- There is a need for the other levels of government to invest in public infrastructure that supports the development and provision of housing – local government cannot afford to fund substantial up-front infrastructure.
- LCC in partnership up-grading a large sewerage main (Southern Trunk Main) which will service existing developed and un-sewered urban areas as well as service the land release areas.
- LCC strong emphasis on developing partnerships and stream lining and making the land release / rezoning preparation of development control plans and timing assessment and determination of DAs
- Steve commented that he thought development assessment processes and timelines are one key break on industry innovation.

Regional strategy should:

- focus on the issue of housing affordability generally rather than focus on hard end of homelessness and service provision;
- provide a tool / template that will assist the 7 councils in providing affordable housing,;
- should be educative and assist to raise awareness of the issue on a regional scale;
- seek inputs from private sector – land and housing developers and real estate industry;
- raise or suggest means for possible partnerships with councils and community non-government housing sector and land and housing developers to realise affordable housing; and
- seek inputs from community non-government housing sector given that State and Federal governments are in various ways divesting their roles as actual providers of social housing.

Meeting with Richmond Valley Council (RVC) – 30th May

Attending Tony McAteer (RVC) Sen. Strat. Planner Naydene (CVC) Malcolm, Malcolm & Jim (Social Habitat)

Affordable Housing Successes - Housing NSW recently completed 4 developments for seniors and disabled persons in Casino (37 dwellings in total 18x2BR, 17x1BR) funded by recent AGNBSP 'stimulus' money and developed under SEPP. Tony had two comments related to SEPP:

- There were too many units squeezed onto land and lack of on-site car parking (9 units 4 on-site spaces) **Country areas are different to urban (Sydney) areas there is a higher car dependence and lack of public transport.**

There was also concerns raised about legalistic and Sydney centric changes to standard template LEP land use definitions, examples cited included: shop top housing and removal of general store definition. Shop top housing now must be on top of shops whereas previously it could be adjacent to shop on same site.

Torrens Title Subdivision

- There appears to be no demand for small lot subdivision, in one subdivision 650m2 lots did not sell and were reconfigured to be 900-1,000m2 lots.
- Council allows creation of 350sqm Torrens title lots of approved developed dual occupancy as alternative to Strata title.
- New LEP did not rezone / release substantial areas of land – basically converted existing instruments to new standard template LEP
- More dual occupancy development in Evans Head probably consequence of higher land value;

Rural Land Sharing - 2 MO's in council area – thought to be 12 site developments – **council perceives MO rating is inequitable.**

Manufactured home estates, there are two, one a gated community with higher level of facilities and services in South Casino "appears expensive", the second an 80 site out of town caravan park near Evans Head which has varied regulation to permit higher % of permanent residencies.

Medium Density Development - Older residential flats (rental accommodation)

General Comments and Issues

- Some unauthorised dual occupancy in town – issues relate to fire safety and structural integrity
- Unauthorised dual occupancy in rural areas which council lacks resources to respond to;
- Affordable house prices in Casino thought to be in range of \$250,000-\$350,000
- **Social affordable housing is the role of State and/or Federal Government;**
- Provision of affordable housing difficult – thought they should be some form of government subsidy to encourage private sector affordable type developments.
- Council used to own an aged persons facility in Coraki – now owned and operated privately;
- Under utilised housing stock in Evans Head – holiday homes occasionally used by owners and/or holiday let;
- Casino has of more recent times seen a resurgence in dual occupancy developments.

Council Role:

- RVC has very limited resources and does not have resources or finances to be a developer of affordable housing
- Council might consider partner role if grant monies were available – some council owned land on which there is 4-5 dwellings managed by North Coast housing;
- Council might consider waiving or exempting secondary dwellings from contributions;
- Council has been able to expand DCP definition to allow attached dual occupancy in rural areas;
- Supportive of regional approach to facilitating affordable housing;

6. Early Council Meetings

Manufactured home estates - As a post meeting update, I had cause to meet with the Casino Village Management Board last week. This is the gated mobile home and manufacture home park in South Casino. They offer manufactured homes ranging from \$150,000 to \$450,000. Apparently the lower priced end of the market is very popular. So, in hind sight my personal comment that "appears expensive" is incorrect as they have a large range of choice but strongly weighted toward the lower priced end of the market.

Tony McAteer Richmond Valley Council

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Meeting with Kyogle Shire Council (KC)

30 May 12, 3PM - Attending: Lachlan Black (KC) Carol O'Neill (KC), Naydene Beaver (CVC) Malcolm, Malcolm and Jim (Social Habitat)

Issues and Comments

- Extent of issue not known in Kyogle – regional investigations and strategy would assist,
- Kyogle compared to other parts of region appears to be 'affordable'.
- Some people live at Kyogle (affordable) and travel to work in Lismore.
- Anecdotal evidence housing east of range (Kyogle) more expensive (\$180,000-\$300,000) – rents \$200-\$300/wk than west of range house where prices and rents are lower.

Land and Housing

- Recent subdivision on northern fringe of town – Stage 1, 20 lots selling for \$110,000-\$150,000.
- NSW Housing has possible 38 properties in Kyogle
- Villages (e.g. Wianagree, Woodenbong, Bonalbo & Tabulam) are potentially places that might be developed for more affordable housing – constrained by lack of services e.g. sewer and jobs and community services/facilities
- Draft LEP about to go on second period of exhibition;
- Kyogle has a fairly high number of MO's particularly in north-eastern part of LGA (Nimbin area) – recent DA for 1 new 6 site MO development & a DA for 3 site expansion of existing development

Council Actions

- KC has no policy for affordable housing – issue identified in the social plan as 'to be investigated'
- KC has no resources or funds to be a direct provider – prepared to consider mechanisms to support e.g. partnership
- KC not a provider of affordable housing – caravan park at Bonalbo closed 6-8 years ago (Council has asked that the possibility for permanent residency be investigated) – caravan park in Kyogle handed back to Crown – now managed privately.
- KC has no policies to waiver or exempt affordable housing development from contributions;
- No recent secondary dwelling or other affordable type developments; and
- Considerable tracts of Crown land in LGA – very few maybe suitable – merit investigation KC can assist by providing access to property register.

Meeting with Ballina Shire Council (BSC) – 31 May 12, 2PM

Attending Simon Scott (BSC), Naydene Beaver (CVC), Malcolm, Malcolm and Jim (Social Habitat)

Simon advised that BSC sees the provision of social housing as a responsibility of the State government and Council would likely be concerned to avoid cost shifting from state to local government in relation to accommodating high needs groups.

Affordable Housing Strategy - The key element of BSC affordable housing strategy is accommodative land supply so that the private sector can readily respond to market demand. It is acknowledged that block sizes are trending smaller in response to affordability and development finance issues and there are examples of lots in the shire as small as 450sqm (though these were approved by the State Government under Part 3A). It is BSC's preference to see smaller allotments occurring as part of an integrated development process (construction of dwellings followed by subdivision, Torrens or strata). Ballina Shire's Draft Growth Management Strategy identifies long-term potential land supplies including land in Lennox Head, Cumbalum & Wollongbar – some council owned land (old drive-in) at Wollongbar and some land in Lennox Head (Henderson Farm South).

BSC affordable housing strategy considers opportunities associated with Community Land Trusts, however such a model would need to be presented that was simple & clearly understood to be effective and to form part of solution – could be applied to a range of land use – need to generate critical mass of land – provide 'salt 'n pepper' mix of land uses.

Council as Developer - BSC has historically (1970's) been a developer of urban land and continues to have a direct role in developing industrial land – this is done as a commercial venture with the ultimate goal of keeping rates lower.



Housing Mix

Land subdivisions in LGA generally currently achieving 8-10 dwellings / ha and development ratios over the shire achieve the 60/40 detached / medium density development requirements of Far North Coast Regional Strategy. BSC's Draft Growth Management Strategy includes an objective to achieve a development density in new release areas of 15 dwellings / hectare.

Some manufactured home estates and caravan parks in council area providing a range in type / age & cost of that form of housing – Riverbend (most recently developed) is looking to expand. Riverbend is relatively low cost housing but is at the higher end of the manufactured home park / caravan park market.

Ballina Island is probably the most suitable location for future provision of affordable housing through urban consolidation, subject to Council's further consideration of the opportunities and constraints of such a strategy. It was noted that Housing NSW owns older housing stock on Ballina Island that may be suitable for re-development. Key issues affecting development opportunities on Ballina Island include: that the land is low lying and subject to

sea level rise through a combination of high tides and high rainfall events; land tenure is also fragmented and consolidation would be complex. Infrastructure capacity considerations, to accommodate further infill development, would also require further consideration.

Affordable Housing SEPP - There have likely been few or no DA's for secondary dwellings, however figures were not available on-hand. BSC does not waiver s. 94 contributions for secondary dwellings, although this is under consideration. Council recently refused a DA for an affordable housing proposal in Lennox Head under the SEPP and that decision was upheld by court.

Private sector cross subsidization as a provision within LEP to provide for a percentage of affordable lots is not likely to be supported, particularly given existing financial/economic climate – there are several major developments in the shire that have stalled or collapsed.

7. Early Council Meetings

The Northern Joint Regional Planning Panel has refused a development application (DA) for an affordable rental housing estate in Tallow Wood Place and Greenfield Road, Lennox Head.

Chair of the Northern regional panel, Mr. Garry West, said, "the panel acknowledges that there is a need for affordable housing in the Ballina Shire, however after consideration of the DA, it has concluded that the proposed development is not consistent with relevant land use, planning regulations or development controls applicable to the site and has, therefore, had to refuse consent for the application.

Extract Joint Regional Planning Panels media release 14th July 2011

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Meeting with Byron Shire Council (BSC) - 31 May 12

Attending Ray Darney (BSC), Naydene (CVC), Malcolm, Malcolm and Jim (Social Habitat)

BSC has undertaken considerable research and investigation into affordable housing issue including:

- Development of a strategy
- Provisions of draft LEP (some which have been rejected by Dept.of Planning)
- Waivering s. 94 & s. 68 contributions for secondary dwellings
- Investigating sites suitable for mobile home estates and other forms of potential low cost housing

Issues and Comments

- BSC has significant financial constraints – State government is responsible for provision of social housing – BSC will not accept cost shifting
- BSC has no spare money for new projects – a consequence of cost of building, operation and managing library and regional sports centre
- Provision for affordable housing through planning instruments (LEP & DCP) – would appear to be the ‘easiest’ approach
- Difficulty in providing for affordable housing because community does not appear to like medium density developments or small lot development.
- BSC is reluctant to rezone / release more land for urban development – landowners have sought approval pathway via State government
- **DA for boarding house recommended for approval by staff considered to achieve SEPP merit considerations – refused by council – council decision upheld by court.**
- No new land releases around Byron – diminished supply cost up impacts together with holiday letting has impact on affordability
- **Recent development of zoned land (Tallowwood) near Mullumbimby – DA still determined by L&EC – some easing on demand but process makes affordability difficult**
- Landlords mainly in Byron Bay maybe seeking to take advantage of secondary dwelling provision in SEPP for holiday rentals, BSC when it approved DA’s seeks via conditions of consent and 88E restriction on title that the secondary dwelling be not used for holiday accommodation.
- **Draft template LEP included incentive provisions recommended in the council affordable housing strategy (Dr Stubbs) but those were in part removed by the Dept of Planning**
- Need for greater flexibility in template LEP or for a SEPP for affordable housing applying to the region
- Needs to be a rethink on rural land multiple occupancy which historically has provided low cost housing in shire – re-introduce SEPP15 type – rental rural housing – rural dual occupancy – provided land not constrained and no loss of prime agricultural land
- Need for mechanism and will to ‘legalise’ unauthorised rural housing to ensure public / occupant safety
- Confusion in regard status of NSW Housing and ownership of its housing rental stock
- Flood prone land limits development of multi-unit affordable housing – depending on category of flood single detached elevated dwellings.

Supported in a Regional Strategy

- BSC might get involved in partnership to develop land it owns for affordable housing – though not sure whether or not council will expect to maximise or seek full return from the land asset – council not a developer and would not be interested in management
- Council would consider regional approach which might make recommendations to change the template LEP to include provisions for affordable housing
- Supports notion of ‘notwithstanding’ schedules in template LEP as a means of identifying on specific land parcels specific development (e.g. mobile home estates and other forms of potential low cost housing) as opposed to making the type of development generally permissible in a zone
- Notion of community land trust could be investigated as a management tool for an affordable housing provider but it (whatever it is) does not resolve planning issues of permissibility.

Court rejects Bruns boarding house

Luis Feliu

The NSW Land and Environment Court has found that a proposed 27-room boarding house, which sparked an outcry from Brunswick Heads residents, would be out of character with the surrounding area.

The court last week dismissed an appeal by the owners of the Teven Street property against Byron Shire Council's rejection last year. The controversial plan was to redevelop the existing gym and squash centre into a boarding house.

Adverse local impact

Commissioner Sue Harris concluded that the design of the boarding house would have an adverse impact on the local area.

In her judgment, commissioner Harris said she accepted the need for affordable rental housing in Brunswick Heads and believed it would be in the public interest, 'however, it should be provided in a manner that is appropriate in terms of its impacts and design'.

The development plan, which had been recommended for approval by Byron Council staff, was lodged under a contentious new policy introduced two years ago by the former state government to promote affordable rental housing.

It was quietly placed on public exhibition for several weeks over the busy 2010 Christmas break, but after an outcry from locals, the matter was called up by mayor Jan Barham for councillors to decide.

Last year, councillors overwhelmingly rejected the plan, backing residents who opposed the project for being out of scale and character with the area and that it would cause major traffic and social impacts on the quiet street and neighbourhood.

Owners of the double block, Murray and Julia Stebbing, originally proposed to build 33 rooms into the centre, but just before the court case started cut it back to 27 rooms and deleted a proposed free-standing manager's residence and increased the common areas.

Mayor Jan Barham welcomed the news as 'fantastic', while taking a swipe at council planners for ignoring the character test and relying solely on the contentious planning policy requirements when they recommended approval.

'Staff did not consider all the work we had done to that date for settlement strategies and other plans in defining what character is,' Cr Barham said. "This will send out a strong message about how important character and amenity is in planning'.

Article in Byron Shire Echo
May 30th 2012

Meeting with Steve Connelly Lennox Heads based town planner.

May 31st 5:30PM - Attending Steve, Malcolm, Malcolm & Jim

Steve pushed for a regional approach to affordable housing based on Aspen model when he worked on the Regional Strategy and advised government concerning the Far North Coast Regional strategy. He said that the State did not have an appetite for this approach.

Despite the well written policies crafted by local government in the region and a special purpose SEPP, Steve has witnessed extreme NIMBYism in regard to provision of affordable housing in the region, citing recent DA's in Lennox Head and Brunswick Heads;

Steve observed that Estates in the region (such as Angels Beach, East Ballina and Tallowood Ridge, Mullumbimby), are having difficulty selling "conventional" land and are looking at revamping new releases and housing products to meet the regional demand for housing in a much lower cost cohort.

When asked what he thought were the most effective possible mechanisms that councils could enact he recommended:

1. Making it mandatory for all new homes to be approved as dual occupancies. The homes need not be built with the dual occupancy facilities (i.e. second bathroom and kitchen) in place, but at some time in the future (i.e. when the kids leave home) the house can be instantly converted for use as a secondary dwelling with the need to go back to council to get a new approval, and can just as easily "flip back" to a dwelling as the family situation demands; and
2. Make the conversion of an existing house to a dual occupancy "exempt development". Much like it is exempt development to have an home office and employ 2 persons additional to the house occupants, Steve recommends making the conversion of an existing house to a dual occupancy a form of development that does not require any DA approval. He accepts that BCA rules will still apply.

8. Early Meetings

See Aspen model of affordable housing at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Aspen's+affordable+housing+program+helps+create+community.-a016548541>

"I think it is pretty much impossible to get affordable housing with any scale approved in this Region." Steve Connelly

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Northern Rivers LGA Affordable Housing Strategies

Three councils in the Northern Rivers, have developed and adopted affordable housing strategies, these are Ballina Shire Council, Byron Shire Council and Clarence Valley Council. Lismore City Council has developed a general housing strategy, which is currently in draft form and on exhibition. Both Tweed Shire Council and Richmond Valley Council have informal strategies indicated by work in other strategic areas. Richmond Valley has an on-going Affordable Housing Advisory Group. This review looks at the strategies of all seven councils. Kyogle is the only LGA of the seven that does not have a strategic approach to affordable housing.

Of the four written strategies, the Clarence Valley strategy document is the simplest and in some ways the weakest, yet their strategy has probably been the most successful. It has built its success out of building momentum through collaboration and implementation of achievable tasks, and it has been resourced with a full time worker.

In contrast the Byron strategy document is more ambitious and packed with more ideas, however thus far it has failed to implement much of its strategy although it has tried to implement a number of projects and it has had a deal of success with secondary dwellings. This lack of success to date should not necessarily be regarded as failure because it has blazed a trail, which may prove to be helpful to the regional strategy. Its strategy has been let down by the inconsistent nature of resourcing; an unsupportive response by the state government to many of the strategy ideas; and fickle local politics.

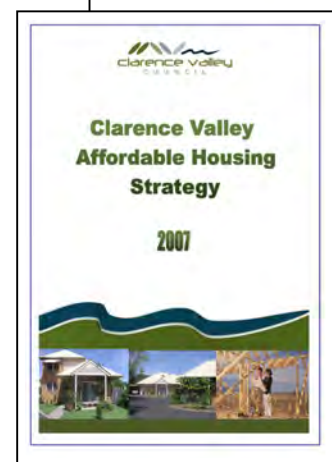
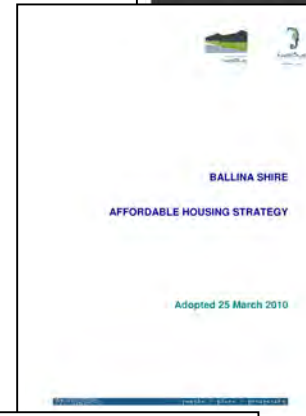
Ballina's strategy is more conservative and has been implemented more recently, its success or failure is hard to gauge as the strategy relies heavily on long term objectives related to the release of new land and innovation in the private sector. There has been little progress in the partnership section of their strategy because there appears to be a lack of political support locally and a lack of local resources to implement the strategy.

There is little basis yet for analysing the success or failure of the draft Lismore Housing Strategy, the document is interesting in that it:

- Clearly articulates a strategic methodology; and
- It differentiates the issues of housing diversity and affordable housing in a useful way.

In comparing the four available housing strategy documents and the other relevant strategies of the seven councils, there is no a common approach to affordable housing, affordable housing policy or even a common framework for strategic development because:

- The methodology applied by each council to developing a strategy is different. Each strategy document frames its objectives, outcomes and actions quite differently;
- While there are similarities in the issues of each council, the methods and extent of consultation and research are different and each strategy gives a different emphasis to common issues.
- Each council area is at a different level of awareness and development in their various strategies, with Clarence and Byron



- being highly aware down to Kyogle being unaware;
- There is little commonality to the way action plans are structured.
- Resourcing to implement each strategy is quite different, only Clarence Valley has applied consistent resources to affordable housing.

Strengths

- Compared to other regions around Australia and particularly other regions within NSW with similar characteristics, local government and the community sector in the region have been very active in advocating for better affordable housing policy.**
- The region has been served well by a number of regional organisations and expert external consultants in helping to analyse local issues;
- There has been strong collaboration between local government and other key stakeholders, particularly in the community sector; and
- Given that affordable housing is not a traditional council activity and the fact councils have limited resources, this region has applied quite extensive resources to the issue compared to many other regions.**

Weaknesses

- The common ground between the various LGA's as represented by their strategies is uneven;
- There has been a complete lack of effective community education of the issue. NIMBY values in particular places have succeeded to preventing some of the most promising affordable housing projects;
- There has been little coordination of action between local government areas till now;
- Most local strategies are not well connected to their wider environmental, cultural, economic or historical context;
- None of the strategies make a link to the success or failure of strategies used to develop low cost housing in the region in previous generations;
- In terms of building new housing or bringing in new resources, success has been modest to date.
- The reliance on the community housing sector and in particular North Coast Community Housing Company to lead the process of developing new social housing stock has had little success. This is more a criticism of the state government than NCCHC because it has failed to adequately skill and resource this local organization.

Conclusions

The success of an affordable housing strategy, as borne out by analysis of the strategies of the LGA's in the Northern Rivers is related to five factors.

- The level of appropriate and contiguous resources, in particular staff, being applied to the implementation of the strategy;
- Political support within the local council and community;
- How supportive NSW state government policies and people are;
- The effectiveness of collaboration and partnerships with key industry stakeholders; and
- The quality of direction that the strategy document provides;

Sadly there does not seem yet to be a correlation between the innovative "good" ideas provided and successful actions.

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9. Review of LGA Affordable Housing Strategies

A more comprehensive analysis of the affordable housing strategies of the seven LGA's is in a document called:
Review of LGA Affordable Housing Strategies, Planning Instruments and SEPPs

This is obtainable by contacting Social Habitat

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A list of 16 questions with a number of sub questions about affordable housing was sent to each of the seven councils. Responses were received from all seven councils. The following is a selection of quotes and extractions from the results.

"I would hope that the analysis of the housing affordability situation will include some consideration of the broader (national and international) factors that have contributed to the current situation." - **Simon Scott (BallinaSC) Q1**

"I believe that the TOR should seriously consider accessible and adaptable housing as a part of the review of existing housing stock." - **Joanne Petrovic (RVC) Q1**

"It is envisaged that Council would adopt the Strategy (assuming there are actions relevant to and requiring action by LCC) following adoption by NOROC." - **Paula Newman(LCC) Q1a**

"The delivery of 'social housing' is a state government responsibility and I would suggest it is beyond the scope of this project." - **Simon (BallinaSC) Q1b**

"It is envisaged that Council would adopt the Strategy (assuming there are actions relevant to and requiring action by LCC) following adoption by NOROC." - **Paula (LCC) Q1a**

4) What have been the successes in provision of affordable housing in your local government area in the last 3 years?

The SEPP Affordable Housing has had very little success in the region:

- There have been a number of boarding house style developments and infill development under the SEPP have been rejected by local councils and Joint Regional Planning Panels.
- The best success under the SEPP has been secondary dwellings approved in Byron Shire, although there is doubt about whether many of the approved secondary dwellings will be used for tourism rather as affordable housing.
- There were four infill developments (37dwellings) in RVC under SEPP with stimulus money that were not regarded fondly because of negative impact on private housing providers.

5) Where on the spectrum of action would your council sit in regard to affordable housing?

All councils answered either:

LOW - Awareness Raising and Advocacy **or**

MEDIUM - Facilitation of Housing Outcomes through Planning & Regulatory Functions

No council answered: **HIGH** - Direct Provision and /or Management.

"Our experience with Noydene is that it is essential to have an affordable housing officer to make progress. Just like for heritage you need a heritage officer or in the environment an ecologist". - **Des Schroder (CVC) Q5**

"No. Individuals often think they understand the issue however it is often derived from exposure to topical issues in the media; a more in depth appreciation and understanding of the issue and most importantly the costs and barriers to resolving it need to be more broadly understood." - **Ian Lonsdale (TSC) Q6**

"Council are aware of the direr needs in our Shire, but believe it's a state responsibility. There is a large number of illegal rural housing throughout the Shire, most of which are substandard and don't comply with housing codes." - **Ray Darney ByronSC Q6**

"Increasing the supply of land zoned for housing is the biggest land use issue. The least constrained land and probably the cheapest land for development in Lismore is generally flood prone." - **Paula LCC Q7**

"...in particular the poor perception of mixed residential-commercial, industry and business which has led to segregated and isolated pockets of limited development opportunity and absence of cross utilization; 'deadzones', encouraged through zoned based planning; flooding; environmental sensitivity..." - **Ian (TSC) Q7**

"...the mentality of 'build it and they shall' come is insufficient in determining the success of affordable and low cost housing..." - **Ian (TSC) Q8**

"State govt needs to take direct ownership by finding suitable sites and building affordable public housing." - **Ray (ByronSC) Q8**

"Council recognises that Lismore needs greater housing diversity and needs to encourage sustainable forms of development. It therefore supports urban consolidation in principle." - **Paula (LCC) Q9**

"Council is very supportive of rural land sharing; it has occurred in the Lismore LGA for many years. It has remained an affordable form of housing." - **Paula (LCC) Q12**

Council supports this and has endeavored to provide for more caravan parks and MHEs through an EOI process and LGMS. Council would hope to incorporate these new sites in the draft LEP. - **Ray (ByronSC) Q13**

"The potential for prefabricated housing, that is well suited to the climatic conditions of the region, is worthy of further investigation and possible support." - **Simon (BallinaSC) Q15**

"Promote mixed use development in town/village centres - commercial space with residential above. Benefits for the vitality of local economies and village life." - **Lachlan Black (KSC) Q16**

"I think that adaptable housing is the way to go in the future and that there is a big market out there for houses that have some shared and some private areas. Adapting existing properties seems to me to be crucial." - **Joanne (RVC) Q16**

"Open and meaningful consultation between State and local government and the development industry and banks... In the meantime, pushing to deliver housing diversity and adaptability is likely to be one of the few areas local government can influence and impact on their own." - **Ian (TSC) Q16**

10. Council Questionnaire Results

Note: none of the responses provided are the official responses from the councils concerned.

The full responses to questions are in a document:
Northern Rivers Regional Affordable Housing Strategy - Results of Council Questionnaire
Available from Social Habitat

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The first steering group meeting of the Northern Rivers Regional Affordable Housing Strategy was held at Lismore Council Chambers on June 22nd 2012.

The meeting was attended by representatives of all the Northern Rivers LGA's except Kyogle Shire Council as well as representatives of Social Habitat and planning NSW. These included: Toni Appleton, Malcolm Price & Malcolm Scott (Social Habitat), David Bird (Planning NSW) via telephone link, Ian Lonsdale & Robin Spragg (TSC), Sharon French (ByronSC), Jo Petrovic & Tony McAteer (RVC), Simon Scott (BallinaSC), Brent McAllister (LCC), Naydene Beaver & Des Schroder (CVC)

Session 1 - Overview of Project & Objectives

The meeting was opened by **Naydene** who outlined the history of the project and then updated the group on changes in housing policy and delivery at state and commonwealth levels.

- No more tenure for life in public housing,
- The proposal to transfer dwelling titles to community housing providers stalled when there was a change of government.
- Housing NSW has been split between FACS – services and Dept Finance – stock.
- 2009 AH SEPP is under review and government is close to making recommendations which should include local approach/rules, planning incentives for rezonings and looking more closely at community profiles. It will be called the 'Affordable Housing Choices SEPP'
- National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and Fed Govt funding are now drying up.
- National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) has replaced Com/state housing agreements.
- Andrew Mc Naulty?? who chairs of NAHA agenda is to look at developing government land and council land for affordable housing.

David Bird indicated that the state government regards this project as a pilot and its main objective should be to work together to create AH projects, including an action plan.

Session 2 - Social Habitat - Process to Date

Malcolm Price outlined the work of Social Habitat to date including:

- **Work as it is described in the Storyboard document (see pages 1-8)**

"CVC has many illegal second dwellings in rural areas" - **Des CVC**

New development based on AH SEPP created homelessness in Casino – previous illegal providers went broke, rental market and property values went down. – **Joanne RVC**

"in Lismore 'temporary accommodation' approvals are commonplace." - **Brent LCC**

"FNCRS was created in the boom time 2006 and is now largely irrelevant, there was a target of 40% medium density, particularly trying to change diversity." – **Malcolm Price**

"In Tweed, even the units built were 3-4 bedrooms, therefore rents were too high. There was better diversity in SEQ where smaller units were mandated by policy." – **Ian TSC**

- **Review of Local Affordable Housing Strategies (see page 9)**

- **The council questionnaire (see page 10)**

"Byron affordable strategy was taken up in the new LEP, but DIPNR rejected it. High land prices meant there was no uptake. AH SEPP secondary dwelling provision has been well supported since April 2011, 67 applications, 45 approved, 12 waiting approval." – **Sharon ByronSC**

General agreement that a 'Champions'/workers like Naydene are needed to make any strategy work.

Lismore resolved to employ housing officer 15 years ago, no-one ever appointed. – **Brent LCC**

Best success is to involve everyone from the beginning of discussions with developers, including the engineers. – **Des CVC**

AH officers are funded by Planning NSW area assistance scheme as 'Community Builders' - so resource the people NOROC needs to promote AH. – **Joanne RVC**

Do we want to achieve:

1. A worker?
2. Working together to create projects?
3. Working together for planning controls to align?

Naydene CVC

Richmond Valley won't be interested if it costs – funding essential. An ET costs \$30,000. - **Tony RVC**

Sect94/64 cap is a problem, has stymied development because councils can't afford the infrastructure. - **Ian TSC**

- PNSW are looking at AH clauses to insert in the new standard LEP. There will be a new planning system in a year or two, which will make it easier for community housing providers.
- June '12 State budget was aimed at providing infrastructure for housing development.
- There is a desire to embed AH in the green paper on regional planning.
- The state welcomes the opportunity to be involved, encourages regional approach and will look into resourcing issues for AH workers and opportunities to be flexible in planning instruments. If there are any specific sites, the state may be really keen to 'pilot' some schemes.

David Bird Planning NSW



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11. First Steering Group Meeting

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None of content can be assumed will be a part of the final strategy. The document can be downloaded from there website at www.socialhabitat.com.au/housing-2/northern-rivers-housing-strategy

Session 3 – Document Framework

Malcolm outlined the context of the regional strategy and asked a number of questions for discussion as well as tabling 3 strategy methodologies.

- Given there is no common format or methodology of each of the existing strategies or strategy documents, what form should the strategy take?

Three documents tabled as possible models:

Sunshine Coast Affordable Living Strategy

(<http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sitePage.cfm?code=als-new-life>)

Lismore Housing Strategy introduction page

W.A. Affordable Housing Executive summary

(<http://www.housing.wa.gov.au/aboutus/aboutthedept/StrategicDirection/Pages/default.aspx>)



- What is the regional affordable housing strategy's relationship to the state regional plans?
- In the absence of wider regional policy context at NOROC how should the strategy create it own

context?

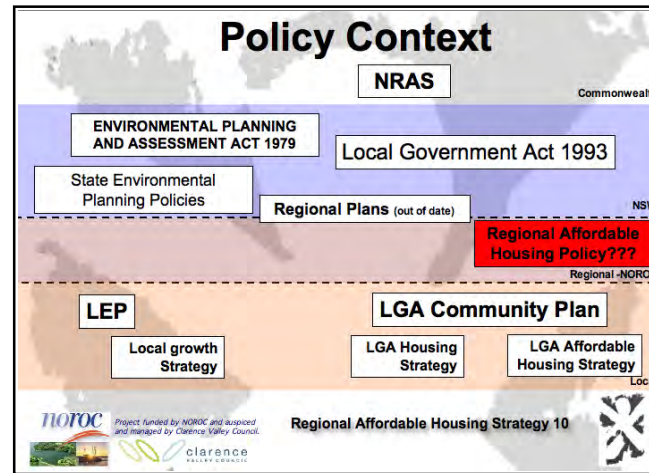
- What is the relationship of the new regional affordable housing strategy to existing Local affordable housing strategies?
 - Does it make them redundant?
 - Does it provide another layer of support, and advocacy?
 - Where there is no existing local strategy can it take its place?
 - How would it be endorsed?

Session 4 - Planning Polices (see page 13)

Malcolm Scott discussed the planning review work he has done including the housing LEP matrix, which compares the way zonings are used across the seven shires.

Important points:

- Only CVC and BySC have AH embedded in their LEPs.
- SEPP 15 (Rural Landsharing) is available in all shires except in LCC and BySC, which have local rural residential strategies.



Draft Strategy Goal
To increase the range of housing opportunities for those on low-to-moderate incomes, where accommodation is available, affordable and appropriate adaptable. By:

- strengthening partnerships;
- using knowledge we can gain from each other in the region;
- emulating the successes and learning from the mistakes of other councils;
- collective advocacy.

The Strategy Document

- Strategy document should be no more than 26 pages in total, or it won't be read.
- Strategy will clearly define region
- Strategy to define regional AH problem
- Use the Sunshine Coast strategy tools to achieve actions – Advocacy, Partnership, Policy, Planning and Research.
- It was agreed that there was little likelihood of the strategy being endorsed by individual councils this year and that an initial action of the strategy would presentation to new elected councils.
- Initial endorsement of the strategy should be by NOROC GMs.
- Strategy should include four or five clear actions with defined outcomes and timeframe.
- Strategy may be in two parts with second part being more 'blue sky thinking'.

Discussion included (related to session 3 & 4)

Things have changed. The Task Force is pushing for leadership from the State government. It's about naming – 'Affordable Housing Choices SEPP' - Des

BySC has changed the requirement from six occupancies to three and a pathway for people to come forward prior to the Rural Residential Strategy 1996. - Sharon

New Rural SEPP may allow concessional allotments, using a gateway for the 'notwithstanding' clauses. - Des

It could be useful to include this idea in the strategy. It might appeal to private developers and be no great cost to councils. - David

RVC has taken a liberal attitude to 'attachment' in relation to dual occs in rural zones, and allowed the AH SEPP in the village zone. - Tony

Don't create more road infrastructure in rural zones. - Des

BaSC has not allowed clustered rural residential subdivision since 1996. - Simon

CVC did not find much in the planning instruments that was an impediment to AH. - David

How do you get AH integrated into big Greenfield developments? Force it? Lt sizes? Small houses? Can't be sold? The only statutory form is as an objective in the LEP. Send this message to the state government. - Des

Adaptable housing should be complying development when part of the existing footprint. - Mal P
Change the word 'appropriate' to 'adaptable' in the LEP. - Sharon

% requirement could apply to adaptable housing. - Robin

Sunshine coast has a description for living and working in the same place – investigate for inclusion. - Des

Have a variation clause that is related to the AH objective in the LEP – avoid re-zoning. Or allow developers to change AH provision in any council. - Ian

Make the criteria specific/explicit. There's no third party right of appeal to a strategy – "it's about control". - Ian

Leave out homelessness, it's about support services, not housing. Housing model is dead. Can we get an innovative project on the ground? Educate councils, and do skills development in councils. CVC has identified some possibilities with developers to 're-steer the ship', however developers need to make money. - Des

Strategy should be different from the usual stuff, be more of an 'accord' with actions, such as developing flagship projects. It must not be futile, has to be meaningful, impress NOROC and it will travel smoothly and there will be action. GM's are cynical about strategies floating around, but if GM's endorse it, it will not be affected by elections. - Brent

GMs talk to mayors. Planning departments are becoming Economic Dev. departments. - Des
Will use the strategy to create Tweed's by the middle of next year, also to get state support and attract developers. - Ian

Session 5 – Other Ideas – Next Steps

- Social Habitat to present at August NOROC GM meeting
- Assess new demographic data from the 2011 census.
- A large consultation forum is not appropriate at this stage.
- A comprehensive land register is not realistic at this stage – although identifying land for a pilot project would be useful – issue could be considered by GMs
- Broaden consultation: developers, planners, agents, lawyers, community housing providers, caravan parks, organisations such as NRSDC, RDA and NCCHC
- Invite important stakeholders to next steering meetings eg. NRSDC, RDA, CHPs
- Begin Strategy content development.

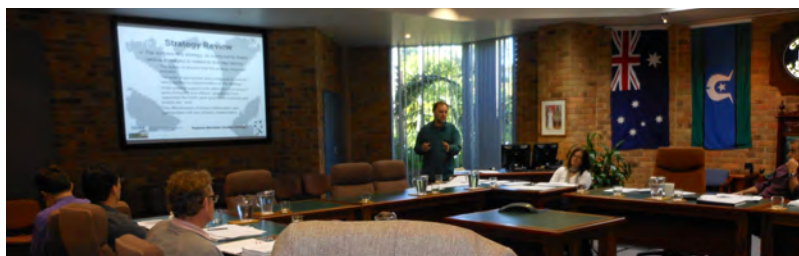
Project funded by NOROC and auspiced and managed by Clarence Valley Council.

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12. First Steering Group Meeting



Aim for a MOU between the GMs of all the NOROC councils.

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