

# Vision



*Revitalising*

# Coffs Harbour

CITY CENTRE PLAN



Planning







Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan  
Vision  
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coffsharbour](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/coffsharbour)

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Photography

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## how to have your say...

Council encourages you to view the documents and to submit your views on the future of Coffs Harbour's city centre. The draft documents are on exhibition until 5pm Friday, 8th October 2010, and can be viewed at:

- Coffs Harbour Administration Building;
- Coffs Harbour Library;
- Toormina Library, and;
- Woolgoolga Library.

A CD containing the documents is available free of charge from Council's Customer Service Centres. Comments on the draft Plan are welcome. Details of the exhibition period can be found on the website as shown below. Submissions may be lodged by the following methods:



Post: Coffs Harbour City Council  
Locked Bag 155  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450



Email: [citycentreplan@chcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:citycentreplan@chcc.nsw.gov.au)



Fax: (02) 6648 4199

If you have any questions please contact Council's Land Use Planning Branch on (02) 6648 4605

## see website

for more information

[www.planning.nsw.gov.au/coffsharbour](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/coffsharbour) OR  
[www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/citycentreplan](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/citycentreplan)

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# Minister's Statement

## MINISTER'S STATEMENT

The NSW Government's Mid North Coast Regional Strategy recognises Coffs Harbour as a major regional city located midway between Sydney and Brisbane. The city has a significant role to play in accommodating projected population and employment along the coast of NSW. The plan for Coffs Harbour City Centre supports the regional strategy by encouraging sustainable growth. The city future growth is focused in several well established precincts, the Coffs Harbour CBD, the Coffs Harbour Jetty Village and along the Park Beach.

The plan increases commercial, residential and tourist densities in these areas and protects the areas that contribute to the natural beauty of the city.

The Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan emphasises the city's natural setting by celebrating the Coffs Creek as the green heart of the city centre. The proposed streetscape improvements along Harbour Drive will strengthen the connection between the CBD and the Harbour, while Park Beach and Coffs Jetty will continue to be the principal tourism and recreation precincts in the City Centre.

This 25 year plan for Coffs Harbour caters for an additional 5,000 residents and 2,000 new jobs. It comprises three documents; a City Centre Vision, Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.

In formulating the plan a reference panel of local stakeholders from community, employer and environmental groups was consulted to ensure that vital feedback and input from the wider community was captured and put to good use.

I am proud of the work achieved to date through the joint efforts of the Coffs Harbour City Council, the community reference panel and the NSW Department of Planning. The Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan will become the catalyst for the future growth of Coffs Harbour whilst preserving the city's unique natural setting and serving as a model for managing coastal growth. We want a vibrant city with a strong economy that attracts investors, new business, visitors, cultural expression, and residents alike.

I thank everyone involved in the development of the Plan to date and I encourage all those interested in Coffs Harbour's future to read the documents and to contribute constructively to the public discussion about the future of your city.

The Honourable Tony Kelly  
Minister for Planning



## Mayor's Statement

Positioned halfway between Sydney and Brisbane, Coffs Harbour is a city of around 70,000 that enjoys a unique lifestyle created by its geography and climate.

Nestled between the coastal slopes of the Great Dividing Range and the 80 kilometres of golden beaches that form its Pacific Ocean boundary, Coffs Harbour has gained a reputation as a dynamic and rapidly expanding economic hub.

Council's Vision for the city is "Coffs Harbour - the Health City, the Smart City, the Cultural City for a sustainable future."

On top of the wide range of leisure attractions and lifestyle opportunities available, the city can also boast excellent transport links as well as education and health facilities that make it the envy of the NSW North Coast.

As a city, it can also lay claim to a cultural and historic heritage that has given it a rich multicultural makeup and outlook.

Primarily a tourist destination, Coffs Harbour can also boast a \$200m GRP a year manufacturing sector, varied primary industries and major retail zones.

The focus now is to continue to build on our strong economic foundations to create a city that its dynamic community deserves.

This draft Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan is a welcome addition to the strong planning direction that Council, the community and business leaders have established with the aim of growing the region's economy and creating more employment opportunities.

A healthy and prosperous city centre in Coffs Harbour is the catalyst that will benefit the whole region.

The vision and the accompanying planning documents contained within the draft Plan will help further refine the goals and future direction of Coffs Harbour.

I would encourage all Coffs Harbour's residents to take a look at the draft Plan. With your help and ideas, we can see the vision move forward to make the Plan a reality.

Keith Rhoades AFSM

Mayor, City of Coffs Harbour





**2,000 new jobs**  
**5,000 more people**  
**25 year plan**  
**1 city centre**



## Introduction: About regional cities

The NSW State Government recognises the importance of regional cities in the economic growth of the state, and the need for their proper planning and servicing.

The government's 25 year Sydney, Far North Coast, Lower Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast regional strategies aim to create a much greater employment, activity and recreation role for key subregional and regional urban centres. Coffs Harbour in the Mid North Coast Region is one of the centres and has been nominated to play a dominant role in its region.

These strategies have defined a regional city as:

"A city that is a focal point for jobs that also has a full range of business, government, retail, cultural, entertainment and recreational activities."

### REGIONAL CITIES

An underlying principle is that people should be able to access a range of jobs, health and education services, cultural, entertainment and recreational activities and shopping without travelling long distances. Most people are willing to travel about an hour a day and the regional cities concept is about concentrating services and activities to achieve this goal.

### REGIONAL CITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

To realise their potential, each regional city needs careful planning, supported by government investment and targeted asset management. The primacy of the centres as employment nodes, supported by high quality and appropriately located residential

development, needs to be recognised. Common development principles for the regional cities include the following:

- Growing jobs in the heart of the city centre.
- Encouraging diverse precincts around the city centre.
- Creating a living city by encouraging mixed use development that complements the centre's core employment role.
- Developing a distinct role and character for the centre.
- Ensuring high quality design of building and public areas.
- Enhancing transport links to and from the centre. And,
- Improving the natural environment.

### GROWING JOBS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY CENTRE

Regional cities contain concentrations of jobs and service activities. The highest density area for jobs needs to be in the heart of the centre, close to transport and services. Planning must allow for sufficient floor space to accommodate future job growth.

Community, education and government activities currently provide many of the high value, high skill job opportunities in the regional cities. The continued development of these activities, and related spin-off enterprises in the private sector, is fundamental to the future success of the regional cities as job locations.

# Introduction: About regional cities

Government land and assets will also play a strategic role in the development of regional cities. A 'whole of government' approach is essential to ensure that assets are utilised to maximise outcomes for the good of the centre as a whole. The utilisation of Council assets such as libraries, civic centres, parks and land can also be reviewed to ensure they effectively support city centre development.

## ENCOURAGING DIVERSE PRECINCTS AROUND THE CITY CENTRE

Regional cities all have assets which give them their pre-eminent status in the region. Universities, hospitals, parks, light industry areas, cultural and entertainment facilities, river and waterfront assets and parklands – as well as the shopping and business precincts - all make a contribution to the life and attractiveness of these places as diverse destinations.

## CREATING A LIVING CITY

While a core employment role is fundamental, opportunities for additional mixed use and residential development in and around the centre exist. Attracting new residents will bring additional retail and service activity, as well as street life. High quality design outcomes, public places and civic improvements should be a priority in these areas.

## CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE

Each of the centres has a different role in its subregion and their assets underpin different competitive strengths. An understanding of the importance of topography and landscape,, economic and community assets in the centre, and the creation of development settings as appropriate, is critical.

## IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC AREAS

High quality architecture and design, of buildings and the public domain, attracts investment and visitors. Places are simply more enjoyable when innovation in design and development is on display. Regional cities need to be an example for better quality urban development.

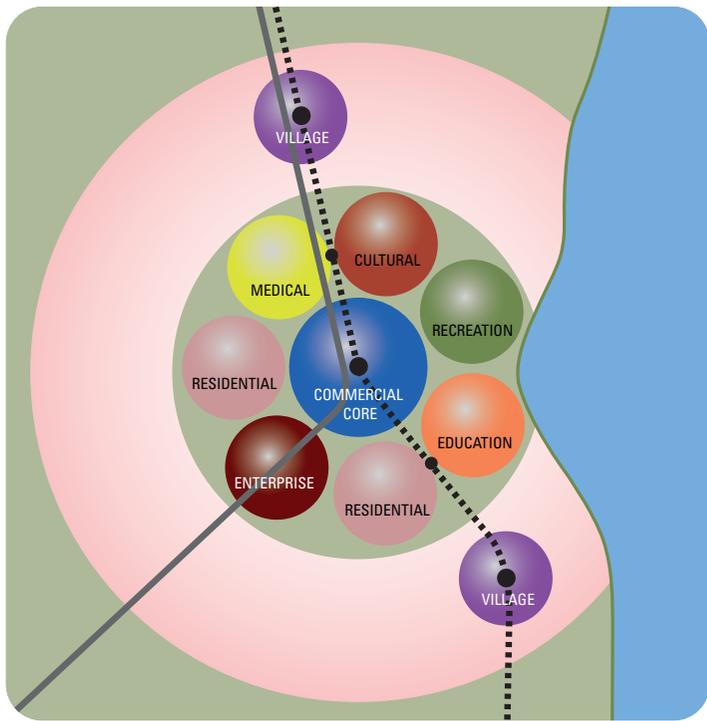
## ENHANCING TRANSPORT AND ACCESS AROUND AND TO THE CENTRES

As the regional cities are to become the focus for new investment and accelerated development, access to the centres is fundamental. New and upgraded public transport links, improved private vehicle access and enhanced environments for pedestrians and cyclists must be a priority.

## IMPROVING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

With looming environmental and climate change, the sustainability of our cities is under increasing scrutiny. The regional cities need to be exemplars for best practice performance in terms of energy and water conservation, solar access for public spaces and encouraging transport forms that minimise air and noise pollution.

Coastal cities need to carefully balance the issue of climate change related sea level rise and flooding potential with the economic wellbeing of the city. Strategies to manage the effects of climate change need to be integrated into long term planning.



Key elements of a regional city.



## 1. About the Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan

Located between Sydney and Brisbane, the Mid North Coast region has been a focus for consistent population growth in recent decades. The region offers high quality lifestyles and, for many, more affordable housing than can be found in Sydney or Southeast Queensland. The natural environment - including beaches, rivers and national parks – distinctive townships and strong sense of community underpin the region's attractiveness.

The climatic range and geographic variety of Coffs Harbour, where the mountain range is within one kilometre of the sea in some places, results in a wide range of flora and fauna, from warm temperate to sub-tropical habitats. These topographical features assist in creating a region of high biodiversity including all three aspects: genetic diversity; species diversity; and ecosystem diversity.

The East Australian current has a major influence on the marine area off the coast of Coffs Harbour. It carries a mixture of tropical and subtropical waters from the Coral Sea and the Queensland Coast into the temperate area of the NSW Continental Shelf. Here the current overlaps the colder northward flowing inshore current resulting in a complex mix of marine species normally associated with habitats from Tasmania to the Great Barrier Reef.

The existence of the adjacent Solitary Islands Marine Park further demonstrates the unique marine environment of Coffs Harbour.

In Coffs Harbour 93 species of plants and animals are recognised as being either endangered or vulnerable. It is important to realise that these species are essential to the environment, and the loss of any of these species could have consequences in the future.

The regional cities project is all about reinvigorating the major centres of important regions and offering new lifestyle, residential, service and job opportunities. With its beaches and natural attractions, there is great potential to increase the appeal of Coffs Harbour as a destination for shopping, tourism, employment, entertainment and cultural activities, high quality health and medical services, and as a place to live.

This plan recognises the fundamental connection between future economic developments and the quality of place through the redevelopment and improvement of the City Centre. The economics of the future redevelopment of the City Centre are dependent on having the underpinnings of a strong and growing regional and city based economy. At the same time to secure this growth, the City Centre has to present itself as an attractive and vibrant location to work, to live, to operate a business and to visit.

# 1. About the Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan

## 1.1 THE THREE PLANNING DOCUMENTS

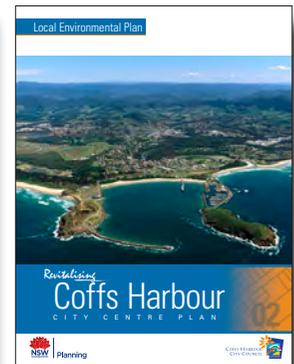
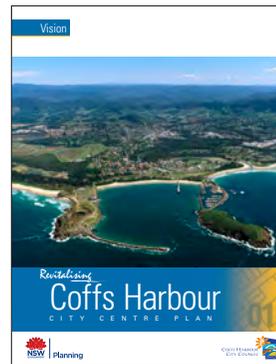
The Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan is the first step in delivering this positive future for Coffs Harbour. Its progress will be monitored over time. The Plan includes the following planning documents:

### The City Centre Vision

This document describes a vision for the regional city, provides information on the history and development context, and includes an action plan to facilitate the city's growth. It sets a strategic framework for the city centre to grow into a prosperous, vibrant and attractive city.

Key actions include:

- Seeking to attract new employment and investor opportunities while harnessing local skills and talent.
- Providing high quality residential development to cater for future population mix.
- Encouraging the development of special areas such as the former Coffs Hospital site and Park Beach Plaza.
- Managing the Coffs Creek foreshore to reconnect the city to its waterway while protecting its natural assets.
- Improving the quality of public domain especially along Harbour Drive. And,
- Facilitating movement in and around the city centre by the improvement of pedestrian access.



### Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

The LEP is the statutory planning framework that establishes zoning, heights, floor space ratios and the main provisions for development across the city centre. The Coffs Harbour City Centre LEP is based on the new Standard Instrument (LEPs) Order 2006 that now applies to all councils in NSW.

Key features of the new LEP are:

- Increases in allowable development to provide for anticipated job and housing growth (increased 'Floor Space Ratios and building heights).
- Key sites subject to design competition.

## Development Control Plan (DCP)

The DCP outlines the more detailed planning provisions for the built form such as pedestrian amenity, access and environmental management for future development in the city centre. It establishes controls for building setbacks, awnings, and separations between buildings in order to ensure amenity and good city form within the city centre.

Key features of the DCP are:

- Enhancing pedestrian links through providing for 'mid-block' connections.
- An emphasis on the public domain including building to the street and active frontages.

## 1.2 OTHER DOCUMENTS

### Reference Documents

Many other documents have been utilised in the preparation of the three key planning documents. These include detailed reports about economics, traffic, urban design, public domain, social and environmental issues. These reports and studies are listed at the end of the Vision document.

### Future Supporting Documents

Although the three city centre planning documents are the publicly exhibited documents for the city, there will be a need for more detailed documents to ensure the implementation of the plan.

Likely documents to accompany the plan include:

- Project Plans – as key projects gain priority, specific project plans will be prepared, designed and documented in detail.
- Review of City Centre Plans – all planning documents need to be reviewed over time to accommodate changing circumstances or standards. The planning system in New

South Wales builds in a process for modifying planning instruments and for regular reviews.

## 1.3 DEFINITION OF THE COFFS HARBOUR CITY CENTRE

The Coffs Harbour City Centre is more than the core shopping and business centre.

The three planning documents cover an area stretching from the West High Street area in the west to Coffs Jetty in the east. To the north the City Centre includes Park Beach, including Park Beach Plaza, Homebase Shopping Centre and the residential precinct north and south of Bray Street. The southern boundary of the city centre area generally runs along the northern boundary of the racetrack and golf course.



COFFS HARBOUR CITY CENTRE AREA

*"Coffs Harbour is to be a vital, sustainable, attractive, walkable, mixed use, urban city centre, comfortably sealed to its coastal plain context, with employment opportunities and well serviced by community retail, recreational, health and wellness facilities; offering a unique urban coastal lifestyle."*



## 2. The vision for the Coffs Harbour city centre



### **GROWING THE CITY CENTRE**

As the regional city for the Mid North Coast, Coffs Harbour will be a vibrant centre for jobs, key regional services, cultural activity, entertainment and tourism. Jobs will focus on high growth industries that build the city's strengths in health, education, retail, tourism and cultural activities. The city centre plan accommodates 2,000 new jobs and 5,000 new residents.

The form of the city will reinforce the distinctive precincts which make up the City Centre. These areas include the CBD, the Jetty area and Park Beach.

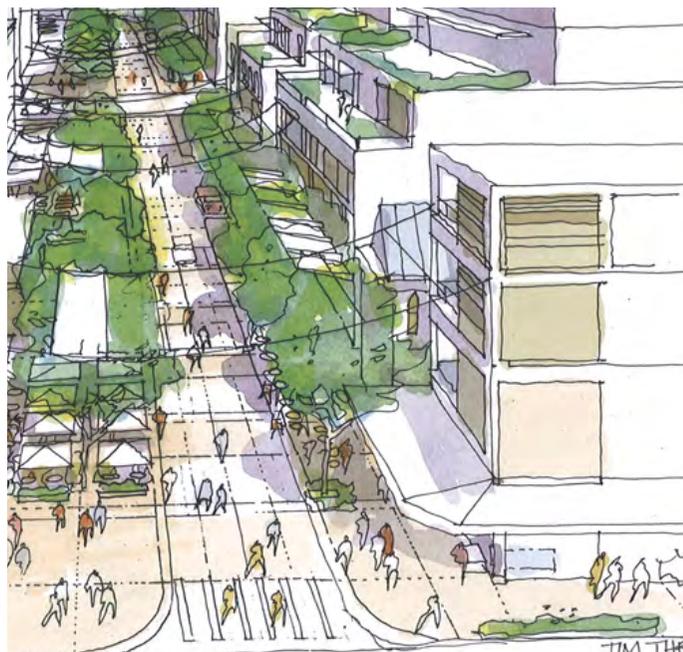
## 2. The vision for the Coffs Harbour city centre

### CELEBRATING COFFS CREEK AS THE GREEN HEART OF COFFS HARBOUR



The city centre will celebrate Coffs Creek as a local and regionally significant natural asset that forms the heart of Coffs Harbour City Centre. The creek's edge will be activated with upgraded recreational facilities, pedestrian walkways and cycleways.

### CREATING A LIVING CITY



The range of mixed use developments will increase in the centre, including commercial, residential, cultural, community and retail uses. New housing will provide for a diversity of age and income groups.

## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC DOMAIN



The public environment will be well-designed, creating an attractive, people friendly and desirable city centre with areas where people take preference over cars to create a safe pedestrianised city. High quality paving, planting and street furniture will provide an attractive environment for walking and public life. An upgraded public domain will reinforce key public spaces such as the City Square, Brelford Park, Harbour Drive, the Jetty precinct and Park Beach with improved planting, lighting and street furniture.

## ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



Ecological sustainability will continue to be a requirement for all development. Buildings and public spaces will embrace dynamic water and energy efficient strategies and long-life principles. All development will be subject to environmental, social and economic sustainability tests in order to preserve Coffs' unique environmental character. The built environment and public spaces will minimise the consumption of energy and water and promote social interaction and activity. Community hubs will be linked by effective public transportation.

## 2. The vision for the Coffs Harbour city centre

### IMPROVING HARBOUR DRIVE



A cohesive landscape scheme will reinforce Harbour Drive as the key city spine connecting the CBD to the sea. Street trees will provide shade, while a continuous cycleway will improve accessibility and safety. Upgraded planting on key north-south streets such as Gordon Street will promote connection between the CBD and Coffs Creek.

### ESTABLISHING COFFS JETTY AS A CENTRE FOR OUTDOOR DINING AND RECREATION



The Coffs Jetty precinct provides a pleasant area for outdoor dining centred on Harbour Drive. Additional improvements to the local streetscape, including widened footpaths, will increase pedestrian accessibility in the area while allowing further expansion of dining and retail.

## IMPROVING PACIFIC HIGHWAY AS THE GATEWAY TO COFFS HARBOUR CBD



Pacific Highway passes directly through the Coffs CBD and connects the city centre to Brisbane and Sydney. When the major traffic bypass is completed redirecting through traffic from Pacific Highway, the highway will be upgraded to become a commercial and retail main street. In the short term the streetscape improvements such as banners, rainforest planting, and improved fencing, signage and lighting will be implemented to create a sense of entry, reinforcing Coffs Harbour's status as an important regional service and tourist centre.

## REVITALISING PARK BEACH AS A TOURIST CENTRE



The Park Beach area will become the tourist hub of Coffs Harbour. Active street frontages will be incorporated into the new developments along Park Beach Road to encourage pedestrian activities. Streetscape upgrades along Ocean Drive and Park Beach Road will improve pedestrian accessibility and better connect to the jetty precinct, Park Beach Plaza and Park Beach. Park Beach reserve will be upgraded to provide higher quality facilities and amenities.



## 3. Regional context

### 3.1 THE MID NORTH COAST REGIONAL STRATEGY

The Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, prepared by the Department of Planning, applies to the local government areas of Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Greater Taree and Great Lakes. The strategy, and others prepared for high-growth areas of NSW, aims to manage the region's growth in a sustainable manner, ensuring that adequate land is available for housing and employment while protecting the region's unique natural environment.

From the coast to the hinterland, the natural landscape is the region's greatest asset. The Mid North Coast supports significant biodiversity and contains more than 40 national parks, as well as two marine parks, including the Solitary Islands Marine Park, which stretches north from Coffs Harbour. These valuable natural assets have made the region an increasingly popular place to live and the region has experienced a 70 per cent increase in population over the past 25 years. A significant portion of this growth has been concentrated around Coffs Harbour, which is easily accessible via the Pacific Highway and Coffs Harbour Regional Airport, one of the busiest regional airports in the state.

The current population of the Far North Coast Region is estimated at 330,600 (2006 census) and is expected to increase by 28 per cent over the next 25 years, resulting in one of the highest regional growth rates in NSW. The incoming residents, many of whom are retirees, will accelerate the ageing of the population. The population aged 65 and over is expected to more than double by 2031. Because of the decreasing size of households, a diversity of housing form will be required. The strategy anticipates a need for 59,600 additional dwellings in the region by 2031.

The changing population of the Mid North Coast has transformed the nature of the local economy. Agriculture has given way to services as the dominant source of employment. At least 48,500 new jobs will be required to accommodate projected population growth in the region. Many of these jobs will need to be accommodated in regional centres such as Coffs Harbour, where increased employment and housing supply, as well as a concentration of recreational opportunities, will entice new residents to the region.

### 3.2 COFFS HARBOUR AND THE REGION

The strategy identifies Coffs Harbour as one of four major regional centres, along with Grafton, Port Macquarie and Taree. The revitalisation of Coffs Harbour city centre will allow the city to accommodate a significant proportion of the region's population and employment growth, while protecting the local environment and improving the city's amenity.



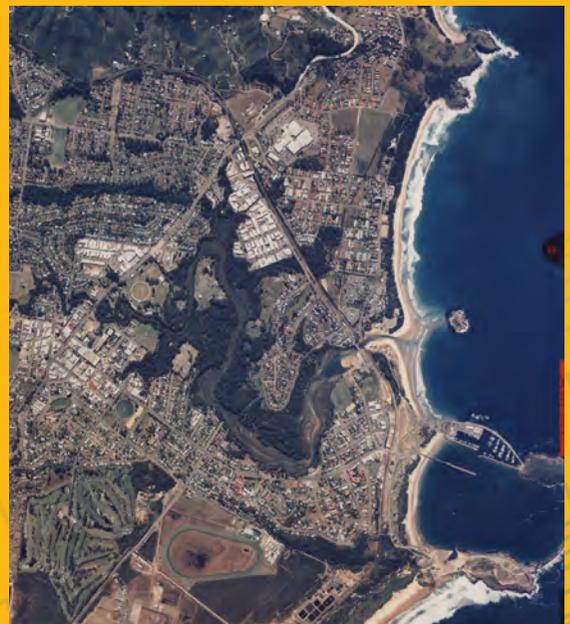
Coffs Creek being the vital resource for the local indigenous community.



Coffs Jetty was a significant piece of port infrastructure for the local fishing industry



Coffs Harbour 1964



Coffs Harbour 1994

## 4. Historic context

### INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

Coffs Harbour is the traditional home of the Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal people, who settled in the area because of its excellent climate and abundant resources. Due to this abundance of resources, these people led a less nomadic lifestyle than was typical of Aboriginal people in other areas.

Initial European contact posed little immediate threat to the Aboriginal people's lifestyle, with only minimal conflict between the two groups. In a few instances runaway convicts from Moreton Bay survived in the area by adapting to Aboriginal ways. Upon returning to European society, these runaways assisted contact with Aboriginal people through their acquired knowledge of Aboriginal habits, skills and language.

European settlers learnt many techniques from the Aboriginal people including traditional fishing techniques, honey gathering, botanical knowledge of poisons applied in the food preparation process as well as tree climbing, canoe making and local animal husbandry techniques.

### EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

The Solitary Islands, which dot the ocean along the Coffs Coast, were named by Lieutenant James Cook on 15 May 1770, when he sailed past what would later become known as Coffs Harbour.

In the mid-nineteenth century the area became known as "Korffs Harbour", after Captain John Korff whose ship "Brothers" took shelter from a storm in the bay framed by Mutton Bird and South Coffs Islands in 1847. The name was misspelt as Coffs Harbour in a government gazette in 1861.

During the 1870s and 1880s more Europeans settled in the area, mostly coming from the Bellinger and Clarence River districts to log cedar. Just after the opening of the first school in 1885, a town named Brelsford was proclaimed and laid out in 1886. The name changed back to Coffs Harbour in 1897. In addition to timber getting, the main economic mainstays in those days included agriculture and gold-mining.

The timber industry thrived further after the completion of the Coffs Harbour Jetty in 1892 and the establishment of a number of timber mills. The Jetty was later modified with a crane and rail tracks. However, the arrival of the railway in Coffs Harbour in 1915 caused a decline in shipping.

Construction of the northern breakwater linking Coffs Harbour and Muttonbird Island started in 1915, but wasn't fully completed until 1935. The eastern breakwater, which reached its target length in 1939, provided even more shelter for ships in the Harbour. In the 1970s the Harbour became the base of a large fishing fleet which is still active today.

At the start of the 20th century settlers discovered that bananas grew very well in the region's climate and they tasted sweeter than many varieties grown elsewhere. The banana industry soon became the backbone of Coffs Harbour's economy, reaching its peak in the 1960s. The entire history of the local banana industry is on display at The Big Banana, one of Coffs Harbour's main landmarks, which was established as a tourist attraction in 1964.

## 4. Historic Context

During World War II, Coffs Harbour was selected as the most suitable town on the east coast to build a military operations base from which to defend Australia against invasion. Many remnant wartime structures including bunkers still exist today.

Part of the Dorrigo Shire from 1906, Coffs Harbour became a shire in its own right in 1956, and was declared a city in 1987. In the last few decades, tourism has grown to become the city's main industry, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the Coffs Coast region each year. Expansion of the Coffs Harbour Regional Airport in the 1990s has turned it into one of the largest regional airports in New South Wales.

### BUILDING THE CHARACTER OF COFFS HARBOUR

During the early days, as a newer developing town than its neighbours and which relied on primary industries such as agriculture and timber, it was supported by the shipping industry. There was no development of an affluent social class as all the areas inhabitants were generally workers or shop owners in a working class area. This is reflected in the types of buildings constructed as most buildings were built from cheap and easily obtainable materials such as timber, corrugated iron and when it was developed, fibro was also utilised.

Importation of better quality building materials such as brick or slate simply was not possible, due primarily to Coffs Harbour's geographical position and associated financial constraints. With no rivers nearby, a barrier of mountainous country in the west and only tracks through thick bushland to the nearest settlements, nearly all transport was by sea, as the earliest section of railway in the area (Coffs Harbour to Raleigh) was not completed until 1915.

Government buildings were generally the most elaborate and modern for their time and expensively built and this is reflected in the classical style of the Coffs Harbour Jetty post office. Other buildings which reflect this trend include Coffs Harbour High School, NSW Forests building and the Coffs Harbour Court House.

Commercial properties were, like the private dwellings, also constructed of timber with either shingles or corrugated iron roofing. These were later replaced by more 'modern' brick buildings as either an owner wanting to upgrade their premises or more often, through fire. The earliest surviving brick buildings date from the middle of Coffs Harbour's boom period in the 1920s. These structures are located along the 'jetty strip' with a small number of others situated on the southern side of Harbour Drive near the Pacific Highway.



HMAS Yarra and HMAS Parramatta off Coffs Jetty 1911



Coffs Jetty 1915



Coffs Harbour 1922



## 5. Demographic and housing context

### 5.1 KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Mid North Coast Region has grown faster than the rest of NSW in recent years, driving residential and tourism development and giving rise to environmental, economic and social pressures.

Coffs Harbour's population has grown at a faster rate than NSW over the past decade. Between 2001 and 2006, the Coffs LGA has grown by 1.2% a year compared to annual growth of 0.7% in NSW. The Coffs Harbour city centre area has averaged 1.36% annual growth, similar to the LGA as a whole. This high rate of growth reflects Coffs Harbour's importance as a service centre and tourist destination for the region, as well as the relative attractiveness of the 'seachange' lifestyle in an area with good transport connections to both Sydney and Brisbane.

## 5. Demographic and housing context

### POPULATION GROWTH

The Coffs Harbour city centre grew faster than the Coffs LGA between 2001 and 2006, while both grew at a significantly faster rate than NSW over the same period. While population growth slowed in NSW over the period 2001-2006 when compared to 1996-2001, the rate of growth in the Coffs LGA increased slightly.

Census Year	Coffs Harbour City Centre	Coffs Harbour LGA	NSW
1996	n/a	58,021	6,006,206
2001	8,670	61,186	6,326,579
2006	9,262	64,910	6,549,179
<b>Total Population Growth</b>			
1996-2001	n/a	5.5%	5.3%
2001-2006	6.8%	6.1%	3.5%
<b>Annual Population Growth</b>			
1996-2001	n/a	1.1%	1.1%
2001-2006	1.36%	1.2%	0.7%

TABLE 5.1 POPULATION GROWTH

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

In the coming years, Coffs Harbour is expected to maintain a higher rate of growth than the rest of the region and NSW as a whole. In the period to 2031, the Coffs LGA is projected to experience annual growth of 1.76%, compared to the forecast for the Mid North Coast of 0.9%. This is projected to result in a population of 98,711 for the LGA in 2031, an overall increase of 30,177 people over 25 years. The Coffs Harbour Urban census area is projected to grow at nearly the same rate as the LGA, and both are expected to substantially outstrip the 0.8% annual rate of growth expected in NSW over the same period. The Coffs Harbour LGA is expected to account for 40.1% of total population growth in the Mid North Coast Region and will experience the highest growth of any of the eight LGAs which constitute the region.

Population Projection	Coffs Harbour Urban	Coffs Harbour LGA	NSW
2011	27,870	75,037	7,145,170
2016	30,024	81,309	7,437,260
2021	32,185	87,193	7,725,260
2026	34,332	93,030	8,002,499
2031	36,442	98,771	8,259,181
<b>Total Projected Population Growth</b>			
2006-2031	41.5%	44.0%	20.7%
<b>Annual Population Growth</b>			
2006-2031	1.7%	1.76%	0.8%

\*Coffs Harbour Urban census area includes the Coffs Harbour city centre, Korora, and other residential areas west and south of the city centre

**TABLE 5.2 POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

## 5. Demographic and housing context

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

Like many regional coastal cities, the Coffs Harbour LGA has an ageing population. The average age of 39.8 years in 2006 was 1.5 years older than in the previous census in 2001. This is younger than the average age of the Mid North Coast as a whole (41.6 years), but older than the average for NSW (37.5 years). The ageing of the local population is particularly apparent in the Coffs Harbour city centre itself, which has an average age of 43. The difference in age distribution between the Coffs Harbour LGA and the city centre is most apparent in the larger proportion of residents over 65 in the city centre area. When compared to the state as a whole, the 25-54 year old age group is under-represented in both the Coffs LGA and the city, perhaps due to a lack of local job opportunities.

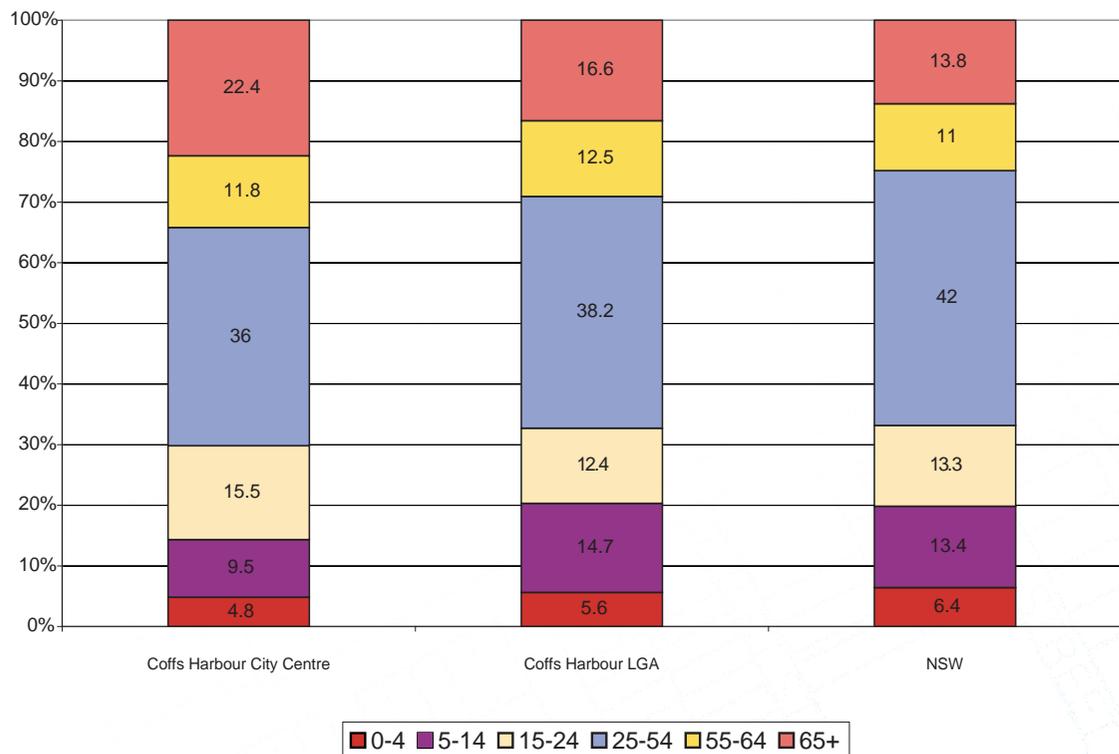


TABLE 5.3 AGE DISTRIBUTION

## INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Average weekly household income in the Coffs Harbour city centre (\$603) is lower than the median for both the Coffs LGA (\$706) and NSW (\$1,036). The percentage city centre area households earning less than \$249 per week is nearly double that of NSW, and is substantially higher than the LGA. Conversely the percentage earning more than \$2000 a week is almost four times smaller than for the state as a whole.

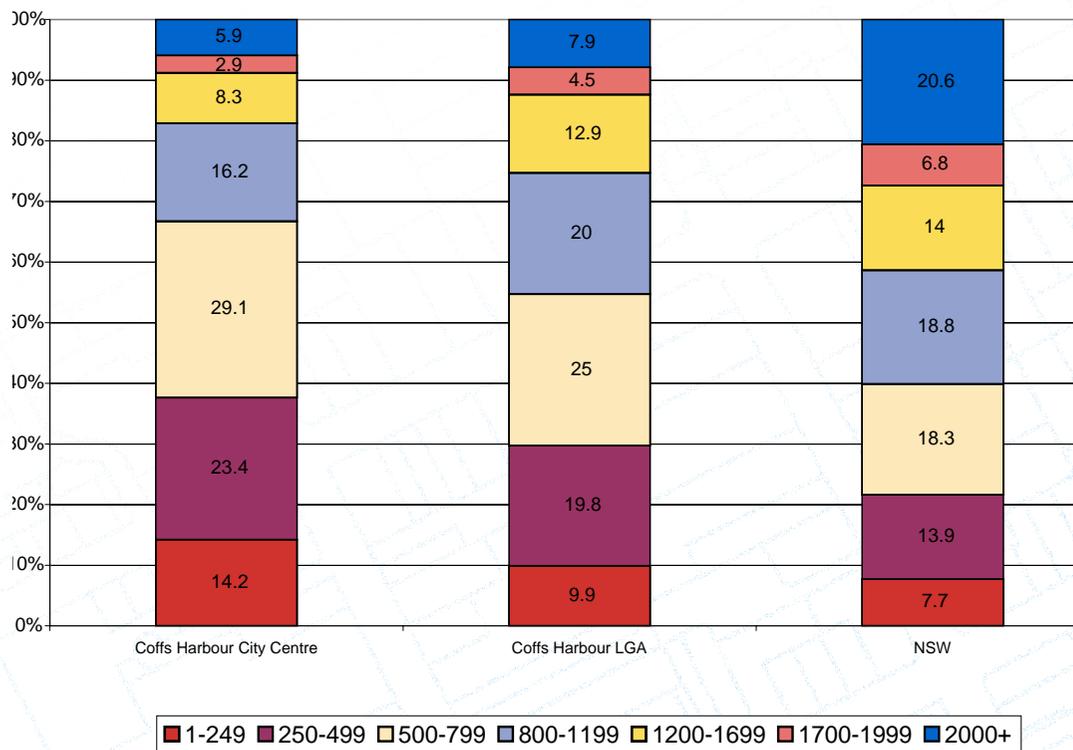


TABLE 5.4 INCOME DISTRIBUTION

## 5. Demographic and housing context

### HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Comprising 40.4% of all households, lone person households are the most common type in the Coffs Harbour city centre area. This high proportion contrasts with the comparatively low percentage of couple with children households, with the city centre rate half the average for the Coffs Harbour LGA, which itself exhibits signs of an ageing population when compared to NSW.

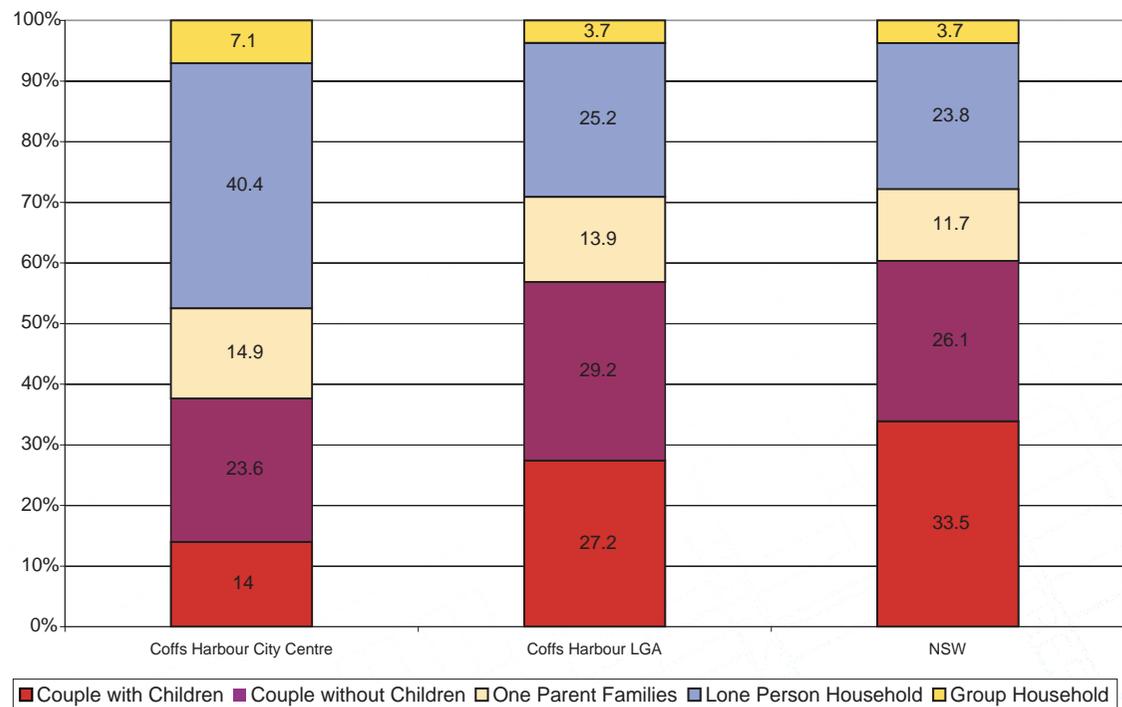


TABLE 5.5 HOUSEHOLD TYPE

## DWELLING TYPES

As would be expected of a city centre area, the Coffs Harbour city centre offers a greater variety of dwelling types than the Coffs LGA or NSW. The city centre area also exhibits generally higher density than the LGA with nearly three times the percentage of apartments, and more than double the percentage of semi-detached dwellings. This preponderance of multi-unit dwellings is in line with the city centre's high proportion of lone households and its ageing population.

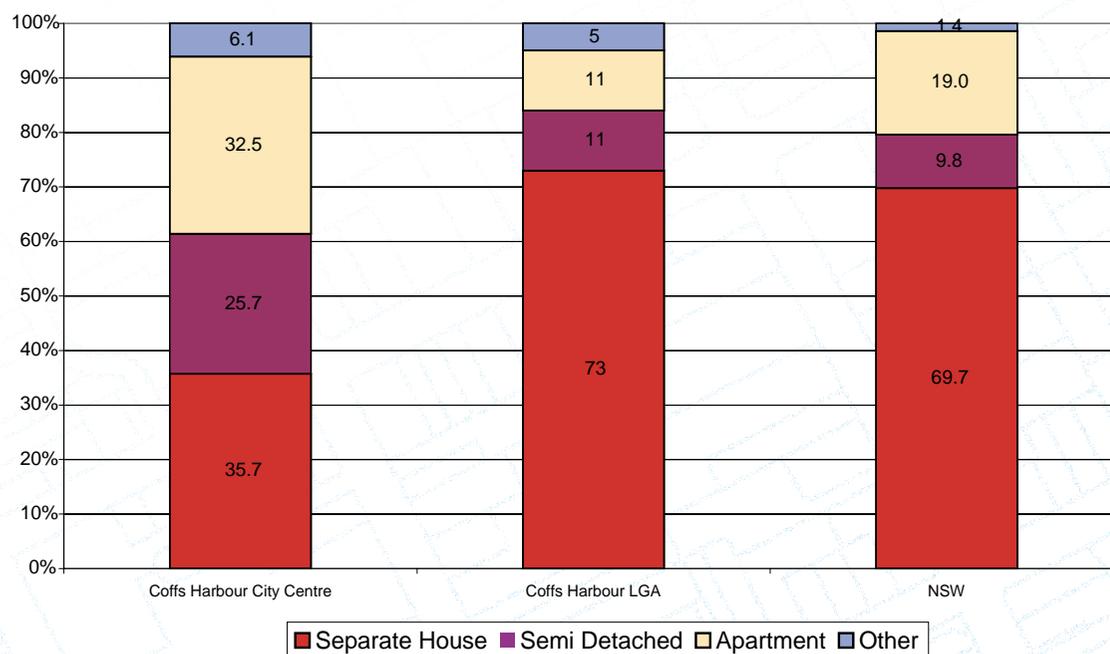


TABLE 5.6 DWELLING TYPES



## 6. Economic development

### BACKGROUND

Like many coastal cities, Coffs Harbour has experienced major economic change in recent decades. While agriculture remains a significant sector of the local economy, increased migration and tourism have created a growing service sector as well as competitive advantages in areas such as health care and education. These areas of the economy are expected to grow strongly in coming years and have great potential for job creation in the city centre. The challenge for Coffs Harbour is to overcome the traditional regional city challenges of above-average unemployment and below average earnings by creating strong job growth in a diversified economy. Because of its natural beauty and easy access to Sydney and Brisbane, Coffs Harbour has some significant, intrinsic advantages which bode well for the future. The development of a strong and vibrant city centre will constitute an indispensable part of this vision.

The Gross Regional Product (GRP) of Coffs Harbour LGA has grown strongly in recent times, rising 10.4% between 2005/06 and 2006/07 to approximately \$2,173.4 million. The largest contributions to GRP were made by the Property & Business Services Sector (11.3% of total GRP), Retail Trade (9.1%), Health & Community Services (8.2%) and Manufacturing. In 2006/07 the GRP for Coffs LGA represented 23.5% of the Mid North Coast GRP and 0.6% of the NSW state product.

In 2006, by share of employment, the largest industry in the Coffs LGA was Retail Trade, employing 15.5% of all employed residents, followed by Health Care & Social Assistance (12.8%), Accommodation & Food Services (10.8%), Construction and Education & Training (both 8.5%). The variety of employment is evidence of a diversified

economy in Coffs, though the strength of retail trade and accommodation indicates the importance of tourism. The diversification of the Coffs economy is confirmed by the Regional Index of Economic Diversity which indicates that the Coffs LGA is the second-most diverse of all LGAs on the Mid North Coast when compared to Australia.

The Coffs Harbour Economic Development Plan, published in 2005, describes the vision and plan of action for Coffs Harbour's future economic development.

### EMPLOYMENT CAPACITY TARGETS

As an important regional city and major contributor to the Gross Regional Product of the Mid North Coast, Coffs Harbour will be expected to provide a substantial portion of the 48,500 jobs estimated to be required to accommodate the region's projected population growth.

Total employment in the Coffs LGA has generally grown in the past few years, with an increase in employed persons of 9.5% between June 2006 and June 2007. As of June 2007, the Coffs workforce comprised 23.9% of total employed persons in the Mid North Coast. More recently, between the September quarter 2007 and 2008, Coffs experienced a decline in employment of 5.4%. In the same period the unemployment rate rose only 0.1% to 7.2%. Though the unemployment rate has fallen by 2.4% from its peak of 9.6% in September 2005, as in many regional cities it remains persistently higher than the rate for Australia and NSW as a whole.

## 6. Economic development

As an important provider of services to the Mid-North Coast, the Coffs Harbour city centre area includes some of the major shopping precincts in the Coffs LGA. The city centre plan seeks to encourage more commercial and retail development within easy walking distance of residential areas. In keeping with this goal, the plan reinforces the Coffs CBD as the primary retail and commercial centre for the LGA. The strengthening of pedestrian-oriented retail precincts, such as the Jetty strip will assure that the city centre includes a variety of retail experiences which enliven the surrounding areas.

Table 6.1 lists the main retail centres in the city centre.

Centre	Type	Floorspace (sqm)	Primary Retail Areas	Trade Area and Market	Competitive Advantages
Coffs Harbour City Centre	Regional	51,700	•Groceries, Food & Liquor Catering, Clothing, Housewares, Recreation	•Coffs Harbour LGA, Regional Catchment	•Ambience, cafes and eateries, fresh food
Park Beach	Sub-regional	44,500	•Groceries, Food & Liquor Catering, Clothing, Housewares, Recreation	•Coffs Harbour LGA, Regional Catchment	•Accessibility, clothing, range, size, variety of store
Jetty Strip	Neighbourhood/ Strip Retail	6,900	•Groceries, Food & Liquor Catering	•Jetty, Coffs Harbour LGA, Tourists	•Range of cafes, restaurants, location, setting
Home Base	Bulky goods	18,600	•Bulky Goods	•Coffs Harbour LGA, Regional Catchment	•Leading range in central location, accessibility
Orlando St	Strip retail	1,100	•Recreation	•Coffs Harbour LGA	•Recreation, marine, professional offices
Bailey Centre	Strip retail	6,800	•Food & Liquor Catering, Recreation, Motor Vehicle Parts	•Coffs Harbour LGA	•Australia's largest fishing shop, accessibility
Bray St Greenhouse Tavern	Strip retail	3,300	•Food & Liquor Catering	•Coffs Harbour LGA	•Accessibility, range of eateries, entertainment
Promenade	Strip Retail	1,000	•Clothing, Homewares, Food & Liquor Catering, Personal Services	•Coffs Harbour LGA	•Mix of retail, quality, amenity, upmarket
Northside	Strip retail	1,500	•Groceries, Food & Liquor Catering	•Coffs Urban North	•Convenience, location

**TABLE 6.1 RETAIL CENTRES IN COFFS HARBOUR**

## JOB GROWTH

The increasing variety of growing industries in Coffs has led to a diversification of the local economy, insulating the local economy from decline in any one sector. Over the past decade, construction, retail trade, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, service industries, health and education have seen robust growth while traditional primary industries have seen a diminished share of employment.

Among emerging industries, the growth of health care as a major employer is expected to continue in parallel with the ageing of the local population. The emergence of health as a major source of local jobs will be assisted by the provision of new infrastructure such as the recently-opened Coffs Harbour Health Campus.

The vision for the economic development of Coffs Harbour city centre includes growth in creative industries such as new media, film, television, IT, design and music. By fostering an attractive and liveable city centre environment, Coffs Harbour could be well positioned for an expansion in the creative sector as these industries face increasing costs in the major cities and seek affordable areas with high lifestyle values. The future growth and diversification of the Coffs economy will depend on the area's attractiveness to clean, green, innovative industries.

Coffs Harbour also seeks to build on the current strength of the tourism industry by encouraging the growing market for conferences, eco-tourism, sports tourism and event tourism related to events such as the Buskers Festival and the Food and Wine Festival. An expansion and diversification of the tourism industry will increase the length of the average visitor stay in Coffs and expand the economic benefits which result from tourism.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Coffs Harbour currently functions as a major regional centre for the Mid North Coast. Its importance to the future of the region lies in the way increased population and economic development in the city centre can encourage a sustainable growth pattern which preserves the area's natural environment. The economy of Coffs Harbour has changed as a result of recent trends. Increased migration and an ageing population have led to growth in retail, health and education as well as a general transition to a diversified service-based economy. Future economic development and diversification into emerging industries will require a skilled workforce and careful attention to planning and the provision of infrastructure.

Future directions for the city centre's economic development include:

- establishing more mixed use development, including an increase in commercial floorspace, to attract employment opportunities and improve the urban form.
- emphasising the Coffs CBD's status as the primary commercial centre of the Coffs LGA.
- encouraging the expansion of retail active frontages in the city centre by improving pedestrian access and the public domain.
- planning for higher density residential development near the CBD in order to create a vibrant, lively town centre.
- building on the Coffs harbour city centre's appeal as a destination by improving the public domain, especially along important corridors such as Harbour Drive.
- building on current strengths, such as health services and education, to encourage economic growth and a more highly-skilled workforce.



## 7. Transport and infrastructure

The Coffs Harbour City Centre is ideal to form the hub of the growing regional City. It is important to build on links which make the City viable and enjoyable. Expected traffic increases can be moderated by increased use of public transport and other modes such as walking and cycling to access the various City Centre Precincts.

### PACIFIC HIGHWAY

The location of Coffs Harbour on the Pacific Highway has made the city an important regional service centre.

It is predicted by the RTA that the, traffic volumes on the existing Pacific Highway corridor through the Coffs Harbour CBD will be in the order of 37,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) by 2021. The Pacific Highway forms a major barrier to the pedestrian and east-west vehicular movement in the city centre.

The Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway Planning strategy identifies the need to by-pass the Coffs Harbour urban area in the medium term. Traffic modelling has shown that the Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway by-pass is predicted to reduce through traffic on the existing route by 11,700 vehicles per day by 2021.

Council has recently completed the construction of the Hogbin Drive extension which also will have the effect of reducing traffic volumes on the Pacific Highway by 10,000 vehicles per day by 2021.

Council is seeking that RTA prepare the Urban Design and Streetscape Planning for the by-passed section of the Pacific Highway through Coffs Harbour as part of the RTA on the Pacific Highway Planning strategy.

Key Pacific Highway traffic management issues are;

- Need for Pacific Highway parking restrictions (clearways) in the short term through the CBD. - This has been part of RTA traffic management strategy for some time. While the strategy will improve peak hour flows on the Pacific Highway through the CBD, strategies will need to be devised to limit the impact on parking and pedestrian access. There is an ongoing need to monitor peak traffic flows on the Pacific Highway and consider implementation of peak hour Clearways if required.
- The RTA have developed a traffic model (Paramics) which will assist in assessment of Pacific Highway traffic management options through Coffs Harbour. These include the provision of service roads and new intersection controls between Coffs Creek and Bray Street.
- An analysis and planning of future land use and access requirements will facilitate development adjacent to the Pacific Highway between Coffs Creek and Bray Street.
- Flooding at Marcia Street intersection causes disruption to traffic. Council is developing plans for flood mitigation and drainage works to alleviate flooding in the Marcia Street Industrial area and at the Pacific Highway/Marcia Street intersection.
- Pedestrian safety and access between Bray Street and Arthur Street will be improved by the construction of a mid-block pedestrian crossing on the Pacific Highway to better manage pedestrian movement pedestrian movement. This is currently subject of an RTA study.
- Pedestrian safety and access between Combine Street and Moonee Street will be improved by

## 7. Transport and infrastructure

similar design solutions as implemented between Park Avenue and Coffs Street.

### TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Completion of the Hogbin Drive Extension has significantly reduced traffic through the Jetty area and the Park Beach precinct. This provides opportunities for traffic calming and improved pedestrian/cycle access on previously busy roads such as Harbour Drive, Orlando Street and Ocean Parade.

Harbour Drive will be reconfigured between Hogbin Drive and Jetty to reduce speeds, improve pedestrian cycle access, and increase the on street parking and landscape opportunities. This would include rationalization of marked pedestrian crossings from Hogbin Drive through to the Jetty Strip and Marina Drive.

Harbour Drive/Gordon Street intersection experiences high levels of congestion during peak traffic times, particularly when pedestrian movements are high. Replacement of the roundabout and marked pedestrian crossings in Gordon Street with traffic control signals will be investigated. This will also provide opportunity to lower road pavement levels and reinstate stormwater overland flow path to Carrals Creek.

Current heavy vehicle bypass on Combine Street and Azalea Avenue from Pacific Highway to Coramba Road is to be reviewed.

The re-design and replacement of traffic guide and tourist signposting through the study area forms part of the Council's City Image improvement project.

Council has in the place the Developer Contributions Plans for car parking provision in the Coffs Harbour CBD and the Jetty Precinct. The progression of the capital works schedules in the Developer Contributions Plans will progress in conjunction with the monitoring, adjustment and enforcement of timed parking restrictions in the Coffs Harbour CBD and the Jetty areas.

### CYCLEWAYS

The major North-South cycle link between Sawtell/Toormina, Coffs CBD and Park Beach has been completed.

Council will implement the Coffs Creek cycleway which will provide a significant Tourist – Commuter link between Coffs CBD, Jetty area and Park Beach. Funding is being sought for the project.

Council will be investigating the implementation of the major cycleway missing links in the future. They are:

- Pacific Highway – Coff Street to Combine Street.
- West Coffs – Link between CBD and West Coffs. Some Section 94 funds are available for this project.
- Arthur Street – Hogbin Drive to Pacific Highway and Hogbin Drive to Diggers Beach Road.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport is important to achieve sustainability of cities and reduce reliance on private vehicles for local residents and visitors. The main bus interchange in Coffs Harbour for school buses and town service buses is currently located in Park Avenue between Little Street and Gordon Street. Long distance coaches pick up and drop off passengers at Coffs Harbour coach stop located adjacent to the Visitors Information Centre on the corner of Pacific Highway and McLean Street. The current coach stop and Visitor Information Centre needs improved pedestrian access to Park Avenue and other parts of the city. Progressive works to improve these connections are proposed.

Council has investigated the feasibility of providing an integrated Bus/Coach and Taxi interchange in the CBD and will work with coach operators to determine the best site and form for an integrated transport hub in the CBD.

Council has recently established a light rail

working group to investigate the feasibility of:

Establishment of a light rail commuter service on the existing North Coast Rail line between Bonville and Coramba.

Planning for a light rail service connecting Coffs Harbour CBD, Park Beach and the Jetty area.

The Light Rail Working Group will work within the framework of the Coffs Harbour 2030 project in terms of future strategies, however the group has foreseen the need for identification of a light rail corridor connecting the CBD to Park Beach and CBD to Jetty along Harbour Drive.



Council will investigate ways to improve public transport in Coffs Harbour City Centre



## 8. Climate Change and Flooding

Recent evidence indicates that climate change is occurring much more rapidly than previously expected. Worldwide, the current predictions for the period 1990 to 2100 are:

- An average global temperature increase of 1.4 to 5.8 degrees Celsius.
- An average global sea level rise of 9 to 88cm.

These changes will most likely lead to more frequent severe storm events, floods and droughts. Impacts from these more intense events could include:

- Reduced agricultural and food production, therefore an increased potential for further poverty worldwide.
- Property damage and loss of life (for example: hurricane Katrina in 2005).
- Reduced human health.
- Loss of biodiversity.
- Changes in water quality.

### CLIMATE CHANGE IN COFFS HARBOUR

Climate change will vary in its effects across Australia. For Coffs Harbour some of the predicted changes for the period 1990 to 2100 are:

- Temperature increase of 2.7 degrees Celsius.
- Sea level rise of up to 90cm by 2100.
- More severe storms.
- More flooding events.
- More droughts.

These changes may have far-reaching impacts on Coffs Harbour's environment, economy and community. For example, there could be:

- A decline in biodiversity.
- A decline in tourism.
- A decline in the fishing industry.
- Widespread crop damage and loss of stock.
- An increase in health risks from declining water quality and a higher potential for diseases (particularly diseases carried by mosquitos).
- Loss of housing areas.

### Sea Level Rise

It is broadly acknowledged that increased sea levels are likely to have significant medium to long term social, economic and environmental impacts.

While sea level rise is a gradual process, the current best projections of sea level rise for NSW are for 40cm by 2050 and 90cm by 2100.

With increased sea levels two primary impacts could result:

1. permanent increase in sea levels relative to those currently experienced; and
2. increased coastal hazard and flooding risks, especially during major storm events.

In response, the Coffs Harbour City Council after consideration of the "Climate Change Impacts for Coffs Harbour (Coastal and Flooding)" report has in December 2008 adopted an upper bound sea level rise figure of 0.91m by 2010. This adopted level is to provide direction when considering potential sea level rise impacts in terms of land use planning and development.

## Heat Effect

Increased frequency of storms and wind, warmer temperatures and importance of urban trees is increased. Established and growing trees capture carbon and are vital for the city centre of Coffs Harbour. Trees reduce the heat effect in cities and reduce energy consumption.

Space for spreading canopy trees is necessary to provide essential shade, heat reduction, filtration of air borne pollutions and habitat. Canopy trees are needed for developments, streetscapes and along cycling and pedestrian routes.

## FLOODING

There is a history of flooding in Coffs Harbour with significant flood events occurring in 1917, 1938, 1950, 1963, 1974, 1977, 1989, 1991, 1996 and the latest in 2009. Large flood events have a significant impact on the local community and on individuals affected. They are destructive, and can be very disruptive with dwellings and personal belongings destroyed or damaged. People not directly affected can be indirectly affected through loss of power and other services plus closure of schools and commercial areas, damages to roads and interruptions to social services such as hospitals and medical facilities.

The flood event of 1996 prompted council to commission a revised Flood Study to further investigate the cause and severity of the flood. The review indicated that the magnitude of flood problems within the catchment was greater than had previously been understood. Council subsequently commissioned a Floodplain Risk Management Study to investigate and recommend measures to either manage or reduce flooding problems within the catchment. The study was then adapted into a Floodplain Risk Management Plan adopted by council in 2006. The process for developing the flood studies and plan was done in accordance with the NSW Governments Floodplain Development Manual.

The information contained in Flood Studies and Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans provides council with sound information and data to use in developing strategic documents and planning controls. The advantages to both Council and the community in having the floodplain management studies and plans in place are:

- Having a proper basis for managing and using flood prone land to provide a balance between danger to personal safety and economic losses due to flooding, and social, ecological and cultural interests.
- Optimising community infrastructure;
- Minimizing personal danger to residents, visitors and emergency response personnel and community flood damage.
- Strategically assessing catchments so that the impacts of development on flooding and flooding on development can be effectively considered.

Following the major flood event of 2009 Council has responded to community concern and is undertaking a significant program of Flood Mitigation Works to minimise flood impacts building upon the actions in the Floodplain Risk Management Plan. A loan of \$6 million from Councils existing Storm Water Levy will finance part of the program that includes construction of detention basins, Early Flood Warning System, drainage works and creek clearing. Council is seeking additional funds for the Flood Mitigation Program through a proposed special rate variation and through grants from the State and Federal Government.

Recently the possible impact of climate change and sea level rise have come to the fore as important factors to consider in predicting future flood behaviour. To assess these consultants were engaged to undertake an 'Assessment of the Possible Impacts of Climate Change on Flooding in Coffs Creek'. The assessment was undertaken with consideration to the following:

- Practical Considerations of Climate Change by DECCW, Oct 2007.

- Draft Flood Risk Management Guide:  
Incorporating sea level rise benchmarks in  
flood risk assessment by DECCW 2009.

The results of the modelling show that sea level rise will have an impact on flood levels in the lower reaches of Coffs Creek that diminishes as you progress upstream and is minimal upstream of the Pacific Highway. For the year 2100 and with a projected sea level rise of 0.9m, the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood level at the Jetty is predicted to be approximately 0.7m higher than current 1% AEP flood level while at the Pacific Highway the increase is predicted to be approximately 0.1m.

When a flood event does occur the SES is the lead agency responsible for coordinating and directing emergency response. The SES have in place the Coffs Harbour City Local Flood Plan a sub-plan of the Coffs Harbour City Local Disaster Plan (DISPLAN) that details management actions and strategies such as evacuation procedures and refuge locations, at risk areas and communities and operational procedures for coordinating flood response. The SES also have information and kits available for house holds and businesses on how to prepare for a flood and what to do in a flood.

*Note: Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) is defined as: "The chance of a flood of a given or larger size occurring in any one year, usually expressed as a percentage. For example, if a peak flood discharge of 500m<sup>3</sup>/s has an AEP of 5%, it means that there is a 5% chance (that is 1 in 20 chance) of a peak flood discharge of 500m<sup>3</sup>/s or larger occurring in any one year."*

Source: "Designing Safer Subdivisions.  
Guidance on Subdivision in flood prone areas."  
Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management  
Steering Committee



## 9. Environment and Parks

At Coffs Harbour, the Great Dividing Range creates a steep, forested backdrop to a narrow coastal plain. The escarpment and surrounding hinterlands provide high scenic value to the city and also create a strong ecological context to the city centre. The vegetation continues to permeate into the City along the creek lines and estuaries which buffer the built form. Views and vistas are available from a number of locations through the city and parts of the city enjoy a native tree canopy.

The natural vegetation is supplemented by street and reserve planting based on the theme of 'rainforest to the sea'. Plantings are subtropical and a mixture of native and exotic ornamental species.

Coffs Harbour is fortunate to have a diverse network of open space which is readily accessible for both residents and visitors. The open space includes substantial areas of foreshore reserves, sporting and recreation reserves and conservation lands. Coffs Harbour residents enjoy proximity to a range of fauna including birdlife, koalas, and marsupials, often located in and around the suburban and city areas.

The city's visual amenity, character, biodiversity and recreational opportunities are well-serviced, and should be protected and enhanced in the future.

Coffs Harbour City Council has recognised that open space delivers significant benefits for the whole community through improved social, physical and mental health.

Council's future vision is to create a high quality, safe and accessible urban and open spaces that celebrate, protect and enhance our subtropical

environment. Council recognises the landscape's particular importance as the city's population increases and the pressures of growth, urbanisation and densification occur. Council aim to ensure that future generations can value and enjoy the open space network and city environments.

The foreshore reserves are popular destinations as are the cycle and footpath connections through the reserve system, where there are a number of boardwalks. The Regional Botanic Garden attracts many visitors and provides a natural setting for education, cultural and community events. Brelsford Park is recognised as an important social and family destination in the city and will support recreational, cultural and sporting facilities for the community.

Within the City Centre Council will increase the city's connectivity to Coffs Creek and to surrounding areas. Council has plans to improve the urban amenity of the city through quality urban design elements such as signage, landscaping, public art and street furniture. Within the CBD, varied street setbacks could provide additional open spaces for outdoor eating, complementing the lively cafe strip on Harbour Drive. Existing laneways and through-site links should be retained and enhanced to improve pedestrian connectivity and servicing and pedestrian connectivity.

The public square on Harbour Drive can become an even more attractive public space in the city centre for outdoor dining and the location of civic activities

There is also a need to develop an Urban Forest Strategy in order to ensure a canopy of shade along major pedestrian routes and destinations

## 9. Environment and Parks

through the city are protected from harsh sunlight and to encourage walking

The city's landscape strategy will identify the major entries to the city and the key link connecting the CBD to the foreshore along Harbour Drive.



Cyclists and pedestrians will be encouraged to share the streets with cars



Public parks will be celebrated through art installations



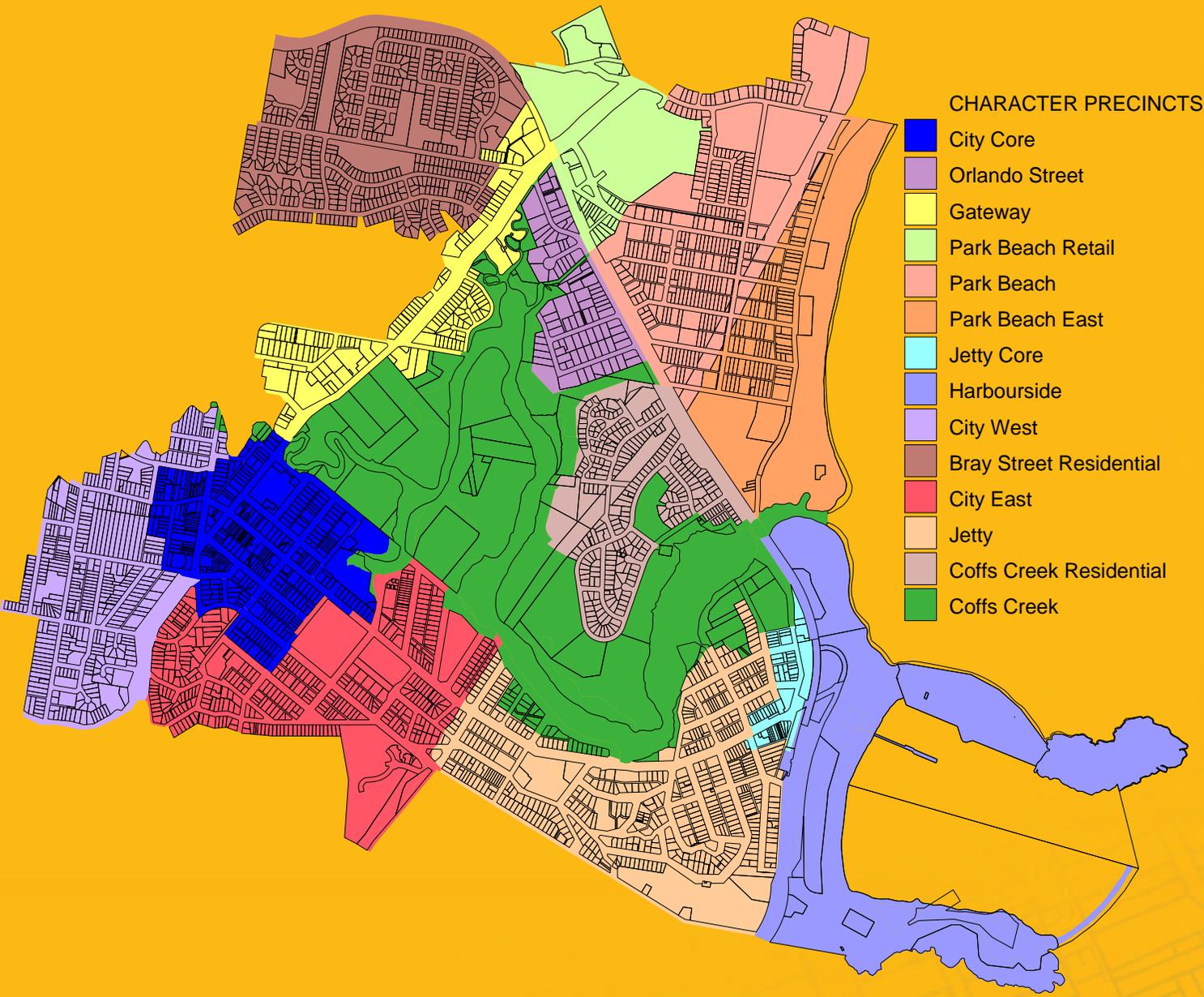
Coffs Creek parkland and other local parks will be used for passive and active recreation



Better public access and interaction with Coffs Creek will improve its attractiveness to the community



Activities in well designed public spaces will encourage the city's vitality and economic prosperity



**CHARACTER PRECINCTS**

- City Core
- Orlando Street
- Gateway
- Park Beach Retail
- Park Beach
- Park Beach East
- Jetty Core
- Harbourside
- City West
- Bray Street Residential
- City East
- Jetty
- Coffs Creek Residential
- Coffs Creek

# 10. City centre character

## 10.1 CITY CORE

Coffs Harbour has a relatively centralised urban core and serves a role as a sub-regional centre.

The City Core is the main business centre occupying some 30 hectares of land. This area also contains major cultural land uses.

This area provides:

- Core retail precinct with a mixture of specialty shops.
- Professional offices.
- A meeting place for the community.
- Community and cultural facilities.
- Health and welfare support services.
- An entertainment precinct.
- Civic offices.
- Restaurant and dining experiences.

The future character of the city core will be of an attractive retail, employment and residential area catering to locals and tourists. The new buildings will be of high quality housing a mix of uses that would encourage safety and activity during the day and at night.

The buildings will have continuous awnings for weather protection and outdoor dining will be encouraged along main streets. The landscape character of local streets will have distinct paving, lighting and street furniture to make visitors welcome and locals proud of the city.

## 10.2 ORLANDO STREET

This Precinct is a mixed industrial area and contains general industrial activity, bulky goods retail and service industries.

Given its proximity to the Solitary Island Marine Park (Coffs Creek) and residential development the area is best suited to the low impact industry and will continue its role as a light industrial area providing a range of local service industries.

## 10.3 GATEWAY

The land along Pacific Highway is defined as the "Gateway" to Coffs Harbour, it is the arrival point for many visitors and therefore impacts on how the City's character and attributes are perceived.

The corridor between the Coffs Creek and Bray Street has inherent future development opportunities which can improve the City's image, amenity and transport network structure.

The current zoning of the majority of this land is residential. Past decisions by Council (via consents) as well as legally operating home industries/ home occupations mean that the area has a variety of uses, not necessarily residential in nature.

The Enterprise Corridor zoning will support existing uses in this precinct, which contribute to the local economy and offer flexibility and diversity of employment.

The area will remain a low key commercial use with low scale buildings with active frontages and front street setback accommodating landscape and visitor carparking.

## 10. City centre character

### 10.4 PARK BEACH RETAIL

This precinct functions well as a retail centre serving the local community. The scale of development in the precinct and its proximity to the City Core means that great care needs to be taken in the future to ensure that new development does not threaten the city core's economic viability and its role as the Regional Centre.

This precinct has a mix of retail and service businesses, good accessibility and proximity to surrounding residential precincts. It functions well as a local centre offering retail and service roles.

It is envisaged that in the future the precinct will have better pedestrian links to the surrounding areas and conflicts with vehicles will be reduced. The public face of the retail precinct with Pacific Highway should be improved and landscaping introduced to soften the large expanses of surface parking.

### 10.5 PARK BEACH

The western part of Park Beach has developed into a residential precinct catering for tourist/visitor and permanent accommodation. The proximity to the beach and major shopping facilities has enhanced the residential role of this location. Its relatively flat terrain makes it ideal for pedestrian and cycle movement.

The area's residential stock ranges in age, size and design with no established theme. Many of the residential developments have been strata titled, making redevelopment difficult. Future development should take advantage of Coffs Harbour's subtropical climate by employing natural ventilation, passive heating and cooling and high quality, generous landscape within new developments.

Few development sites are available, however one large site on Arthur Street is an important site for major new development and as such is subject to special area provisions in the DCP.

The area's service laneways should be retained and upgraded to provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections.

### 10.6 PARK BEACH EAST

The eastern portion of Park Beach is the most attractive residential and tourist location in Coffs Harbour with direct access to Park Beach. The area contains the highest residential buildings and tourist accommodation in Coffs ranging from two to seventeen storeys.

The precinct provides a mixture of uses including holiday accommodation, permanent accommodation, and tourist facilities; all with links to recreational the nearby beach and the coastal reserve.

The future development in the northern part of Park Beach East will have a higher density and taller development, while development in the southern part will be of innovative and functional design minimising impacts on the aesthetic, recreational and environmental values of the area.

### 10.7 JETTY CORE

The Jetty Core Precinct is located at the site of the original township of Coffs Harbour. The Jetty Core Precinct hosts a thriving mixed use area with small cafes, retail strip, some short term accommodation, residential and some residual light industrial uses.

The Jetty Core's role as a mixed use precinct is important for its future success. The amenity and character of the precinct are ensured by proximity to the nearby beach and harbour and the views that link it with those features.

While some light industrial uses remain from earlier associations with the harbour and railway line, the future character of this area will focus on higher density mixed use development supporting active frontages to the streets and outdoor dining.

## 10.8 HARBOURSIDE

The future potential of the Harbourside Precinct has created much debate within the Coffs Harbour community. Any future redevelopment of this precinct needs to reflect the following principles:

- Strengthen the Harbourside Precinct's identity as an outstanding destination.
- Support the function of the harbour as an international port for small vessels.
- Enhance the recreational functions and amenity of the Harbourside Precinct.
- Enhance the environmental quality of the Harbourside Precinct.
- Establish and maintain landscape as the dominant element over built form.
- Incorporate and reaffirm the Aboriginal meaning of the place.
- Promote and incorporate the settlement history of this Harbourside Precinct.
- Strengthen the small-scale character of built form within the Harbourside Precinct.
- Establish ecological integrity as a component of local character.
- Develop the Precinct as a recognisable seaside village.
- Create development opportunities which are sustainable in an environmentally, socially and financially sound way.

## 10.9 CITY WEST

The predominant use of this precinct is for residential purposes. Its proximity in relation to the City Core and associated services make this area ideal for increased residential density.

Two specific sub precincts have been identified for the highest residential zoning and therefore have future potential to achieve high density living. These two residential sub precincts are called McLean Street and Coffs Creek.

The future development of these two areas is to be guided by the following objectives:

### Coffs Creek Precinct Objectives:

- 1) to retain a tranquil atmosphere;
- 2) to preserve items of heritage significance;
- 3) to utilise the creek edges for low key recreation; and
- 4) to retain and enhance the Coffs Creek vegetation.

### McLean Street Precinct Objectives:

- 1) to provide for a convenient residential area consisting of a mix of dwelling sizes; and
- 2) to maintain the open setting of the park.

The location of high density residential development in these locations is also enhanced by the proximity to the extensive open space (McLean Street Oval and Coffs Creek) within the precincts.

Special area plans have been prepared to illustrate specific controls for the Coffs Creek and McLean Street high density residential areas (see chapter 8 of the *Coffs Harbour City Centre DCP*).

## 10.10 BRAY STREET RESIDENTIAL

This precinct is predominantly low density residential in nature with some business activity focussed on the primary road corridors. The area is predominantly flat and thus susceptible to flooding.

Much of the residential development in this precinct caters for lower cost housing.

The future character of this precinct will remain as low density residential.

## 10. City centre character

### 10.11 CITY EAST

There are various uses within this precinct, with a strong residential purpose focus.

This precinct includes residential land within walking distance from the City Centre. The Albany Street area bound Earl Street, Avenue Street and Curocoa Street has been identified as a high density living zone.

The future development in this area is to be guided by the following objectives:

#### Objectives:

- 1) to maintain views to the hill sides west of the City Centre; and
- 2) to retain a private, enclosed or meeting place atmosphere in Bonville Street.
- 3) To encourage vehicular access from rear lanes.

The attractiveness of any residential development within the City East Precinct is also enhanced by the proximity to existing educational facilities and extensive open space (including Brelsford Park, Botanic Gardens and Coffs Creek).

A special area plans has been prepared to illustrate specific controls for the Albany Street high density residential area (see Chapter 8 of this *DCP*).

### 10.12 JETTY

This precinct is to be predominantly medium density residential in nature, reflecting a character influenced by natural landscape elements. The local landscape is to be enhanced by the introduction of local endemic street tree planting.

Significant views to Coffs Creek, the mountains and coast are to be retained.

The following general principles will guide future development:

- Maintaining focus of existing mixed use

businesses on Harbour Drive.

- Continuing to provide for higher density development along “spine” of Harbour Drive and into appropriate locations adjacent Harbour Drive.
- Retention and protection of open space along Coffs Creek. And
- Retention of green backdrop to development.

Within this precinct the former hospital site is deemed to be important and require special area controls and has been identified as a Key Site requiring architectural competitions to ensure high quality development.

### 10.13 COFFS CREEK RESIDENTIAL

The majority of this precinct has been developed over the last decade and a half with low density permanent residential accommodation.

The area benefits from the natural amenity of Coffs Creek, as well as from proximity to the city’s beaches, shopping, employment and recreational facilities.

Since development in the area is relatively recent, redevelopment opportunities in this precinct are limited.

### 10.14 COFFS CREEK

The Coffs Creek parkland is the “lungs” of the City Centre. This precinct provides wonderful opportunities to assist the City achieve a healthy, active sustainable future. It offers a passive and active recreation area in a central location and it has good access for residents, visitors and workers.

The Coffs Creek parkland facilitates cycle and pedestrian links across the City Centre area. It is a major city asset and has the opportunity to function even better as an attractive central city parkland with picnic areas and boating activities for future residents, workers and visitors to Coffs Harbour





# 11. Future actions

The Coffs Harbour City Council in partnership with the New South Wales State Government will have a major role in implementing the city vision over the next 25 years. The centre contains a number of important public assets that can be further developed to enhance the city's development prospects. A number of Council's initiatives are designed to support the transformation of Coffs Harbour into a regional city.

Action items to implement the city vision are listed below.

## ACTION 1

Promote office (re)development in the city's commercial core.

### Rationale:

The main growth in the last 10 years in Coffs Harbour has been residential in nature and with an expected population of 100,000 in the region by 2031, Coffs Harbour will need to have suitable growth in its employment sector. To accommodate the predicted growth additional sites for commercial development, office buildings, cultural and recreational facilities will need to be identified. A mixed use centre is encouraged as it creates a dynamic and liveable city centre.

## ACTION 2

Investigate the further development of a State agency precinct.

### Rationale:

As Coffs Harbour emerges as a regional city the State agency activities need to be consolidated and strengthened. The focus should be on the achievement of the appropriate development on the of this precinct is the former NSW Forestry

site on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Beryl Street.

The Mid North Coast Regional Strategy identifies the Coffs Harbour Court and Coffs Harbour Police Station replacement as major infrastructure projects. While funding is not currently approved the projects form part of the \$140 billion State Infrastructure Strategy to be implemented by 2017/18.

A State agency precinct can attract additional associated activities that will strengthen the local employment base and reinforce the City Core's role in the heart of the regional city.

## ACTION 3

Investigate ways to improve the connections between the City Centre and the harbour.

### Rationale:

Creating better links with the CBD and the waterfront (harbour) will assist in fostering Coffs Harbour as an attractive tourist destination.

Further development opportunities and strategies for the City Centre to encourage tourism should be investigated and assessed by Coffs Harbour City Council and relevant stakeholders.

## ACTION 4

Implement staged development of Brelsford Park to enable it to become the Passive Recreation and Cultural Heart of the City Centre.

### Rationale:

Brelsford Park is the city park catering for many passive and active recreational

# 11. Future actions

activities. It's role as a key urban recreation area needs to be strengthened.

Council will continue to progress the development of Brelsford Park consistent with the Park's Plan of Management.

## ACTION 5

Establish a steering committee of stakeholders to assess the options of a convenient transport link from the Coffs Harbour Education Campus/ Health Campus to the City Core; linking these facilities to the airport, harbour and Park Beach Plaza.

### Rationale:

The future growth of the City Centre will assist in creating a sustainable local public transport. The ability to link all key employment, residential, educational and health facilities through a cost efficient transport service would provide a safe and convenient form of transport for the community. Increased accessibility will increase the vitality and viability of the linked services. The committee should include representation from:

- Mid North Coast Health;
- Coffs Harbour Education Campus; and
- Coffs Harbour City Council.

## ACTION 6

Undertake detailed studies and implementation plans to progress the development of green landscape through the City.

### Rationale:

Coffs Harbour's character is closely related to its coastal location and beautiful natural environment. The Vision 2030 process identifies the role of the greenery within the City that is paramount in maintaining Coffs

character.

The Civic Improvement Plan identifies key landscape features and processes to progress this action. As development occurs more detailed locality plans will need to be produced by Council.

## ACTION 7

Promote healthy waterways in the urban city setting.

### Rationale:

Settlement close to waterways can impact on the health of the water and marine environment.

Creation and implementation of policies to ensure developments in proximity to waterways (including drains) employ appropriate controls to minimise pollution issues and pressure on the waterway and the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

Council will investigate the introduction of such provisions in Council's DCPs and policies for all new development to assist in enhancing and protecting the City's biodiversity.

## ACTION 8

Review Coastline Flood Management Studies and associated Hazard Reduction Plans.

### Rationale:

Beach erosion and recovery is a natural process, as our population increases there is potentially greater pressure on our beach, creeks and coastal dune systems.

Coastal hazards, including those influenced by climate change and rising sea levels, have the potential to cause major damage

to infrastructure and developed urban areas. These impacts need to be considered in future development and appropriate mitigation measures employed.

## **ACTION 9**

Promote the use of public transport, bicycle use and walking to reduce reliance on private vehicles (and reduce greenhouse gas emissions).

### **Rationale:**

Private motor vehicles are responsible for 90% of lead emissions in urban areas and old cars contribute far more pollution than newer cars.

## **ACTION 10**

Encourage the provision of facilities, services and resources which attract and support young people.

### **Rationale:**

Establishing a mix of retail, residential and recreational opportunities will assist in retaining and attracting young people to work, live, study and recreate in the City Centre.

## 12. References

Department of Planning – Mid North Coast  
Regional Strategy 2009

Coffs Harbour City Council – Local Environmental  
Plan and relevant Development Control Plans

ERM Mitchell McCotter – Urban Design Study  
and Masterplan

PSB – draft Jetty Development Control Plan

Department of Lands – Plan of Management for  
the Harbour









Planning