

INVERELL

'LIVING LANDS' STRATEGY

2009



July 2009



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Definitions and Terminologies

For the purposes of clarity, the following definitions/terminologies have been used to describe the anticipated range of residential lot sizes and typical land uses. The comparable Zone designation under the NSW DoP's Standard Instrument (LEP) is also provided.

Residential Lots – Fully serviced standard residential lots of various sizes – Approximately 1,000m² in area - (Zone R1 General Residential).

Residential Large Lots (Inner) – Larger residential land parcels with a minimum lot size of:

- 2,000 m² for land serviced with reticulated water and sewer; and,
- 4,000 m² for land serviced with only reticulated water - (Zone R5 Large Lot Residential).

Residential Large Lot (Outer) – Larger residential land parcels serviced with reticulated water and having a maximum lot size of 1 hectare - (Zone R5 Large Lot Residential).

Rural Small Holdings - Minimum 4 hectare lot size (with reticulated water services) and Minimum 12.5 hectare lot size (where no reticulated water and sewer services are available) – Hobby farms and relatively small rural lots in selected locations readily accessible to Inverell township – (RU4 Rural Small Holdings).

Abbreviations Used

DoP	NSW Department of Planning
DIPNR	NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (now NSW Department of Planning)
DECC	NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change
LEP	Local Environmental Plan (containing Council's planning controls)
LES	Local Environmental Study
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
DCP	Development Control Plan (containing Council's detailed guidelines for development)
LGA	Local Government Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Inverell 'Living Lands' Strategy 2009* has been prepared as a pre-requisite to the preparation of a comprehensive *"Inverell Land Use Strategy"* (ILUS) for the whole of the local government area. This Strategy seeks to identify land suitable for a range of residential purposes (or "living land") including housing on standard 'Residential Lots', 'Residential Large Lots' and 'Rural Small Holdings' within a reasonable distance of the services and support facilities available in Inverell township. It should be noted that the identification of land suitable for 'Rural Living Lots' (minimum 40 and 100 hectares) and larger 'Rural Lots' (minimum 300 and 800 hectares) is discussed in a separate document titled *"Inverell Rural Land Use Study 2008"* prepared by Council's Planning and Development Department.

The findings and recommendations of this report (once adopted by Council), together with those of the recently completed Rural Land Use Study, Employment Lands Strategy, Heritage Study and Traffic Study will become the Inverell Land Use Strategy (ILUS) which is to be a consolidation of all of the strategic planning work. The ILUS will be a single concise document that provides the justification for the new Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) which will introduce new planning provisions as required by the NSW Department of Planning. Opportunities to comment on both the ILUS and the Draft LEP will be afforded to all interested persons during the planning process.

The 'Living Lands' Strategy examines demographic and housing statistics over the last 10 years and makes predictions as to the likely growth in the population of Inverell and the anticipated residential development and subdivision activity as a basis for determining future supply and demand for residential and rural /residential land. A constraints analysis covering a wide range of environmental, social and economic considerations is undertaken to identify land suitable for development in the short and long term.

The main findings and recommendations of the 'Living Lands' Strategy include:

- Although the Shire's population has decreased since 1991, Inverell's town population has increased and development trends indicate that compared to other rural towns, Inverell appears to be thriving.
- Over the period 2001 – 2006, the population of the Inverell LGA increased by 0.65%.
- From 2001 – 2031, it is predicted that the Average Annual rate of population change in Inverell Shire will remain steady at between 0% - 1%.
- Migration is the biggest factor in the population decline in the New England North West Region. Unlike births and deaths, which have been relatively stable components of population change, migration flows can fluctuate from year to year. This is indicative of changing opportunities within the region and the varying needs of the population in terms of employment, education, household structure, and social aspirations.
- The potential to increase resident numbers is high.
- Inverell is a forward thinking community that is interested in promoting the lifestyle, cultural and economic benefits of the town and the LGA.

- While the average number of residential lots created in the last 10 years was 29 (average of 32 per year over the last 5 years), the fluctuations have been fairly extreme (2 lots created in 1999 to 53 lots in 2002 and 2005). The average number of residential dwellings constructed each year was 25 (36 dwellings per year in recent times) suggesting that the rate of land release is generally meeting the demands of the housing market.
- There has been an increasing trend in the number of rural/residential lots that have been created in recent times (an average of 53 rural/residential lots created per year over the last 5 years compared to 39 per year since 1999). Similarly, the number of dwellings built on rural/residential lots has risen steadily in recent times (average 32 dwellings per year in the last 5 years compared to 24 dwellings per year since 1999).
- Following consideration of a number of influencing factors and allowing for some oversupply of land to accommodate unforeseen demand, an average annual figure of 32 residential lots per year has been adopted for land supply forecasting purposes.
- Given the history of Clause 12 subdivisions and the intention to provide for a mix of rural residential lot sizes in appropriate locations, it is difficult to forecast the likely demand for rural/residential type development. However, it will be critical that the use of this land and the servicing thereof, is properly coordinated by way of Development Control Plan(s) and an Infrastructure Development Plan.
- Over the last 10 years, and more so in the last 5 years, the trend with lots developed is upwardly focused in respect to residential and rural/residential housing.
- There are currently 113 hectares (approx) of land zoned Residential 2(a) in Inverell township. Taking into account the constraints currently applying to this land, it is estimated that there is approximately 41 hectares (net), or just over 10 years land supply if all of the identified land becomes available for development.
- Three locations (with a Net Area of 59 hectares) have been identified as suitable for rezoning to allow residential development in the short term (ie. the Urban Investigation 1(d) and 1(a) Rural Zoned land to the east of Jardine Road; the Urban Investigation 1(d) Zoned land generally bounded by Moore Street, Swanbrook Rd, Unformed Onus Ave and Short St; and the Rural 1(a) Zoned land south of the Gwydir Hwy between Moore St and Lake Inverell Drive). Combined with the 10 year supply of existing zoned land, the new LEP would result in an estimated total of 25 years or more supply of developable residential land stock.
- In addition to the 41 hectares (net) of existing residential land stocks and the 59 hectares (net) of land recommended to be rezoned, a further 175 hectares (net) has been identified as future residential that should be appropriately zoned in the new LEP to ensure that its potential is not sterilised by development.
- Statistics indicate that development growth in the villages is flat (ie. less than 1 dwelling per year for all villages). As such, there is no need to examine opportunities for future residential growth in these localities at this time.
- Approximately 360 hectares of land to be zoned "R5 Residential Large Lot (Inner)" has been identified as suitable for larger residential lots located adjacent to the urban areas of Inverell

with minimum lot sizes of 2,000m² (with reticulated water and sewer) and 4,000m² (with reticulated water only).

- A second “R5 Residential Large Lot” zone covering an area of approximately 1,349 hectares is considered suitable for larger residential land parcels, minimum 1 hectare in size located on generally unconstrained land on the fringes of the urban area and with access to sealed roads and with reticulated water only.
- Approximately 2,790 hectares of “RU4 Rural Small Holdings” has been identified as suitable for small rural lots and ‘hobby farms’. This land is considered suitable for intensive agricultural pursuits located on often partially constrained land further from the urban area of Inverell, with minimum lot sizes of 4 hectares where reticulated water is available and minimum 12.5 hectares where no water is available.
- It is generally accepted that in country areas, it is not uncommon for a land zoned for development to remain undeveloped for many years because country areas do not experience the same market forces as other more populated areas. It is considered prudent planning where population and development bases are relatively small, to have a land bank available to cater for unforeseen demand and to provide people with a choice and range of lot sizes in a number of different locations.

It is considered that the proposed strategy is well balanced and sustainable in that it provides opportunities to meet the long term needs of the community for ‘living land’, while also having regard to the provision for employment opportunities and the protection of the unique rural character and sensitive ecology of the area. Through the provision of a choice of attractive, well-planned and efficiently serviced living opportunities for the residents of the area, this Strategy will assist in encouraging the future growth of the town and the region.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

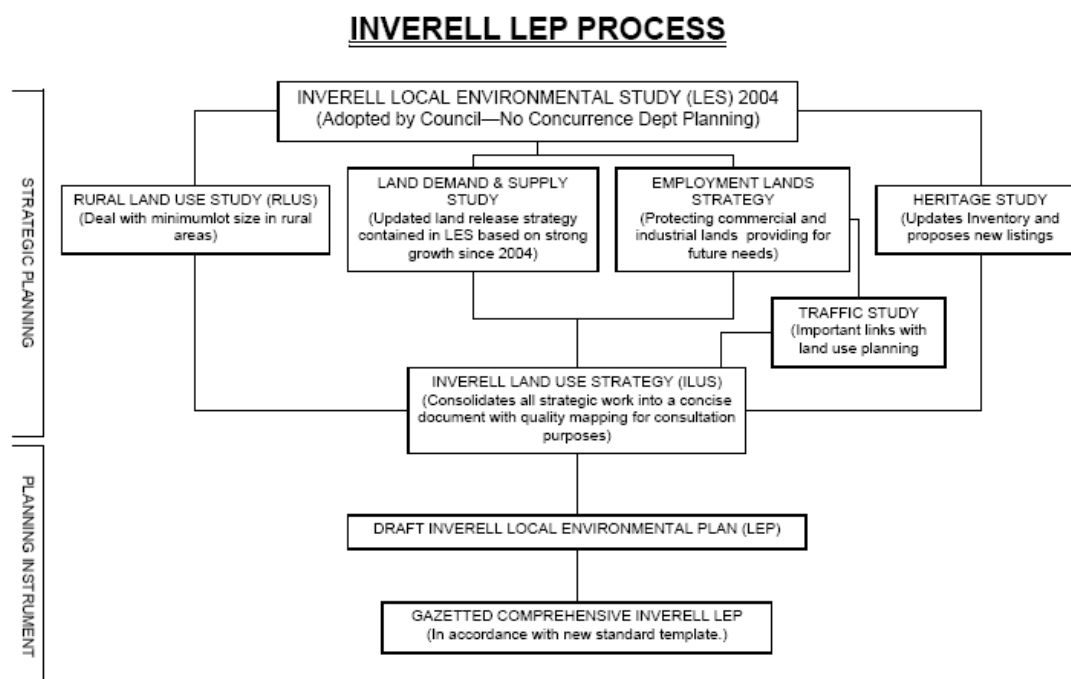
1.1 Purpose

HDB Town Planning and Design Pty Ltd has been commissioned to undertake an analysis of supply and demand for residential land in and around the Inverell Township. The purpose of the “*Inverell Living Lands Strategy 2009*” (previously known as the “Inverell Land Demand and Supply Study 2006”) is to measure land supply for future residential development and its capacity to house the anticipated resident population.

1.2 Background and Context

The NSW Department of Planning requires all Council's within the State to undertake a comprehensive review of their planning controls on a regular basis to ensure that development within all local government areas is occurring in a co-ordinated manner, so that the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area is protected and enhanced. Since 2006, Council has undertaken extensive consultation and has completed a number of studies that are necessary as a pre-requisite to the preparation of a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) in the required format. The following diagram identifies the various studies and shows the relationships between these, and how the information they contain will feed into the final documentation. It is important to note that at various stages throughout the process, Council will be inviting interested persons and all stakeholders to review and provide comment on the findings and recommendations of the various reports produced.

Figure 1 Inverell LEP Process



The Inverell Local Environmental Study (LES) prepared in 2004 presented a number of broad strategies for the future growth of Inverell and its surrounds. The strategy included a plan indicating a number of Development and Candidate Areas for the supply of land.

The original version of this Living Land Strategy 2009, (the “Inverell Land Demand and Supply Study 2006”), was produced as an Addendum to the Inverell Shire Local Environmental Study 2004 (August 2004) and was adopted by Council in 2006. The original Addendum was revised in January 2007 to include the initial release of data from the 2006 Census.

This 2009 review is as a result of the need to update the statistics to include the most recently released data obtained from the ABS 2006 Census and also Council’s most recent dwelling and subdivision statistics. The information contained in this Report has also been expanded to address those issues identified by the NSW Department of Planning (DoP) in their correspondence dated 19 December 2007, which was provided in response to Council’s request for comments on the Draft Inverell Demand and Supply Study 2006 (Revised 2007).

The issues identified by the Department of Planning as needing further examination included:

- The identification of urban growth corridors for future standard density residential development;
- Measures to reduce the potential for conflict between future development in close proximity to certain key strategic land uses (eg. only low density development to be permitted within buffer areas to the abattoir and industrial areas);
- The calculation of projected demand for land to be based on a demographic analysis, as well as lot creation and dwelling statistics;
- Undertake a detailed analysis of already zoned but undeveloped land;
- Consider options to reduce the amount of land allocated for rural residential purposes and strategies for the staged release of land in response to demand;
- Undertake a detailed constraints analysis so that development is directed to the most appropriate areas; and,
- Include mapping of services and infrastructure to assist in justifying target locations and guide the release of appropriate areas for development.

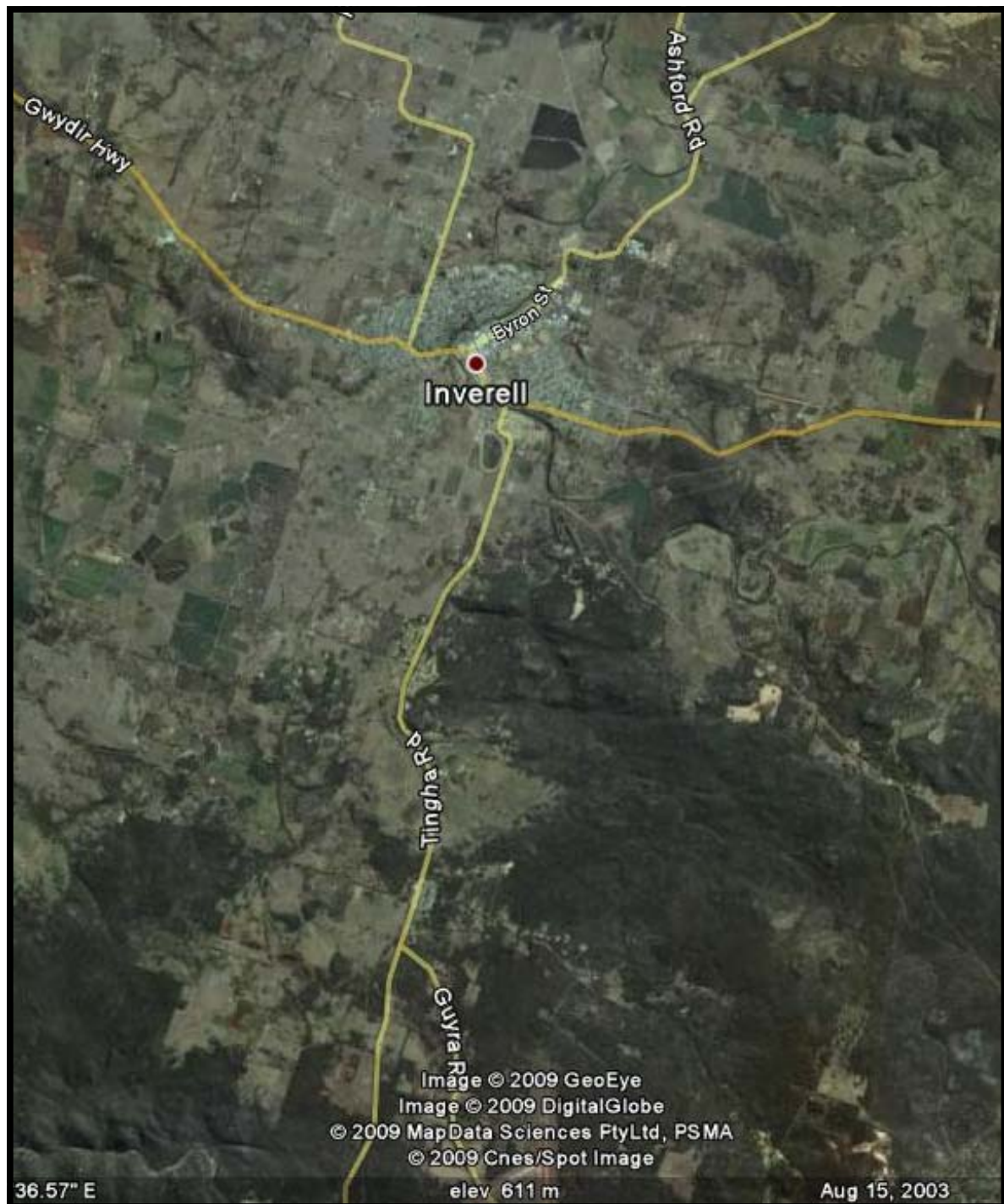
It is considered that the issues raised by the Department have been properly addressed in this Living Lands Strategy.

1.3 Scope of Investigations

The Inverell Living Land Strategy 2009 provides land supply and demand projections, based on the most up-to-date statistics available as they affect, not only the immediate town of Inverell, but the area known as Greater Inverell, including land within the Parishes of Clive and Inverell. This Report therefore concentrates on the area previously identified and endorsed by Department of Planning

(DoP) in the current Local Environmental Plan (LEP) as suitable for residential and rural/residential uses being the land within and surrounding Inverell township often referred to as the “Greater Inverell Area”. Refer to **Figure 2 - Investigation Area** below.

Figure 2 – Investigation Area

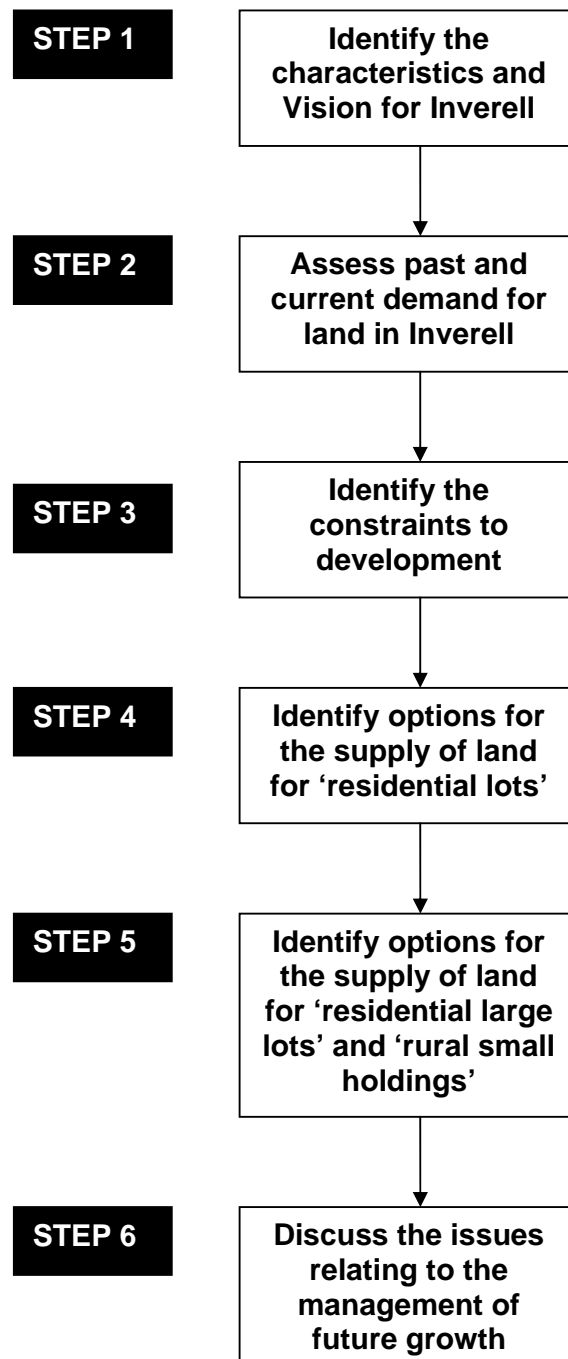


This Strategy seeks to identify land suitable for a range of residential purposes including housing on standard 'Residential Lots', 'Residential Large Lots' and 'Rural Small Holdings' within a reasonable distance of the services and support facilities available in Inverell township. It should be noted that the identification of land suitable for 'Rural Living Lots' (minimum 40 and 100 hectares) and larger 'Rural Lots' (minimum 300 and 800 hectares) is discussed in a separate document titled "*Inverell Rural Land Use Study 2008*" prepared by Council's Planning and Development Department.

2.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

The following methodology has been adopted in the preparation of this 'Living Land' Supply and Demand Study 2008.

Figure 3 – Methodology Flow Diagram



3.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF INVERELL

The Shire of Inverell covers an area of 8,605.9km², which comprises approximately 10km² of urban land. The remainder is predominantly farming and grazing land. The town of Inverell is situated on the MacIntyre River on the western fringe of the New England Tablelands and is 590m above sea level. The climate is dry with average maximum temperatures ranging from 28°C in summer to 18°C in winter.

Established in 1856, Inverell has evolved to have the following positive characteristics (as identified at the community workshops in 2004):

- A town with community cohesion & friendliness with a strong family atmosphere.
- A community that has developed a unique character founded on unity and rural resilience.
- A lifestyle that can be enjoyed by all the community.
- A strong business community moving from strength to strength, and young people, once upon a time leaving in search of career prospects, returning to Inverell to raise their own families in Inverell's warm and welcoming community.
- Inverell cares for its community by providing strong support for its disadvantaged, aged and disabled, encouraging its talented and gifted, constantly working to improve its environment and proudly displaying its culture, history and background.
- A community with a desire to better the lives of those in it and around it, putting energy into cooperative ventures for the greater good of the town.
- With many service clubs, charity groups, and a strong league of volunteer organisations, Inverell prides itself on its charitable and generous community spirit.

It is these positive characteristics that have and will continue to influence the future growth of Inverell as an enjoyable place to live, an important service centre and a focus for economic and social activity in the region.

Another extremely valuable business is Bindaree Beef, whose head office is located in Inverell. Bindaree Beef is the largest meat processor in New South Wales and a prominent leader in the Australian Beef Industry. It supplies markets overseas and is a leader in training young people in new and innovative practices, as well as in traditional processing methods. The company is a large employer in Inverell, processing more than 1000 head of cattle per day.

Although Inverell does not have all the facilities available in the larger centres of Tamworth and Armidale, due to location it plays a crucial role in serving a large surrounding area. Its service roles include agriculture, retail and manufacturing. Inverell is also home to several government agencies including, a Country Energy Customer Service Centre, the District Office of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, State Forest Centre and Nursery, and a Community Services Centre of the NSW

Department of Community Services. The presence of these government agency offices as well as several other larger corporate identities, supports Inverell's role as a regional centre.

There are numerous facts that make Inverell susceptible to more significant degrees of economic fluctuation. For example, Inverell has a high dependency on the abattoir industry. This facility has recently expanded its operating hours and staffing levels. It is expected that this expansion will bring employment levels up to approximately 800 people. This makes the town especially vulnerable if the abattoir is unable to access adequate suitable livestock, if there is a contamination scare or if there are overseas market challenges.

Inverell has a non-central location and although it is located on the Gwydir Highway, it is not part of the major transport routes of the New England Highway and the Newell Highway. Furthermore, Inverell, is a predominantly rural LGA and is subject to climatic changes which greatly affect the agriculture sector. These natural occurrences such as drought and flooding, have subsequent "flow-on effects" that impact on not just the farming community, but the economy, as a whole.

However, in spite of its relative isolation and lack of control over the natural elements, Inverell has been resourceful and worked towards the development of projects aimed at assisting and supporting the existing industry base, as well as investigating initiatives to broaden and diversify into new markets.

One of these initiatives has been the establishment in 2002, of the "Growing Inverell" Program, funded through the Department of State and Regional Development. This funding led to the development of a community plan which has become the blueprint to assist in the ongoing economic development of Inverell.

Some projects have been developed to specifically target the retention of Inverell's youth (so that they do not move away from the area – ie: the brain drain) as well as focusing on the promotion of businesses in the area and increasing the diversity of Inverell's commercial sector.

Surveys undertaken in 2007 by "Growing Inverell" indicate:

- a large number of businesses that have been established for greater than 10 years, thereby indicating a longevity in business;
- an increase in the levels of employment within the business sector;
- that some 66% of businesses employ between 2 – 9 people; and,
- that some 72% of businesses are expecting their businesses to grow over the next 2 years.

This therefore suggests that in spite of its isolated location, Inverell has established a plan and followed through with initiatives which will assist in the rejection of the typical view of a declining rural area and which shows signs of a prosperous and growing rural economy.

4.0 THE VISION FOR INVERELL

During the formulation of Council's Local Environmental Study in 2004, a comprehensive round of public meetings were held throughout the Inverell Local Government Area, including many of the outlying villages. The meetings and workshops served to establish and quantify the issues of importance to the residents of the Shire, together with establishing visions to guide the future development of the Shire. The Visions focus on issues relating to :

- the achievement of a good quality of life for the residents of Inverell
- providing support for rural communities
- promotion of tourism as an opportunity to diversify the economy
- ensuring social equity, employment growth and environmental sustainability

It is widely accepted that properly planned and located residential development, provides not only diversity of lifestyles for the residents, but contributes to the character, social fabric and the economy of a region.

In many of the outlying villages, which are currently under decline, development can also provide a means of revitalizing those rural communities, with positive affects not only on the environment, but on the economy and service levels provided within those communities. It is important to recognise and maintain the positive values to the community and also seek to address the pressures experienced by residents in the rural and village areas within Inverell Shire.

5.0 DEMAND FOR LAND

Have regard to the Changing Nature of Households in Demand Projections – It is important to not just rely on past trends. With increasing life expectation, divorce rates, later marriage, single parent families and greater individual wealth, household occupancy rates will continue to decrease. The implications of reduced household size and individual housing choices must be considered in meeting demand for residential accommodation. In particular, it is important to offer a choice in housing type and a range of lot sizes to ensure appropriate accommodation is available to meet the changing life circumstances of the residents over time (DoP).

Demand for land is influenced by not only population growth, but also economic change and lifestyle choice. Inverell is a rural-based Shire and there is an established and ongoing demand for larger residential and small rural lots. This demand needs to be taken into consideration, as Inverell's economic future will be constrained should the qualities of Inverell be forced to change, as would occur if smaller lot housing was the only form offered.

It is important to offer choice in housing type and this should not be constrained where that choice is sustainable.

5.1 Population, Growth and Migration Trends

5.1.1 National Trends

Population growth in Australia's states and territories is drawn from three components – natural increase, overseas migration and interstate migration. New South Wales annual population growth (1.2% in 2001) declined during the period 2002 to 2004 (0.6% to 0.7%), then rose again in 2005 and 2006, albeit to a lower level than previously (0.9%) (ABS Catalogue 1338.1.55.001 - Statistical Trends, NSW, 2007).

In 2006 – 2007, the NSW growth rate was at 1.05%, which is still below the National average of 1.5% (NSW DoP – Population NSW Bulletin No. 10, Dec 2007). The most recent population projections (NSW DoP 2008 Release) suggests that the NSW population growth rate will peak at 1.07% in 2008-09 and then gradually fall to 0.80% by 2035-36.

This trend is by no means indicative of growth areas in regional areas. The rate of population change in the metropolitan and coastal areas skews the State average to that of positive growth. Many regional areas, especially rural and small country towns are experiencing a decline in population.

Falling population, caused by underlying structural, technological and cultural changes, has a cumulative effect. Cyclical emigration leads to reduced service demand, reduced employment opportunities and further emigration.

Australia's rapidly aging population profile, changing patterns of population distribution and a strong trend towards smaller family and household types, are collectively exerting strong influence over the nature and direction of demand for residential dwellings.

In particular, the relative number of dwellings now required to accommodate a given population base is increasing (shrinking household size). Demand for smaller dwellings is growing and available residential land along the coast and in capital cities is becoming increasingly scarce.

In order to accommodate these demands without sacrificing residential amenity, it is appropriate to consider the implications of expected changes in household size. The average household occupancy rates for Inverell township recorded in the last three Census periods were:

1991 – 2.82	(2.90 for the LGA)
1996 – 2.67	(2.74 for the LGA)
2001 – 2.66	(2.70 for the LGA)
2006 – 2.67	(2.66 for the LGA)

It is projected that the household occupancy rates for Inverell township will continue to slowly decline consistent with anticipated trends, to reach an occupancy ratio of around 2.59 (2.53 for the LGA) in 2031 (ABS Census Statistics, NSW DoP, Collie Pty Ltd Employment Lands Strategy 2008). It is noted that the decrease in the household occupancy rate for Inverell township has been quite slow and correspondingly this will slowly add to the demand for new housing as families become smaller on average. The impacts on demand figures attributed to this issue will be significant in percentage terms due the low base numbers, but the actual increase in the numbers of lots created and dwellings built due to the trend towards smaller housing sizes will be minimal.

5.1.2 Regional Trends

In 2004, the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources, produced a Discussion Paper entitled *"Population Change in the New England North West Region – January, 2005 Barwon Region"*. For the purposes of the DIPNR Study, Inverell, Glenn Innes, Severn and Tenterfield LGAs form Subregional Group 5, of the New England North West Region, located in Northern New South Wales. The reason for the study associated with the paper is that despite the fact that the New England North West region has strong industries in beef, wool, education and cotton, it is by no means immune to regional population decline. The reasons for decline are however, highly complex, with changes in natural increase, closure of businesses and the associated loss of employment, changes in lifestyle choices and the extent and length of the recent drought, all contributing.

The Discussion Paper clearly shows that the greatest contributor of population decline in New England North Western Region is emigration. More people are choosing to leave the Region than those who choose to move to the Region. The slow rate of natural increase (the difference between births and

deaths in a population) as health services and treatments improve is comparable to other parts of the country.

The Population NSW Bulletin No. 10, published by the NSW Department of Planning in December, 2007, reports that over the five years from 2001 to 2006, the population of the Northern Region declined by 1,400 people, or an annual rate of decline of 0.2% (ABS 2007d, Table 9).

The *New South Wales State and Regional Population Projections 2001-2051, (2005 Release)* – Department of Planning Transport and Population Data Centre, the population of the Northern Statistical Region is projected to remain virtually static or slowly declining (the Northern Region includes Armidale, Dumaresq, Barraba, Bingara, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Guyra, Inverell, Manilla, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Nundle, Parry, Quirindi, Severn, Tamworth, Tenterfield, Uralla, Walcha and Yallaro).

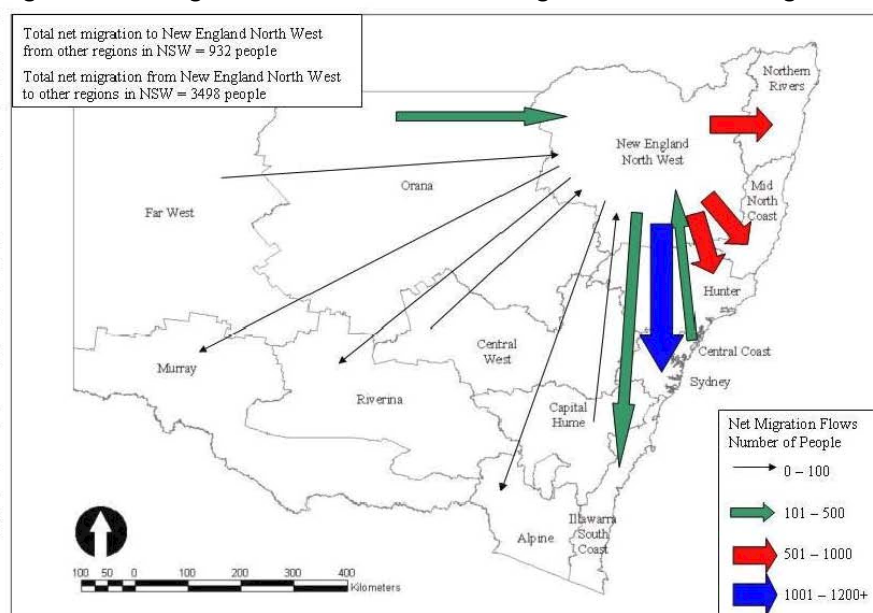
The region's largest centre of Tamworth continues to grow, with an average annual growth rate of over 1.7% between 2001 and 2006.

Like many other regional areas, the Northern Region has a net out-migration of young adults, resulting in an age distribution with relative small numbers of people aged between 20 and 40 years. It has a smaller proportion of older people than the Mid-North Coast Region, with only 15% of the population aged 65 and over in 2005. The Region's population will age over the next 25 years, with a large decline in the number of children under 15 years of age, and dramatic increases in the number of people in the older age groups.

It is however, interesting to note that the *New South Wales State and Regional Population Projections 2001-2051, (2005 Release)* report indicates that there is likely to be more births than deaths throughout the projection period, but that the Northern Region is expected to have the largest losses through net internal migration of any region in New South Wales outside Sydney. It is expected that a major proportion of these net losses will include young adults to interstate locations. As a consequence, any growth in inland areas that might occur is likely to be slow.

The most recent projections contained in the 2008 Release of the *NSW State and Regional Projections 2006-2036*, suggest that the population of the Northern Statistical Division (made up of Armidale-Dumaresq, Glen Innes Severn, Gunnedah, Guyra, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth Regional, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha LGA's) will continue to fall by about 200 persons annually in the initial years to about 800 persons annually in 2035-36. Over the 2006-36 projection horizon natural increase will begin with more births than deaths. However, this will gradually decline to zero because of an increase in the number of elderly and therefore an increase in the number of deaths. Negative net migration will more than outweigh any natural increase resulting in a population growth below zero (NSW DoP Projections 2008 Release).

Figure 4 Net migration flow between New England North West Region



Source: ABS, 2001 (Figure reproduced from "Population Change in the New England North West Region – January, 2005 Barwon Region" – DIPNR 2005)

These net migration figures have been taken from the ABS 2001 and to date, they have not been updated using the ABS 2006 data. However, the figures are still representative of the current trends.

Figure 4 shows that some 932 people migrated to the New England North West, while 3498 people migrated from the New England North West area to other regions in NSW. It is notable that the majority of those migrating out of the area, are moving towards the coastal regions of Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, Hunter, Sydney and Illawarra South Coast.

In relation to changes in the age structure of the regional population, between 2006 and 2036, the Northern region is projected to experience population decline at all ages under 60, with increases in numbers occurring only in the older age groups.

5.1.3 Local Trends

Accurate long-term trends for the local area are difficult to predict given the relatively small market and population base. It is therefore a fact, that fluctuations brought about by unrelated or unpredicted events or circumstances can have major impacts on statistical analysis. For example, if a major employment industry relocated to the area, it could easily add 50% to the demand for land in any one year **Table 1** below shows the change in population for Inverell over the period 1981 to 2006.

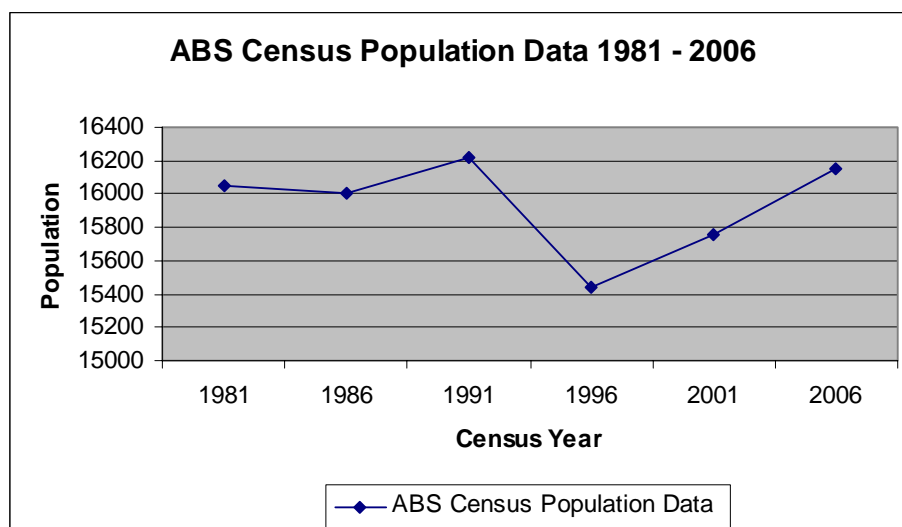
Table 1 Inverell LGA - Change in population over the period 1981 to 2006

Census Year	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Inverell LGA Population	16050	16000	16223	15445	15754	16152

Source: ABS Census , 1981 - 2006

The population of Inverell LGA remained stable at just over 16,000 until 1991, after which time it fell approximately 155 persons annually (about 5% decrease) to 15,445 in 1996. It has gradually increased since then with populations of 15,754 (1.9% increase) and 16,152 (2.4% increase) recorded in 2001 and 2006 respectively. This is illustrated in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5 Inverell LGA Population Trend (1981 – 2006)



Source: ABS Census , 1981 - 2006

It is important to note that almost 70% of the population of the Inverell local government area lives in urban areas and the remainder living in other rural parts of the Shire. Within Inverell Shire, the main concentrations of populations occur in Inverell approximately 10,500, Ashford approximately 600, Delungra approximately 310, and Gilgai approximately 250, and the remainder living in small villages or on rural holdings throughout the Shire.

5.1.4 Local Opinions

To gain an understanding of the likely future growth of Inverell, it is important to consider those factors that make Inverell attractive as a place to live and those factors that detract from the location that might be a deterrent to population growth. A study looking into the economic potential of Inverell, undertaken by Roger Epps (2002), included asking community members about the specific advantages and disadvantages of the town. It is interesting to note that the comments made were very similar to those identified by Hunter Development Brokerage during its community consultation for the LES in 2004.

The advantages include:

- Inverell has a pleasant climate and favourable geography.
- The community has a positive outlook and strong character.

- Community members have a strong opinion of the living environment, including security, schools, municipal services and cleanliness.
- Inverell is seen to have a strong professional base. Including accountants, lawyers, dentists, doctors and hospital.
- Inverell is seen to have an excellent retail business centre.
- There is the availability of cheap land which strongly favours businesses needing large areas.
- There is a strong, diverse agricultural base.
- Local Government in Inverell is seen to be solidly supportive of the best interests of the town.
- Inverell has good access to abundant cheap water.

The disadvantages include:

- Due to the fact that Inverell is not on a major highway, it has a lack of passing trade and reduced tourism potential.
- The restructure of Northpower led to the loss of leaders and executive officers in service clubs and other civic groups.
- Inverell has an aging population and opportunities for young people are limited.
- Population decline contributes to greater challenges in handling community issues.
- Inverell has poor public transport.
- TAFE courses, airlines and some medical services have been reduced.
- Poor use of appropriate IT and other technological training, which leads to slow uptake of technological use.
- Many community members resist change.
- Inverell has a lack of access to appropriately skilled manufacturing staff.
- There is little incentive for potential young farmers to gain tertiary education and return to the farm.

A more recent stakeholder consultation in relation to the town's commercial area undertaken by Collie Pty Ltd in early 2008, reinforced the positive characteristics of the Inverell township as being:

- The attractive setting, structure of the town and the interesting buildings. In particular, the compact nature of the town centre and the positive implications that this has for pedestrian accessibility;
- The competitiveness of the town centre in a regional sense. The range and mix of stores available attracts people from a wide area.
- The presence of higher order medical facilities and the civic and administrative services attracting visitors to the town (including their expenditure).

The majority of inland regions are projected to have declining populations (DIPNR 2005). In many inland regions this population loss is due to net interstate migration and to a lesser extent, lower numbers in births and higher deaths, associated with an older age structure. It should however be

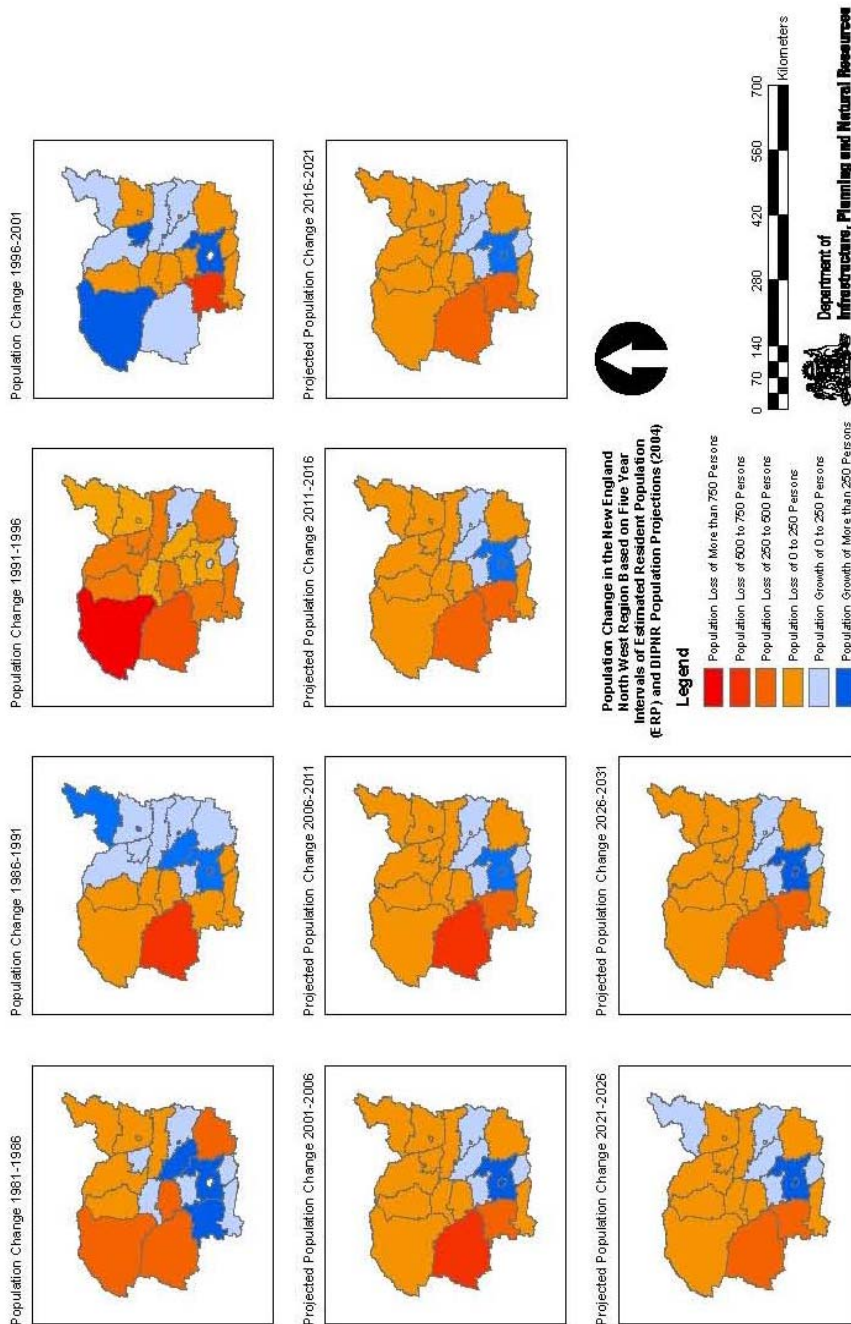
noted that although Inverell Shire's total population decreased significantly during the 1991-96 period, the overall population, and in particular Inverell's town population, has continued to increase since that time, and development trends indicate that compared to other rural towns, Inverell appears to be thriving.

5.2 Population Growth Projections

5.2.1 Regional Projections

Figures 6 and 7 which have been reproduced from the Discussion Paper “*Population Change in the New England North West Region – January, 2005 Barwon Region*” – DIPNR 2005) illustrate population changes in the New England North West Region. Although this Strategy focuses on the Inverell Local Government Area, Figures 3 and 4 illustrate Inverell LGA's relationship with the wider Region.

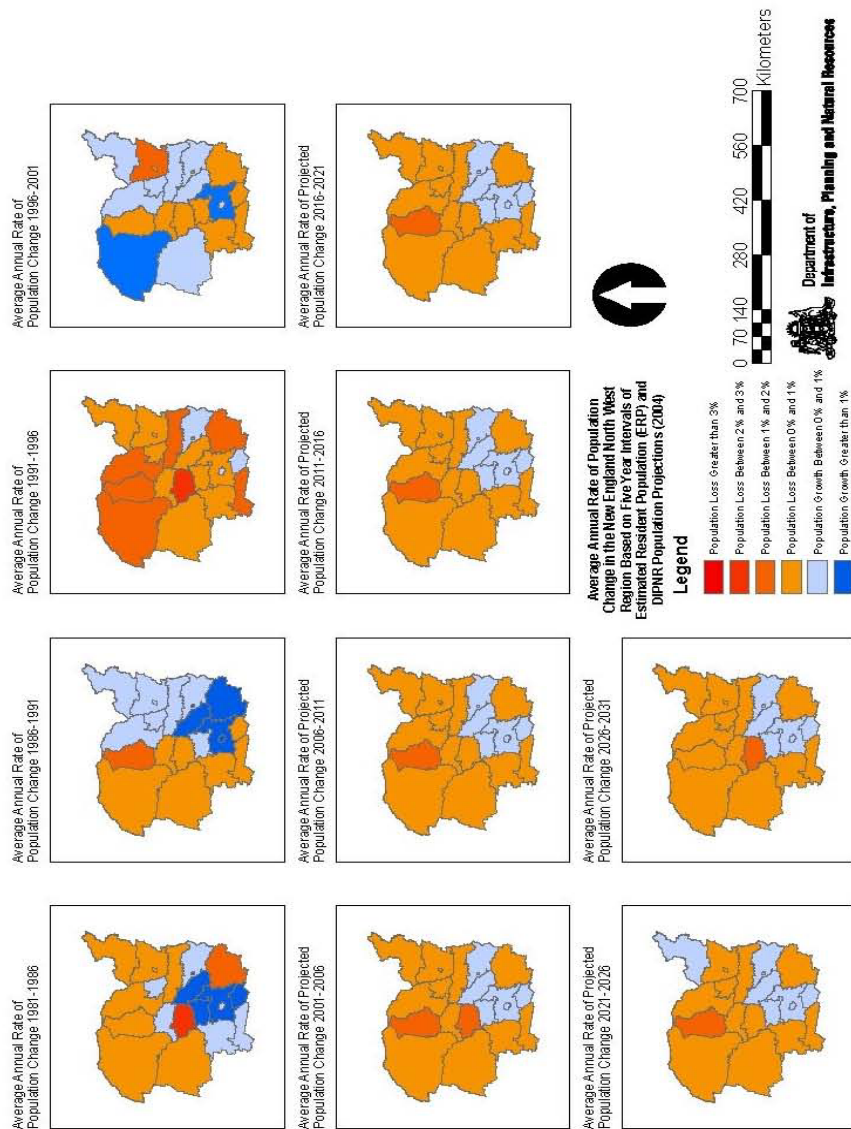
Figure 6 Population Change in the New England North West Region



Source: ABS, 1981 - 2001 (Figure reproduced from "Population Change in the New England North West Region – January, 2005 Barwon Region" – DIPNR 2005)

Figure 6 shows the anticipated **population change** in the New England North West Region, from 1981 to a predicted 2031. Although not shown in this illustration, the ABS 2006 Census data reports an increase in the population of the Inverell LGA for the period 2001 – 2006. The Figure does however show a population increase of between 0 – 250 persons in the periods, 1986 – 1991 and 1996 – 2001. All other periods show a decline of between 0 – 250 persons, while the period 1991 – 1996 illustrates a population decline of between 250 and 500 persons.

Figure 7 Average Annual Rate of Population Change in the New England North West Region



Source: ABS, 1981 – 2001 and DIPNR, 2004 (Figure reproduced from "Population Change in the New England North West Region – January, 2005 Barwon Region" – DIPNR 2005)

Figure 7 illustrates the **Average Annual rate of population change** in the New England North West Region from 1981 to a predicted 2031. Specifically, in relation to the Inverell Local Government Area, these figures show a population loss of up to 2%, for the period 1981 – 1996. It then shows an increase of up to 1% for the period 1996 – 2001. Inconsistent with the predicted decrease shown on this illustration for the period 2001 – 2006, the population of the Inverell LGA actually increased by approximately 0.5% per annum reaching a figure of 16,150 in 2006.

Figure 7 (prepared by DIPNR in 2004) suggests that for the remaining period from 2006 – 2031, the Average Annual rate of population change will remain steady or slowly decline by up to 1% per annum.

In relation to **Figures 4, 5 and 6**, migration is the biggest factor in the population decline in the New England North West Region. Unlike births and deaths, which have been relatively stable components of population change, migration flows can fluctuate from year to year. This is indicative of changing opportunities within the region and the varying needs of the population in terms of employment, education, household structure, and social aspirations.

Young people generally leave the Region in order to gain higher education and take advantage of wider job opportunities available in the Metropolitan areas. Given the career choices in the Greater Metropolitan area, it becomes difficult to attract and retain educated young adults from outside the Region. Generally the New England North West attracts older adults, but the numbers are not sufficient to counter the out-movement of younger adults.

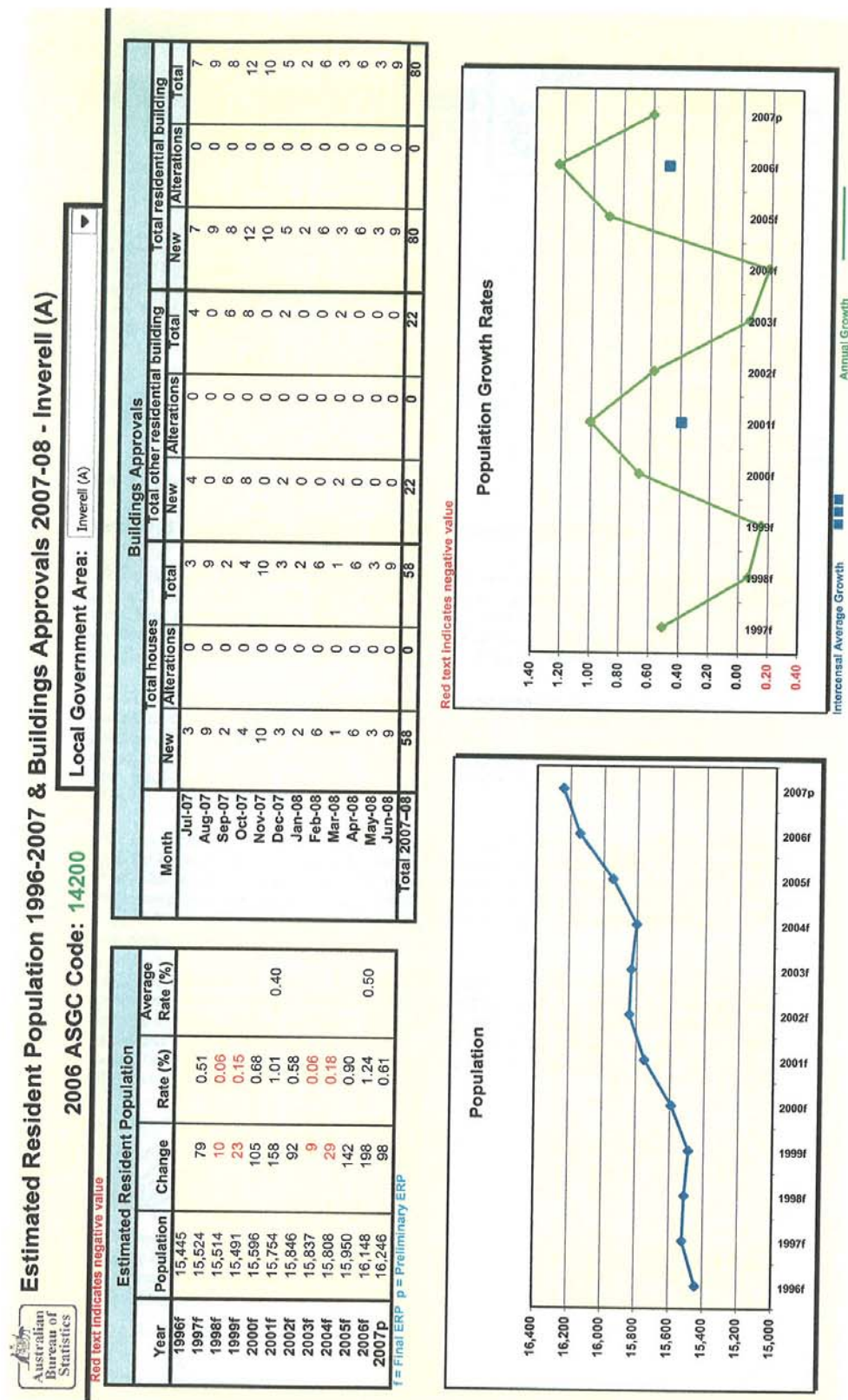
The towns to which people are most likely to move are those in the strong service sector and that act as a population hub. In the New England North West, these centres are Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Moree, Narrabri and Tenterfield. These centres (with the exception of Tenterfield) have populations of more than 5,000 and are well positioned around the Region to be diverse.

The above comments have been taken from the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources publication “Population Change in the New England North West Region – Discussion Paper (Jan 2005)”. The paper also made comment that “although the town of Inverell has experienced a population decline, the potential to increase resident numbers is high”. It also noted that Inverell has a forward thinking Council that is interested in promoting the lifestyle, cultural and economic benefits of the town and the LGA.

5.2.2 Local Projections

The following tables and graphs have been extracted from a summary report provided by the ABS. It is evident that while the overall population growth of Inverell LGA has continued to show growth since 1996, the annual growth rates have been variable with extremes of positive 1.2% in 2006 and negative 0.2% experienced in 1999 and 2004. It demonstrates that fluctuations brought about by unrelated or unpredicted events or circumstances can have major impacts on statistical analysis. For example, if a major employment industry relocated to the area, it could easily add 50% to the demand for land in any one year. With the volatility of the international markets and climatic extremes experienced in Australia, it can be assumed that the surges and recessions in growth rates will continue for Inverell.

Figure 8 *Estimated Resident Population 1996 to 2007, Building Approval Inverell 2007-2008*



The population forecasts provided in **Table 2 and 3** above have been prepared on the basis of local dwelling/housing construction activity, occupancy rates, historic and forecast housing size since 1991. The method of analysis undertaken by Collie Pty Ltd in the table below provides a higher degree of accuracy, as it provides a direct link between recent local trends and forecast population activity.

Table 2: Household and Population Forecasts (2006 to 2031)
Census Year - Inverell Township

Census Year	No. of Households	Occ.Rate	Est. Resident Population
Historic Data			
1991	3,627	2.82	10,213
1996	3,639	2.67	9,720
2001	3,755	2.66	9,989
2006	3,892	2.67	10,372
Projections			
2011	3,991	2.65	10,570
2016	4,131	2.63	10,880
2021	4,161	2.62	10,890
2026	4,191	2.60	10,900
2031	4,224	2.59	10,920

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, NSW DIPNR Projections, Collie Pty Ltd (2008)

Table 3: Shire Projected Population (2006 to 2031)
Estimated Resident Population

Census Year	Inverell Township	Rural Balance	Total Municipality
2011	10,570	5,890	16,460
2016	10,880	6,010	16,890
2021	10,890	6,100	16,990
2026	10,900	6,180	17,080
2031	10,920	6,250	17,170

Source: Collie Pty Ltd 2008

As indicated above, the projected population for the Shire is forecast to increase by approximately 700 persons in the period 2011 to 2031. This growth is forecast to occur relatively evenly between the rural areas and the Township. However, the majority of the growth in the rural areas is likely to comprise rural/residential activity (ie. residential large lots and small rural holdings) with limited productive land, rather than traditional rural activity with large land holdings and rural production (Collie 2008).

Although accurate long-term trends for the local area are difficult to predict given the relatively small market and population base, it can be assumed that given the importance of its role in the region and

the attraction it offers as a desirable place to live, on average the Greater Inverell area will continue to grow, albeit slowly and in a fluctuating manner. Inverell needs to be ready to respond to those fluctuations in demand as they occur.

5.3 New Lots Created

Since the introduction of Clause 12 into Council's planning instrument in 1992, subdivision for rural/residential (lifestyle) lots has been permitted within the rural areas of the Parishes of Clive and Inverell (generally surrounding and to the south of the Inverell township). Subject to certain tests, Clause 12 has allowed the subdivision of 1(a) Rural (Agriculture) zoned land down to 1 hectare where a reticulated water supply is available, and down to 5,000m² where lots can also be connected to reticulated sewer services.

Council has supplied updated statistics in respect to residential and rural residential lots created since 1999. These have been generally categorised into Standard Residential, Rural Residential (Clause 12 lots) and Village and are shown in **Table 4** (over 14 years), **Table 4a** (over the last 10 years), and **Table 4b** (over the last 5 years) below:

Table 4 Additional Living Lots Created in Inverell between 1995 and 2008 (14 years)

(Note: Lots created have been derived from the Subdivision Certificates endorsed by Council each year rather than from approvals issued as some approved subdivisions do not proceed to registration).

YEAR	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Av./yr over 14 yrs
Standard Residential	31	2	15	43	2	28	9	53	35	10	53	48	43	5	27
Rural Residential (Clause 12)	22	18	30	40	8	27	25	36	31	78	36	69	33	51	36
Village	1	1	1	0	1	3	2	1	1	0	3	1	1	-1	1
Totals	54	21	46	83	11	58	36	90	67	88	92	118	77	55	64

A comparison of the average number of lots created over the last 14 years (Table 4) against the last 10 years (Table 4a) shows that the average number of lots created has increased from 27 to 29 per year for residential lots and from 36 to 39 per year for rural residential lots.

Table 4a Additional Living Lots Created in Inverell between 1999 and 2008 (10 years)

YEAR	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Av. /yr over 10 yrs
Standard Residential	2	28	9	53	35	10	53	48	43	5	29
Rural Residential (Clause 12)	8	27	25	36	31	78	36	69	33	51	39
Village	1	3	2	1	1	0	3	1	1	-1	1
Totals	11	58	36	90	67	88	92	118	77	55	69

On examining the activity occurring over the last 5 year period (Table 4b) against the previous 10 year period (Table 4a), it is noted that the average number of lots created has increased in recent times from 29 to 32 per year for residential lots and from 39 to 53 lots per year for rural residential lots.

Table 4b Additional Living Lots Created in Inverell between 2004 and 2008 (5 years)

YEAR	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Av. /yr over 5 yrs
Standard Residential	10	53	48	43	5	32
Rural Residential (Clause 12)	78	36	69	33	51	53
Village	0	3	1	1	-1	1
Totals	88	92	118	77	55	87

Source: Table produced by HDB Town Planning and Design from information supplied by Inverell Shire Council Planning Department

It can be seen from the above statistics that:

- A total of 692 'living lots' have been created in Inverell over the last 10 years (an average of 69 per year). Over the 10 year period (Table 4a), approximately 56% of all lots created have been rural residential in nature. Over the last 5 years (Table 4b), approximately 62% of all lots created have been rural residential in nature.
- On average, there have been 29 residential lots created each year over the last 10 years and 32 residential lots created each year over the last 5 years. This suggests that the average number of residential lots created each year is gradually increasing, notwithstanding the unusual downturn in the number of lots created in 2008.
- The supply of new residential lots has fluctuated over the years. Peaks in supply occurred in 2002-2003 and 2005-2006 while only 5 lots were created in 2008. This is consistent with the land development process, with construction and registration of subdivisions usually done in stages to minimise financial outlay. Sufficient land is developed in each stage to cover perceived demand over a 2-3 year period while the next stage is being designed, constructed and subsequently registered when demand dictates. The timing of release of lots to the market is generally determined by the number of lots remaining for sale in the market and other locational factors.
- As demand increases with the advent of the recent first home buyers grant assistance packages and lower interest rates, another peak in subdivision activity can be expected within the period 2009- 2011;
- There continues to be a significant number of rural residential lots being created with a 10 year average of 39 lots per year. In the last 5 years this has increased to an average of 53 rural residential lots created each year. This suggests that the demand for large lot residential and rural small holdings lots located close to Inverell township will continue to be a significant part of the 'living land' market;
- There has been very little activity in the villages with only 1 lot per annum on average being created for all the villages.

While it is evident that there will be fluctuations as a result of economic circumstances and the influence of other local variables (eg. droughts, new employment generators), the statistics suggest

that Inverell township has experienced, and will continue to experience, growth in demand for both standard residential and rural residential land parcels.

5.4 Lot Sizes

The data used in respect to lot creation relates to the Greater Inverell area. This area includes the Township of Inverell and the surrounding rural areas mostly within the Parishes of Inverell and Clive. The population is more confined around the town and nearby villages. As evidenced from enquiries with real estate agents, rental properties are hard to come by, and new lots are readily sold for a realistic price, when developed. Council records and anecdotal evidence indicate that there is a continuing demand for larger residential (>800m²) and smaller rural residential lots (ranging from 5,000m² to 10 hectares). This generally supports the contention that the residents of Inverell desire some space around them and that there will be a continuing demand for these larger living lots.

5.5 Comparison of New Lots to New Dwellings

5.5.1 Residential Lots Created Compared to Dwellings Approved

The Table below provides a comparison of the statistics in relation to the number of additional residential lots created versus the number of residential dwellings approved per annum since 1999.

Table 5 Average Number of New Residential Lots / Dwellings Created per Year from 1999 to 2008

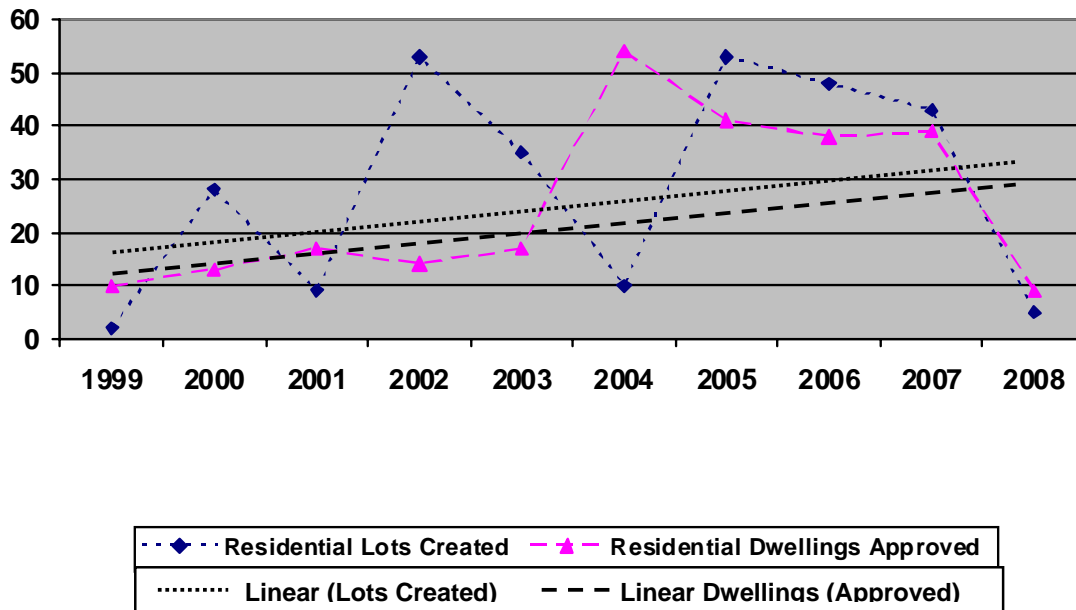
Residential	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Av. /yr
Residential Lots Created	2	28	9	53	35	10	53	48	43	5	29
Residential Dwellings Approved	10	13	17	14	17	54	41	38	39	9	25

The above statistics are graphically represented in **Figure 12**. The above statistics indicate that on average, there have been 29 new residential lots created per year over last 10 years and an annual average of 32 lots over the last 5 years. However, it should be noted that the annual lot figures provided above include multi-unit subdivisions and have not been adjusted to have regard to amalgamations and the number of original lots prior to subdivision. As such, the numbers may be slightly inflated.

There has been an average of 25 new dwellings constructed per year since 1999 and an average of 36 new dwellings per year in the last 5 years. Notwithstanding fluctuations and adjustments, the average number of new lots created each year is slightly higher than the average number of new residential dwellings being constructed. This would suggest that there is a land stock of residential lots at the moment. The associated graph also suggests that as the new residential lots are approved, there is a corresponding "lag time" of around 18 months before the majority of these lots are taken up.

The number of residential lots created and the corresponding number of dwellings built per annum in recent times is consistent with the steady growth in the population of Inverell.

Figure 9 Trends for Average Number of New Residential Lots / Dwellings Created per Year from 1999 to 2008



5.5.2 Rural Residential Lots Created Compared to Dwellings Approved

The Table below provides a comparison of the statistics in relation to the number of new rural residential lots created versus the number of new rural residential dwellings approved per annum since 1999.

Table 6 Average Number of Rural Residential Lots / Dwellings created per year from 1999 to 2008

Rural Res	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Av. /yr
Rural Res. Lots created	8	27	25	36	31	78	36	69	33	51	39
Rural Res Dwellings Approved	16	11	20	20	15	27	30	27	37	38	24

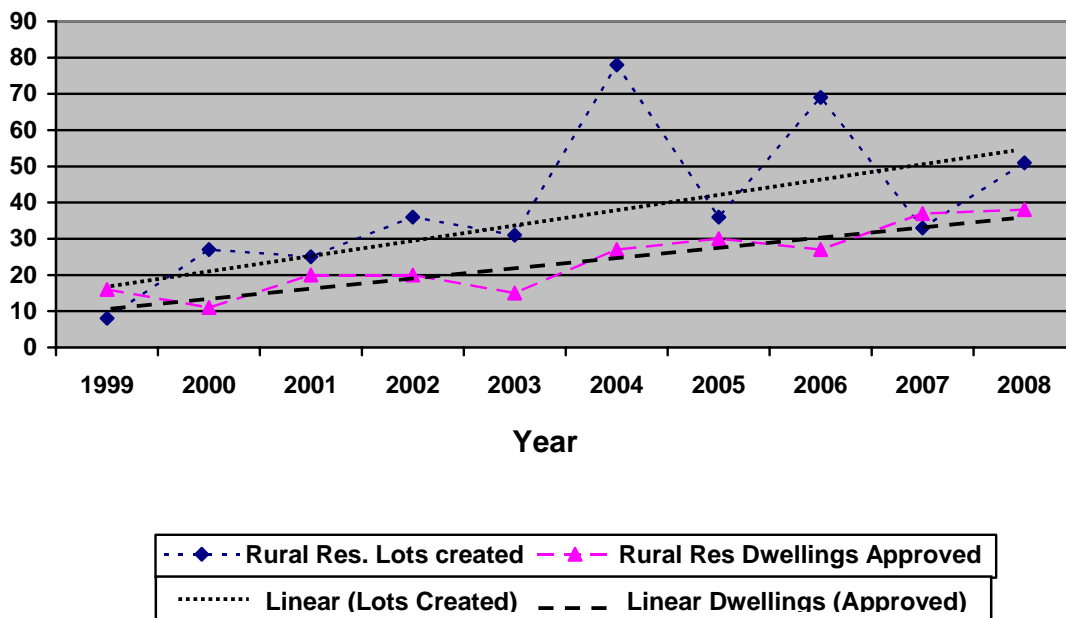
2008

This is graphically represented in **Figure 10**. There has been an increasing trend in the number of rural/residential lots that have been created, with an average of 39 lots per year being created over the 10 year period since 1999 compared to 53 lots per year over the last 5 years. Similarly, the number of dwellings approved on rural/residential lots has risen steadily from an average of 24 dwellings per year over the 10 year period compared to an average of 32 dwellings per year in the last 5 years. The increase in rural/residential subdivision and housing activity in recent times again corresponds with the increase in the population within and around Inverell township over the period 2000 to 2008.

It is noted that there were an unusually high number of rural/residential lots (Clause 12 lots) created in 2004, 2006 and 2008. There is no obvious explanation for these rises and falls, however it has been noted that the peaks correspond roughly with the Council's initial decision and pre-emptive investigations into the preparation of a new LEP. The possible limitation of the spread and number of rural/residential lots under Clause 12, may have generated some speculative land subdivisions which may have contributed to these undulations.

There have been a total of some 394 additional rural/residential lots and 241 new dwellings approved for rural/residential living over the 10 year period. This suggests that only 60% of all rural/residential lots created over the last 10 years have been built upon and that there is a considerable rural/residential land stock available.

Figure 10 Trends in the Average Number of Rural Residential Lots / Dwellings Created per Year from 1999 to 2008



5.5.3 Forecast Demand for Growth in Living Land

For the period 1999 to 2008, the following average number of lots and dwellings per year have been created or approved.

Table 7 Average Lots / Dwellings 1999 to 2008

	Av. No. of Lots/year over 10 years	Av. No. of Lots/year over the last 5 years	Av No. of Dwellings/year over 10 years	Av. No. of Dwellings/year over the last 5 years
Residential	29 lots/year	32 lots/year	25 dwellings/year	36 dwellings/year
Rural Residential (Cl. 12)	39 lots/year	53 lots/year	24 dwellings/year	32 dwellings/year
Villages	1 lot/year	1 lot/year	1 dwelling/year	1 dwelling/year

Source: Table produced by HDB Town Planning and Design from information supplied by Inverell Shire Council Planning Department

Table 7 shows the average number of new lots created and dwellings constructed per year over a 10 year and a 5 year period within the residential, rural/residential (Clause 12) and the village areas of Inverell. The comparative figures for the two periods have identified the following trends:

- The average number of residential lots created over the 10 year period has been around 29 lots per year (average 32 over the last 5 years). From Table 5 it is noted that the average annual number of residential lots created, fluctuated from as low as 2 (in 1999) to a high of 53 (in 2002 and 2005). It is noted that only 5 residential lots were created and 9 dwellings constructed in the residential areas of Inverell in 2008, suggesting that the residential housing market is currently at a low.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of rural residential lots created in recent times. An average of 39 lots created per year over the 10 years as compared to an average of 53 rural residential lots per year over the last 5 year period (2004 to 2008).
- The average number of dwellings constructed on residential land over the 10 years since 1999 was 25 with an average of 36 in the last 5 years. This suggests that there has been a rise in the average number of dwellings each year which is consistent with population growth figures for the Inverell urban area.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of dwellings on rural residential land in recent times with 32 dwellings per year on average being constructed over the last 5 years (average 24 dwellings over the last 10 years). With an average of 53 rural residential lots being created over the last 5 years, it is suggested that approximately 40% of the lots being created are not being built on and are being added to the rural residential land stock.

It should be noted that these figures also include lot amalgamations, multi-unit subdivisions, and have not been reduced to reflect the original lots included in the subdivision. As such, these figures are slightly higher than the actual number of new lots created.

5.6 Demand Forecasting

5.6.1 Residential Land

In determining an appropriate yield of residential lots for strategic planning purposes, the following considerations have been taken into account:

- a) It is assumed that the slow but steady growth in the population in and around Inverell township will continue and as a consequence the average number of residential lots created each year will also continue to increase;
- b) The national and local trend of a reduction in the average household size will also continue for some time;
- c) It is prudent to plan for the oversupply of land (within reason) to be able to accommodate fluctuations in demand and to take advantage of any unforeseen circumstances in the local economy that may stimulate population growth (eg. arrival of a major employment generator);
- d) The land development industry and the property market will be self-regulating in relation to the supply and pricing of land.

On the basis of the subdivision statistics provided and the above considerations, a total residential lot yield of 32 lots per year on average has been adopted for demand forecasting purposes. Further discussion on land supply strategies for residential lots is provided in Chapter 7.0.

5.6.2 Rural Residential Land

To date, rural residential subdivision around Inverell has been via the provisions of Clause 12 of the LEP with minimal regard being given to the co-ordination of land uses, urban design considerations and the management of service provision. Council is now seeking to provide for a mix of lot sizes in appropriate locations based on:

- the lands proximity to Inverell township;
- avoidance of land use conflicts;
- the availability of services; and,
- the suitability of the land for its intended purpose.

Controls on the development of the land will need to be co-ordinated by way of Development Control Plan(s) and an Infrastructure Development Plan. As such, it is difficult at this stage to forecast the number of lots to be created in each category of rural residential subdivision. Further discussion on land supply strategies for residential large lots and rural small holdings is provided in Chapter 8.0.

5.7 Conclusions in Relation to Demand for Land

In summary, the following conclusions are drawn from the analysis of demand:

1. Although the Shire's population has decreased since 1991, Inverell's town population has increased and development trends indicate that compared to other rural towns, Inverell appears to be thriving.
2. Over the period 2001 – 2006, the population of the Inverell LGA increased by 0.65%.
3. From 2001 – 2031, it is predicted that the Average Annual rate of population change in Inverell Shire will remain steady at between 0% - 1%.
4. Migration is the biggest factor in the population decline in the New England North West Region. Unlike births and deaths, which have been relatively stable components of population change, migration flows can fluctuate from year to year. This is indicative of changing opportunities within the region and the varying needs of the population in terms of employment, education, household structure, and social aspirations.
5. The potential to increase resident numbers is high.
6. Inverell is a forward thinking community that is interested in promoting the lifestyle, cultural and economic benefits of the town and the LGA.
7. While the average number of residential lots created in the last 10 years was 29 (and 32 per year on average over the last 5 years), the fluctuations have been fairly extreme (2 lots created in 1999 to 53 lots in 2002 and 2005). The average number of residential dwellings constructed each year was 25 (average 36 dwellings per year in the most recent 5 year period) suggesting that the current rate of land release of 32 lots per year on average is slightly less than the current demand for housing lots.
8. There has been an increasing trend in the number of rural/residential lots that have been created in recent times (an average of 53 rural/residential lots created per year over the last 5 years compared to 39 per year since 1999). Similarly, the number of dwellings built on rural/residential lots has risen steadily in recent times (average 32 dwellings/year in the last 5 years compared to 24/year since 1999).
9. Following consideration of a number of influencing factors and allowing for some oversupply of land to accommodate unforeseen demand, an average annual figure of 32 residential lots per year has been adopted for land supply forecasting purposes.
10. Given the history of Clause 12 subdivisions and the intention to provide for a mix of rural residential lot sizes in appropriate locations, it is difficult to forecast the likely demand for this type of development. However, it will be critical that the use of this land and the servicing thereof, is properly coordinated by way of Development Control Plan(s) and an Infrastructure Development Plan.
11. Over the last 10 years, and more so in the last 5 years, the trend with lots developed is upwardly focused in respect to residential and rural/residential housing.
12. Accurate long-term trends for the local area are difficult to predict given the relatively small market and population base. It is therefore a fact, that fluctuations brought about by unrelated or unpredicted events or circumstances can have a major impact on statistical analysis. For example, if a major employment industry relocated to the area, it could easily add 50% to the demand for land in any one year.

6.0 POTENTIALLY DEVELOPABLE LAND

6.1 Purpose

This Section provides an analysis of all natural and man-made constraints that will influence the supply of urban land to meet future demand. A review of the existing planning provisions, zoning maps and the constraints imposed by existing development, has identified that:

1. Due to historical land use planning decisions, there are limited opportunities for outward expansion of the urban area of Inverell;
2. Some land previously identified for urban purposes, has not and should not be developed for that purpose due to the constraints applying to the land (eg. residentially zoned land with significant constraints to development); and,
3. There are opportunities to increase the densities of development on land already zoned and partially developed for urban purposes (referred to as “in-fill development”)

As such, the investigations involve not only the identification of undeveloped rural land able to accommodate future urban development, but also a re-assessment of existing undeveloped or partially developed urban land to consider its suitability for its intended purpose. If there are opportunities to use existing urban land in a more efficient and appropriate way, alternative uses that better respond to the characteristics of the land need to be identified.

6.2 Constraints Analysis

Have Regard to the Constraints on Development – The identification of key constraints on development is fundamental to the identification of growth opportunities. Factors such as flooding, protected vegetation, bushfire hazard, prime agricultural land, conflict of land uses, scenic quality/character, availability of services and excessive slope etc should be considered in the identification of land suitable for development. The identification of the most appropriate location for development ensures the coordinated and most efficient use of the land and services, and avoids the creation of unrealistic expectations by land owners and developers (DoP).

Constraints mapping has been completed for the “Greater Inverell” area and following an assessment of the limiting factors, the land considered potentially suitable for development has been identified.

The main constraints considered in the identification of land suitable for urban development included:

- Natural constraints – threatened vegetation communities, flooding, slope, bushfire.
- Potential land use conflicts – impacts from adjacent incompatible land uses (eg. main roads, industries, abattoir, sale yard, garbage tip etc).
- Availability, cost of construction and the need for utility services, sealed roads and drainage infrastructure.

- Accessibility to community facilities and other services (eg. schools, shops, medical services).
- Established land uses and lot sizes.
- Land tenure (current ownership and likely development interest).
- Scenic quality/rural amenity – (eg. pastureland, cropping, ridgelines, riparian vegetation, rural features etc)
- Access to transport services – buses, cycleway network.
- Suitability for alternative land uses (eg. industrial land).

For the purposes of clarity, the issues that will influence land use decisions have been plotted on three maps. Existing Infrastructure and Accessibility (proximity to services) appear on Map 1 in the Appendix. **Map 2** identifies the Natural and Man-made Constraints and **Map 3** looks at Environmentally Sensitive Land.

6.2.1 Infrastructure and Accessibility

Map 1 in the Appendices shows the following main constraints:

Water and Sewer Mains – The availability of connection to reticulated water and sewer mains is a critical factor in determining lot size. On-site effluent treatment and disposal requires minimum areas for infiltration and transpiration. Similarly, in those locations where mains water is not available, alternative water supply sources will be needed including sufficient area for rural dams and compliance with harvestable water rights provisions.

Sealed Roads – It is desirable in terms of safety and local amenity that all new subdivisions have direct access to existing or provide new sealed roads.

Accessibility to the services provided within Inverell township and the efficient provision of utility services is directly related to distance.

- Two (2) kilometres is considered an easily walkable distance in 15 to 20 minutes or a five (5) minute bicycle ride.
- Five (5) kilometres (or a 10 minute drive) is deemed a reasonable timeframe to access services and an acceptable distance to cycle.
- Ten (10) kilometres (or a 20 minute drive) is considered by rural residents to be an acceptable inconvenience to access services.

6.2.2 Natural and Man-made Constraints

Map 2 in the Appendices shows the following main constraints:

Buffers to potentially offensive land uses:

- Abattoir – Odour modelling undertaken for the abattoir site indicated that under ‘worst case’ conditions, properties within 1,000 metres (1 kilometre) of the site (and extending to 1,500 metres (1.5 kilometres) in a north easterly direction due to topographical features) would be at risk of experiencing unreasonable odour impacts from the abattoir.
- Sewage Treatment Works – Nominally 500 metres has been selected as appropriate in lieu of a definitive odour study.
- Stock Sale Yards – Nominally 500 metres (as above).
- Waste Disposal Depot – Nominally 500 metres (as above).

Note: Further technical impact analysis may be needed to confirm the adequacy of these buffers in avoiding unreasonable impact. For mapping purposes, the buffer area to the abattoir has been aligned with the nearest property boundary outside the nominated buffer distances.

Bushfire Prone Land – Land containing Vegetation Categories 1 and 2 and associated 100m and 30m buffers respectively.

Ecologically Endangered Vegetation Communities (EEC's) – Box-gum grassy woodlands and derived grasslands are present throughout the Inverell LGA. This plant community is listed as an “endangered ecological community” under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 as well as the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. The Acts require the protection of remnants of this listed ecological community. As a result, land containing this EEC is considered generally constrained from development.

6.2.3 Environmentally Sensitive Land

Map 3 in the Appendices shows the following main constraints to development:

Ground Water Vulnerability – Areas with a high ground water table have potential for contamination of waterways if improperly managed.

Land Susceptible to Erosion - Any land subject to high erosion potential (steeper sloping land).

Potential Flooding Impacts – Shows those properties within Inverell likely to be impacted in a major flooding event.

Wetlands and Low Lying Land – Any land subject to regular or permanent inundation.

It is important to note that not all constraints are absolute. With proper management of land uses, certain types of development can still occur in locations identified as being constrained on the maps. Connection to sewer reticulation, controlled clearing of vegetation and the adoption of water sensitive

urban design initiatives will assist in ensuring the long term sustainability of the environment. The costs associated with extending water and sewer services and the provision of sealed roads will also impact on the economic viability of development.

6.3 Urban Growth Corridors

Identify and Protect Future Growth Corridors – *It has been recognized that there is a need to plan for the orderly and efficient growth of the urban area of Inverell. Opportunities for the long term expansion of residential areas, industrial land and employment related uses should be identified and protected (DoP).*

An aggregation of the hard and soft constraints represented on Maps 1, 2 and 3 identifies land relatively free of constraints and other lesser constrained land that might be considered for limited development purposes. (Refer to **Map 4 – Cumulative Constraints**).

The constraints analysis has identified the land on the fringes of Inverell township potentially suitable for either employment purposes, standard residential or rural lifestyle development. In general terms, the potential urban expansion corridors for Inverell township are located:

- To the west (on the northern side of the Gwydir Highway and west from Jardine Road);
- To the north-east (the potential industrial precinct identified in the ELS centred on Burtenshaw Road – See Note Below);
- To the East of Moore Street (land previously zoned Urban Investigation); and,
- To the south-east (east of Onus Avenue and on Lake Inverell Drive) although this area is limited in its potential by existing development and the ecological communities within Lake Inverell Reserve.

Note: The Council's Employment Lands Strategy (ELS) 2008 prepared by Collie Pty Ltd considers a number of locations for future industrial activities. The preferred location, subject to a commitment to a heavy vehicle 'ring road' connection to the Gwyder Highway, is along Burtenshaw Road in the north-east of the township.

More detailed discussion in relation to the suitability of the land identified as potential residential 'living land' is contained in the subsequent sections to this report.

6.4 LES 2004 Broad Strategy Principles and Assumptions

Further discussions have been held with government agencies (in particular the NSW Department of Planning) and new information has also become available in relation to the environmental constraints applying to the land surrounding Inverell. As a consequence, the land supply Strategies in LES 2004 need to be further refined. However, the following broad principles underlying the 2004 strategies are

still valid and have been carried through into the consideration of future land supply initiatives as part of the Inverell Land Use Strategy to follow closely behind this report.

1. Many existing development sites are affected by environmental constraints, which will lessen their development yields or delay their release. They are also affected by existing fragmentation and development, which can also have a significant impact on potential yields.
2. It is accepted practice that 20% of the developable residentially zoned land area is lost to roads, drainage and open space.
3. It is unrealistic for a developer to produce residential lots under 800m² as they are not saleable in rural towns and their surrounding areas. This is not likely to alter in the foreseeable future. An average lot size of 1,000m² should be adopted for residential lot yield calculation purposes.
4. Land capable of being serviced and adjoining existing residential lot development should be considered for rezoning to residential in the short term, although it may not be developed for some time. This will allow for the market to respond to demand as it arises.

7.0 LAND SUPPLY – Residential Lots

Provide Sufficient Land to Create Opportunities and Meet Unforeseen Demands – It is recognized that providing the land can be reasonably serviced, and is not unduly constrained, there is an acceptance (particularly in country areas) that it is necessary to over-zone to create opportunity and to respond to unforeseen demand as it arises (DoP).

7.1 Definition

Residential Lots – Standard residential lots of various sizes – Generally averaging 1,000m² to reflect the demand for larger residential lots in Inverell - (Zone “R1 General Residential” in the Standard LEP Template).

7.2 Urban Infill Development

Infill residential development is an important consideration in all existing urban areas. Although there is still a market preference for conventional housing on the town fringes, these outer locations have a range of implications in terms of poorer accessibility, potential environmental impacts and higher service provision costs. Infill development within the existing urban area of Inverell may provide advantages to a growing proportion of the housing market, in line with the changing structure of households and the continuing reduction in the number of persons living in each household.

Due to the age of the buildings and the advantages of convenience to services, redevelopment of residential land into higher density residential development usually occurs nearer to the established commercial areas and transport nodes. However, in rural towns there is traditionally less interest in closer living in the form of dual occupancies, residential flat development and shop-top housing. Given the age of the houses surrounding the commercial area, it can be assumed that these residences will gradually be replaced with new residential development. However, it is considered that this older housing stock is more likely to be replaced with larger single residences or possibly duplex development rather than the more dense residential flat buildings. Council's statistics (refer to Table 8 below) indicate that in 2006 and 2007, 11 approvals for multiple dwelling development (duplex, multiple units and shop-top housing) resulted in 33 new medium density dwellings per year in Inverell. The statistics also indicate that the number of units in each application is low (average 3 units per application) suggesting only small scale multiple unit development is occurring.

Table 8 Multiple Dwelling Approvals 2000 to 2008

Multi Dwelling Approvals			
(Including Dual Occupancies, Residential Flat Buildings and Shop-top Housing)			
Year	Number of Applications	Total Number of Units	Average Units/Application
2000	3	5	1.7
2001	3	6	2.0
2002	8	13	1.6
2003	2	4	2.0
2004	9	18	2.0
2005	9	25	2.8
2006	11	33	3.0
2007	11	33	3.0
2008	3	6	2.0
TOTAL	59	143	2.4

It is difficult to estimate the likely yield to come from redevelopment within the existing urban area of Inverell. It is evident from the statistics that there is only limited demand for closer forms of living in the town and that it is not likely to contribute significantly to future housing stock. For the purposes of providing a figure for future growth in the form of duplex and residential flat development, it has been assumed that the most recent trends will continue.

Encouragement of the redevelopment of existing urban areas should be a priority as an alternative to 'greenfield development' outside of the urban area. It provides a low maintenance, service accessible, alternative housing choice particularly suitable for an aging population. Key considerations relating to infill residential development include: quality urban design, streetscape treatment, impacts on heritage, appropriate development scale, servicing capacity, accessibility and water sensitive urban design.

7.3 Existing Residentially Zoned Land Stocks

Existing undeveloped residential land stocks have been identified and are discussed below. Land already zoned for residential purposes falls into one of two categories as follows:

1. **Zoned, Serviced and Suitable** - Currently zoned residential land with all services readily available. There are no constraints to the development of the land other than the costs normally associated with the subdivision of land. Land within this category can be developed and released in the short term. The timing of its release is dependant on market demand and the intentions of the land owners/developers involved.
2. **Zoned, Serviced, Suitable (but Constrained)** - Land within this category is also currently zoned for residential purposes. The land is zoned for development, but for one reason or another, is considered not likely to be developed (at least in the short term). Typically, the constraints to development might include:

- *Multiple ownerships* – difficult to co-ordinate and reach agreement to develop.
- *Lack of interest to develop by the landowner(s) at this time* – often the land is owner-occupied and there is no financial need or desire to change the circumstances.
- *Nature of the Land* – land may be partially or wholly constrained in some way adding to the development costs and/or making development less viable in terms of profit margins (eg, low lying land requiring fill, sloping land more difficult to build on, natural water course present requiring special drainage treatment, vegetation to be retained limiting development yield, less desirable location resulting in lower sale prices, additional access costs, development reliant on other properties before it can proceed).

All land currently zoned residential but yet to be developed has been examined in detail and an estimate made as to the likely yield for each site having regard to the physical characteristics of the land (shape, slope, vegetation, drainage paths etc), the nature and extent of existing development on the site, and the saleability of the land in terms of location and relationship to adjoining land uses (existing and proposed). **Map 5 of the Appendix** shows the location of this land and **Table 9** below provides details of the results of the investigations together with the estimated yields likely to be achieved for each location.

Table 9 - Inverell Township – Undeveloped Residentially Zoned Land

LOCATION	GROSS AREA (ha) of Land Zoned Residential 2(a)	FACTORS AFFECTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL NET AREA (ha) – (% of Gross Area)
AREA 1 (North-west) – Jardine Road/Vernon Street			
1.1	17.82	Significant area of Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) - Grassy Whitebox Woodland in North East corner. Council DA for Affordable Housing Subdivision off Angel Ave (under assessment). Roads, drainage, open space and buffer to Jardine Road	6.2 (35%)
1.2	5.079	Lot configuration issues. Roads, drainage, open space and buffer to Jardine Road	3.8 (75%)
1.3	6.288	Approved 22 lot Res. subdivision and public reserve. Lot configuration issues. Roads, drainage and open space.	3.8 (60%)
TOTAL AREA 1	29.187		13.8 (47%)
AREA 2 (South-west) – Lewin Street/Auburn Vale Road			
2.1	4.754	Approved Commercial Premises (existing use) fronting Gwydir Highway (1.2 Ha). Roads, drainage and open space.	2.8 (60%)
2.2	1.037	Constrained by location of existing rural residential development. Some development potential. Roads, drainage and open space.	0.4 (40%)
2.3	1.623	Public Open Space.	0 (0%)
2.4	6.871	Constrained by location of existing rural residential development, EEC (Grassy White Box Woodland), slope and existing dam. Approved 28 lot Res. Subdivision under construction. Minimal added residential potential.	0.6 (0.9%)
2.5	7.571	Previously approved residential subdivision (physically commenced). Progress deferred. Some lot configuration issues. Roads, drainage and open space.	5.7 (75%)
TOTAL AREA 2	21.758		9.5 (44%)
AREA 3 (South) – South Inverell			

3.1	2.941	Low lying land unsuitable for residential development. (Buffer to Spring Creek - Rezone to Open Space?)	0 (0%)
3.2	3.793	Some lying land with drainage issues, existing rural residential development. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to extent of use, servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.3	4.477	Established rural residential development with outbuildings. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to extent of use, servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.4	2.728	Access issues. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.5	1.314	Flood affected in north, existing rural residential development. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to extent of use, servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.6	2.041	Some existing rural residential development with outbuildings. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.7	0.415	Some existing rural residential development with outbuildings. Unlikely to have added residential potential due to servicing costs and location.	0 (0%)
3.8	1.779	Land traversed east/west by two major power lines. Not suitable for residential development.	0 (0%)
TOTAL AREA 3	19.488		0 (0%)
AREA 4 (South-east) – Onus Ave/Moore Street			
4.1	5.587	Existing Motel (Twin Swans) fronting Glenn Innes Road, approved 12 lot subdivision under construction off Brewery Street existing rural residential development. Limited additional residential development potential. Roads, drainage and open space.	1.5 (27%)
4.2	5.857	Approved subdivision – Stage 1 completed (12 lots) and released, Stages 2 & 3 (39 lots) approved and imminent. Additional potential fronting Glen Innes Road. Potential access issues.	0.8 (14%)
4.3	9.147	Church land. Buffer to Highway. Roads, drainage and open space.	7.3 (80%)
TOTAL AREA 4	20.591		9.6 (47%)
AREA 5 (East) – Brissett Street/Short Street			
5.1	12.7	Approval for Retirement Village (2004), existing dwelling, potential extension of Brissett Street for heavy vehicle thoroughfare. Potential for service industrial fronting Brissett Street extension. Roads, drainage, open space and buffer to future road.	4.1 (32%)
5.2	2.559	Existing Jehovah's Witness Church and dwelling, approved multi-unit development under construction. No additional development potential.	0 (0%)

5.3	7.579	Proposed Retirement Village (on Council owned land), existing dwelling. Roads, drainage and open space.	4.06 (56%)
TOTAL AREA 5	22.838		8.16 (36%)
TOTAL AREA CURRENTLY ZONED RESIDENTIAL LAND (Gross Area)	113.862	ESTIMATED TOTAL DEVELOPABLE LAND (Net Area)	41.06 Ha (36%)

7.4 Identification of Additional Land Suitable for Residential Purposes

A critical issue is the identification and protection of long term growth options for the residential expansion of Inverell. The constraints analysis in the previous section, has identified a number of locations deemed potentially suitable to accommodate additional residential housing lots based on accessibility to services, the topographical constraints of the land and the compatibility of land uses.

In providing additional land for residential development, the following matters have been taken into consideration:

- Flat-moderate grades to minimise cut and fill, construction costs and improve ‘walkability’;
- Relatively clear of vegetation and avoidance of natural water courses to minimise potential environmental impacts and provide for riparian corridor open space linkages;
- Capacity of services and infrastructure/staging of improvements;
- Access to community services and facilities;
- Access to convenience and other retail services;
- Road access (including public transport);
- Market considerations such as aspect and neighbourhood amenity; and,
- Environmental sustainability.

In general, urban growth should be directed to areas where effective use can be made of existing urban infrastructure, particularly where spare capacity is available. Urban growth should also be focussed on providing attractive lifestyle choices to capture potential ‘in migration’ and help retain existing residents seeking new homes.

Land in this category has been identified as suitable for development in the short to medium term but is not currently zoned to allow residential development to occur. Some of this land has been previously identified in Council’s planning instrument as being suitable for some form of urban development, and has been preserved by zoning to “1(d) Urban Investigation” pending the outcomes of the broader investigations undertaken as part of the overall land use strategy for Inverell. As such, a detailed environmental assessment should not be needed for this land and some or all of it could be considered for rezoning to accommodate residential development in the short term and subsequently added to the current land stocks.

It is not possible to accurately quantify the area of land within this category as it requires detailed constraints analysis and master planning to determine the extent of developable land and address access and urban design issues. However, the seven (7) locations identified as having potential for residential development (refer to **Map 6 in the Appendix**) have been initially assessed in relation to the factors likely to affect their development potential. Those influencing factors and recommendations in relation to the priority for rezoning are summarised in **Table 10** below:

Table 10 – Inverell Township – Land Identified as having Potential for Residential Development Subject to Rezoning

LOCATION	GROSS AREA (ha)/ Existing Zone	FACTORS AFFECTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	ESTIMATED NET AREA (ha) - % of Gross Area	REZONING PRIORITY
Location 1 - East of Jardine Road – Extension of the Existing Residential Area	14.4 1(a) Rural (Agricultural) Zone and 1(d) Urban Investigation Zone	Vacant cleared land with scattered trees. Extension of existing residential estate. Services readily available. Approved Residential Large Holdings Subdivision on Jardine Road Roads, drainage and open space. Appropriate for rezoning to R1 General Residential (under the New Template).	11.0 (80%)	Suitable for Rezoning to Residential in the Short Term
Location 2 - Land on either side of Jardine Road (North of the Gwydir Hwy) and extending to the West and North	125.4 1(d) Urban Investigation and 1(a) Rural (Agriculture) Zone	Vacant cleared land with scattered trees along a creek line. Opportunity for an open space/green corridor link to vegetation in the north east. Logical extension of residential estates to the east. Extension of services required. Roads, drainage and open space. Declassification of Jardine Road as a heavy vehicle bypass will need to occur before this land can be considered for rezoning to residential. Sequencing of land release will also be an issue.	94.1 (75%)	Identify as Future Residential in Strategy
Location 3 - State Govt. Land (DNR) - South of Gwydir Hwy (Excluding Tabletop Mountain)	80.7 5(a) Special Uses Zone	Adjoins existing residential development to the east. Undulating mostly cleared land. State Government owned land. Administration and agricultural activities occurring on the higher land. Highway impacts an issue. Roads, drainage and open space. Extension of services required. Delays due to ownership.	64.6 (80%)	Identify as Future Residential Strategy
Location 4 - Clive Street/Moore Street/Onus Avenue Extension	66.0 1(d) Urban Investigation Zone	Existing low density rural residential development (2 to 5 hectares) and land ownership pattern will limit ultimate lot yield and influence lot configuration. Existing residentially zoned land to the south and west. Logical extension of established and proposed urban development. Natural watercourse and scattered trees. Roads, drainage and open space.	40.0 (60%)	Suitable for Rezoning to Residential in the Short Term

		Extension of services required. Appropriate for rezoning to R1 General Residential (under New Template).		
Location 5 - Land between Moore Street and Lake Inverell Drive (South of the Gwydir Hwy)	76.1 1(a) Rural (Agricultural) Zone	The existing low density rural residential development (average approx 2 hectares) and the land ownership pattern will significantly constrain the likely residential development yield. Services available. Development is likely to be in the form of larger lot residential and some low density in-fill residential in selected locations. Lot configuration and potential land use issues. Roads, drainage, land use buffers and open space. Appropriate for rezoning to R1 General Residential (under the New Template).	8.0 (10%)	Suitable for Rezoning to Residential in the Short Term
Location 6 - East of Lake Inverell Drive	17.5 7(b) Environmental Protection Zone	Cleared vacant Council owned land. Bushfire and buffer issues. Roads, drainage and open space. Extension of services required. Issues associated with current zoning and potential for impacts on adjoining habitat (buffers and fencing) will require further investigation.	12.3 (70%)	Identify as Future Residential
Location 7 - Church land west of Runnymede Drive	5.1 1(a) Rural (Agricultural) Zone	Vacant cleared land with scattered trees. Servicing costs and access issues may be a deterrent to early development. Highway impacts an issue. Roads, drainage and open space. Extension of services required. Adjacent to existing vacant residential land to the west. Sequencing of land release an issue.	3.7 (75%)	Identify as Future Residential
TOTAL AREAS – Potential Residential	Gross Area – 385.2		232.9 (60%)	

	Gross Area to be Rezoned	Anticipated Nett Yield
Recommended for Rezoning (Short Term)	156.5 ha	59.0 ha
Identified as Future Residential	<u>228.7 ha</u>	<u>174.7</u>
TOTAL	385.2 ha	232.9 ha

The land identified as being suitable for residential development in the short term (ie. to be included in the new LEP) is shown coloured dark pink on the ***Living Lands Strategy Map 7*** and includes:

- i) Land to the **east of Jardine Road**. This land is partly zoned Urban Investigation and directly adjoins existing residential estates. The area identified for rezoning is considered suitable for development without compromising the operation of Jardine Road. There is approximately 14 hectares of land in this parcel and with an 80% lot yield equates to a developable area of approximately **11 hectares**. (Note: The remainder of the land zoned 1(d) Urban Investigation extending on either side of Jardine Road has not been included as it requires further analysis as to the preferred end use and master planning to address amenity issues associated with heavy vehicle movements on Jardine Road, and any potential conflicts between land uses should activities other than residential be introduced. Should the status of Jardine Road as a heavy vehicle route be changed at some time in the future, this land would be suitable for residential expansion. Obviously, for this to happen, an alternative heavy vehicle route would need to be provided from and to the west).
- ii) Land generally bounded by **Moore Street, Swanbrook Rd, Unformed Onus Avenue & Short Street**. This land is currently zoned Urban Investigation and is a logical location for future residential expansion. Whilst the area is approximately 66 hectares in size, given the normal allowance for roads / drainage / open space, the location of a water course and existing ownership pattern it is likely that a 60% lot yield would eventuate equating to a developable area of approximately **40 hectares**.
- iii) Land to the south of the **Gwydir Highway between Moore Street and Lake Inverell Drive**. This land was originally zoned Urban Investigation under the 1998 LEP and was rezoned with amendment 11 in 2006 to facilitate rural residential subdivision. Given the availability of sewer to parts of the land this has resulted in some 5000m² lots as well as 1ha lots. This area adjoins existing residential development and would provide a suitable opportunity for infill residential subdivision. Whilst the land has a total area of approximately 76 hectares, given the existing ownership pattern and the fact that future development would be 'infill' in nature, the likely lot yield is considered around 10%. This equates to a developable area of **8 hectares**.

Whilst it is important to have an adequate stock of zoned residential land, Council should also think beyond this and ensure that suitable land is preserved to enable the future growth of the township. To preserve the land, it is necessary to zone to prevent other forms of urban development, so that orderly urban expansion can occur at some stage in the future. Hence, a balance needs to be struck between strategically planning for the future growth of the town and not unreasonably sterilizing land. With this in mind the following four areas have been identified as future residential (Note this land is shown as orange on the ***Living Lands Strategy Map 6***):

- i) Department of Natural Resources land to the south of the Gwydir Highway and below the heavily vegetated area of Table Top Mountain. This area adjoins existing residential development, would provide a high level of amenity and is not significantly constrained.
- ii) Land generally to the west of Jardine Road. Subject to the future declassification of Jardine Road from a heavy vehicle bypass, this is one of the very few remaining areas to logically extend the urban footprint of the town in a largely unconstrained manner.
- iii) Predominantly Council owned land to the east of Lake Inverell Drive. This land is not considered to be environmentally constrained and would ultimately be consistent with the development pattern on the opposite side of the road.
- iv) Land to the east of Onus Avenue and north of the Gwydir Highway predominantly owned by the Catholic Church. This land is the residual area of an existing lot already zoned residential (but undeveloped) and hence is a logical extension to be consistent with cadastre boundaries.

The four areas discussed above have a combined land area of approximately 228 hectares. It is reasonable to assume a 75% lot yield which equates to approximately 175 hectares of developable land or approximately 50 years of land supply.

The rezoning of land identified for future residential purposes to a residential zone would occur in response to demonstrated demand. It would also be likely to be necessary to undertake site specific environmental studies prior to rezoning. A critical issue effecting the expansion of residential development to the west would be the declassification of Jardine Road as a heavy vehicle route, and this would be dependent upon establishing an alternate heavy vehicle route. Such planning takes considerable time and it would be prudent upon gazettal of the new LEP to focus on preparation for future land releases.

7.5 Supply of Land for Residential Development in Summary

1. There are currently 113 hectares (approx) of land zoned Residential 2(a) in Inverell township. Taking into account the constraints currently applying to this land and allowing 20% for roads, drainage and open space for the remaining unconstrained land, it is estimated that approximately 41 hectares of the 113 hectares is developable. That is, only 36% of the currently zoned residentially land is considered to be likely to be developed into residential lots.
2. Assuming an average lot size of 1,000 square metres, 41 hectares (net) represents a residential land stock of some 410 lots, or just over 10 years land supply (at 32 lots per year) if all of the identified land becomes available for development.
3. Three locations (with a Net Area of 59 hectares) have been identified as suitable for rezoning to allow residential development in the short term (ie. the Urban Investigation 1(d) and 1(a) Rural Zoned land to the east of Jardine Road; the Urban Investigation 1(d) Zoned land generally bounded by Moore Street, Swanbrook Rd, Unformed Onus Ave and Short St; and the Rural 1(a) Zoned land south of the Gwydir Hwy between Moore St and Lake Inverell

Drive). Based on a consumption rate of 32 lots per year, this is the equivalent of just over 15 years supply. Combined with the just over 10 year supply of existing zoned land, the new LEP would result in an estimated total of 25 to 30 years supply of developable residential land stock.

4. In addition to the 41 hectares (net) of existing residential land stocks and the 59 hectares (net) of land recommended to be rezoned to residential in the new LEP, a further 175 hectares (net) has been identified as future residential that should be appropriately zoned in the new LEP to ensure that its potential is not sterilised by development in the interim to the completion to the required investigations.

7.6 Villages

Gilgai, Yetman, Ashford and Delungra are considered major villages within the Shire of Inverell. With the exception of Gilgai, they are remote from the town of Inverell and provide services to their surrounding rural communities.

The minor villages within the Shire, including Bonshaw, Bukkulla, Graman, Gum Flat, Elsmore, Mount Russell, Nullamanna, Oakwood, Wandera and Little Plain are relatively unserved and are in decline due to the decline in agricultural populations and general downturn in agricultural activity. People in small rural communities are gradually moving into larger towns to find work.

The current planning provisions of the LEP (the 2(b) Rural Village Zone) are considered sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of land uses and there is sufficient undeveloped land within these villages so as not to obstruct any potential turnaround in the local economies should it occur in the future. Council has completed detailed land availability studies for both Ashford and Delungra and it was concluded that there is adequate zoned land available for future development.

Statistics indicate that development growth in the villages is flat (ie. less than 1 dwelling per year for all villages). As such, there is no need to examine opportunities for future residential growth in these localities at this time.

7.7 Recommended Subdivision and Development Controls for Residential Development

The *Inverell 'Living Lands' Strategy (Map 7 in the Appendix)* shows the locations within and surrounding Inverell urban area considered suitable for residential development.

Based on the preceding supply and demand analysis, consideration of the constraints on the land and the Department of Planning's Comprehensive LEP template, it is proposed to introduce the following zoning provisions:

Proposed Residential Land – (Zone "R1 General Residential" in the Standard LEP Template)

Fully serviced standard residential lots **typically ranging in size from 600m² to 1,200m².**

Shown **Dark Pink on Map 6**, this zone has the following basic objectives:

- To provide for the housing needs of the community.
- To provide for a variety of housing types and densities.
- To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.

A net area of approximately 59 hectares of additional residential land stock (Gross Area 156 hectares) to be added to the existing residential land stock of net area 41 hectares giving a total residential land stock that will meet demand for the next 25 years or more.

Future Residential Land (Strategy) – (Zone “RU6 Transition” in the Standard LEP Template)

Rural land in the vicinity or adjacent to existing and proposed residential land, identified as potentially suitable for future residential development subject to further investigations into the constraints of the land.

Shown **Orange on Map 6**, this zone has the following basic objectives:

- To protect and maintain land that provides a transition between rural and other land uses of varying intensities or environmental sensitivities.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones.

A net area of approximately 175 hectares (Gross Area 230 hectares) has been identified as potentially suitable for future residential. This land represents an additional 50 or more years of residential land supply for Inverell that should be appropriately zoned in the new LEP to ensure that its potential is not sterilised by other forms of development in the interim to the completion of the required investigations. It is important to note, that this land has been identified for its long term potential, and as stated previously, the rezoning of this land to a residential zone would only occur following more detailed assessment of its suitability and in response to demonstrated demand.

8.0 LAND SUPPLY – Residential Large Lots and Rural Small Holdings

Avoid Conflicts between Land Uses – Potential for conflicts between land uses should be considered in any strategic planning undertaken as a basis for future residential and rural residential areas. Adequate buffers to residences should be provided around key land uses such as the abattoir, industrial areas (existing and future), the waste depot, stock sale yards and the sewage treatment works. Consideration should also be given to the impacts of heavy vehicle traffic routes on the amenity of residential areas (DoP).

8.1 History

The current *Inverell Local Environmental Plan 1988* (LEP) was first amended in 1992. The amendment (Clause 12) facilitated rural residential development on suitable land within the Parishes of Inverell & Clive. Subject to certain performance based criteria, this meant that in excess of 15,000 hectares of land was available for rural residential subdivision. Whilst the amendment certainly facilitated rural residential development, the lack of a clear guiding strategy has presented some current day planning challenges.

Clause 12 has allowed the subdivision of rural land down to 1 hectare on land with a reticulated water supply, and down to 5,000m² where lots can also be connected to sewer services.

(Note: Section 5.2.2 of this report identified that in the 5 year period of 2003-2007, the average number of rural/residential lots created was 33 per year and the corresponding number of dwellings was 25 per year. This suggests that there are a significant number of vacant small rural lots still available to meet demand in this market. Council records indicate that a significant proportion (approx 30%) of approvals under Clause 12 since its introduction, were for lots around 2 hectares in size. Since November 2005, Council has sought to encourage the more appropriate use of the land and supporting infrastructure in these urban fringe areas by adopting a policy that indicated a preference for rural residential lot sizes of 1 hectare and below, and 4 hectares and above on the more constrained and unserviced land within the Parishes.

Additionally, the flexibility of Clause 12 has generally meant that demand for small and medium size rural/residential lifestyle lots has been satisfied, but with little regard to functional urban design and strategic planning outcomes. The supply of these rural/residential lifestyle lots has continued over many years in a somewhat ad hoc manner, and with minimal forward planning for the connection and servicing of future development on adjoining land.

8.2 Land Prices for Rural Residential Lots

On a regional scale, the price of rural residential land surrounding Inverell is generally lower when compared to other centres. What are considered to be 'prime' rural residential lots (1 to 2 hectares)

around Inverell sell for a maximum of between \$110,000 & \$120,000. Examples of prime rural residential lot prices in other centres is provided below:

1.5 hectare lot, 3kms from Glen Innes -	\$150,000
3000m2 lot, new estate – Glen Innes -	\$120,000
2000m2 lot, Saddlers Estate, Tenterfield -	\$195,000
2 hectare lot, Saumarez Estate, Armidale -	\$190,000
2 hectare lot, Saumarez Ponds Estate, Armidale -	\$220,000
Kurrajong Park Rural Res Estate, Tamworth -	\$160,000 to \$190,000

In the last three years, average one & two hectare lots around Inverell have regularly sold for between \$90,000 & \$100,000. Given initial land purchase costs, development costs of \$40,000 to \$50,000 per lot (green field site), holding costs, agents commission and other selling costs, there is often very limited return for the developer given the extent of the speculation.

A clear strategy provides developers with a degree of certainty in relation to the quantum of land available for certain types of subdivision in an area. An important aspect of any strategy is to ensure that the land supply is such that it does not result in negative market consequences. The new LEP will include a specific zone for “rural small holdings” that will be applied to appropriate locations and will control development to ensure the protection of the environment and the achievement of desired urban design outcomes (ie. efficient use of the land and service provision, accessibility to community services and facilities, environmental management, amenity issues and compatibility of land uses etc).

If Inverell is to continue to thrive, it is important that the land on offer is competitive in the regional market. That is, the land must have the highest available amenity, meet the needs and desires of prospective buyers (future residents) in terms of size, and is competitively priced. This can best be achieved if the estates are properly designed, offer a range lot sizes and the costs to developers are minimised allowing land prices to be reduced. As such, it will be critical that Council prepares and implements guidelines for development (DCP) and co-ordinates the efficient and timely provision of services.

8.3 Issues for Consideration

There are a number of issues that will need to be considered in determining the most appropriate location for the supply of land of different sizes to meet demand.

i. Maintain Future Urban Growth Opportunities

It is apparent that the creation of further large residential lots and small rural lots around the urban areas of Inverell township should be restricted to those localities that will not constrain its future growth.

ii. Co-ordinated and Efficient Provision of Services

Subdivision should not extend outwards from Inverell township further than it is economically feasible to provide essential services. It is also apparent that to avoid the inefficient use of land and adverse environmental and amenity impacts associated with poor subdivision design, any new rural/residential subdivision provisions should be accompanied by a DCP that will guide the form of future development and an Infrastructure Development Plan that will co-ordinate and ensure the funding and provision of required services in a timely manner.

iii. On-site Effluent Treatment and Disposal

The nature of the soils and topography in the areas surrounding Inverell township has demanded lots of a size large enough to accommodate on-site effluent treatment where connection to reticulated sewer is not available. That is, sufficient area to provide for a building pad and the construction of outbuildings, and additional land away from the house to operate an aerated treatment system (spraying of tertiary treated effluent) to allow for infiltration and transpiration. There is some increased risk of pollution of waterways and groundwater resources from the cumulative effects of poorly designed and maintained on-site treatment systems. (Note: Research indicates that only 30% of all on-site treatment systems in NSW are being properly maintained and operated ie. regular renewal of treatment chemicals and relocation of dispersal pipes). In this regard, it will be important that appropriate guidelines for the installation and management of these systems are included in a Development Control Plan (DCP), and that there is ongoing monitoring and policing of their operation.

iv. Why up to 1 hectare for large residential lots?

There is a desire from many residents of the area to maintain its rural character and to live on larger residential lots to provide a greater degree of privacy and separation from their neighbours. These larger residential lots need to be of a size to provide for the construction of larger homes and associated curtilage. It is proposed to allow for lots up to 1 hectare in size (known as 'residential large lots') in appropriate locations closer to Inverell township. These larger residential lots would be of sufficient size to accommodate on-site effluent disposal (subject to a soils assessment). Residential large lots up to 1 hectare in size can be easily maintained without the need for larger machinery or stock to control vegetation growth. Sealed road access will also be required to safely accommodate vehicle movements from these areas.

v. Why not 1-4 hectare lot sizes?

As a consequence of the current planning controls (Clause 12), there is currently a significant supply of land in the 1 to 4 hectare range around Inverell. Council has recognised this by their adoption of a policy position supporting subdivision into larger residential lots less than 1 hectare and greater than 4 hectares (adopted November 2005).

Lots in the 1 hectare to 4 hectare range could not be considered residential in character nor are they of sufficient size to support small scale rural activities. Subdivisions of lots of these sizes are inefficient in terms of the provision of essential services (water, sewer, paved roads) and can have the potential to create problems in relation to ongoing yard maintenance (controlling vegetation growth), fencing costs and land use conflicts associated with the keeping of stock and use of machinery.

It is recommended that Rural Small Holdings areas have a minimum lot size of 4 hectares where reticulated water services are available. Lots of this size are of sufficient area to address concerns related to ongoing management and maintenance of on-site waste treatment systems and to accommodate small scale rural pursuits often associated with these rural lifestyle properties such as the keeping of horses and other stock, chickens, vegetable growing, farm sheds etc. without impacting on neighbouring residents. Additionally, these larger lots can also facilitate the retention of any substantial vegetated areas where smaller lots tend to result in the clearing of all vegetation and associated habitats.

vi. *Maintaining Water Supplies and Harvestable Rights for Rural Dams*

The Department of Water and Energy (DWE) has advised that one of their main land use concerns is a proliferation of subdivisions along water courses and the accumulation of Basic Landholder Rights (the right to access water from adjoining watercourses) which can have a significant impact on downstream landholders, especially in drought seasons, and noting the likely impacts of climate change. In some areas, groundwater resources can also be stretched, necessitating embargos or other controls.

In unserviced rural areas, there is a need to provide for a reliable size dam for domestic water supply, and this will vary depending on what is deemed necessary for gardening, fire fighting, etc. For harvestable rights, it is important to remember that stock water supply must also be included (it is not just a household issue). Farm dams up to 1 megalitre in size (an Olympic pool is approx 2.5 MGL's) are permissible without a license. Under the Water Management Act, land owners are permitted to collect up to 10% of the average regional rainfall runoff from their property. Based on the DWE's 'maximum harvestable right calculator', to create a reliable water supply from a 1 megalitre farm dam on a small rural lot, it is estimated that an area of 12.5 hectares is needed in this locality. That is, in considering controls on the subdivision of rural land, it is important to provide for the creation of lots around the nominal 12.5 hectare size to ensure the optimum use of harvestable water rights and viable farm dams. Harvesting of water in greater quantities than 1 megalitre will require special applications and licensing. As such, it is recommended that in locations considered suitable for Rural Small Holdings subdivision, but without water and sewer services, a minimum area of 12.5 hectares is applied to ensure that these lots are of a size sufficient to have a viable farm dam.

vii. Other Factors that will Influence Lot Size and Location

Minimum lot sizes have been identified for areas identified as suitable for residential large lot and rural small holdings development. In many cases, the presence of other environmental factors will dictate the location of improvements upon the land as a consequence of the need to avoid and/or protect areas of environmental sensitivity, ecological value and rural amenity, in some cases resulting in lots larger than the minimum. Some of these constraining factors include:

- **Water Quality** - The DWE has advised that the main threats to water quality in the region continue to be: over-clearing of native vegetation; excessive use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers; weeds (both in-stream and along waterways), overgrazing; draining or grazing of wetlands and reduced stream flow.
- **Threatened Species** - Inverell LGA contains a number of threatened flora and fauna species. A significant proportion of the remnant vegetation around Inverell township contains the Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) known as the Box Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Grasslands. In considering the location of future 'living' opportunities, substantial stands of the EEC should be avoided and corridors of vegetation maintained and protected to ensure genetic diversity and the ecological sustainability of development.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Land** – The DWE has provided mapping of environmentally sensitive land and water resources including steep sloping land, shallow soils, temporary or permanent inundation, rock outcrops, highly erodible soils, groundwater vulnerability, riparian vegetation, wetlands and freshwater habitat.
- **High Quality Rural Landscapes** – Hill tops, riparian vegetation along creek lines, vegetated ridgelines and slopes and low lying areas including wetlands should be avoided for their intrinsic rural landscape value as well as their ecological value as habitat.

As such, the following criteria were used as the basis to determine the extent, location and lot size of the nominated rural residential land supply:

- Impact of environmental constraints such as endangered ecological communities, steep sloping land and high ground water vulnerability etc.
- Proximity to infrastructure services such as sealed roads, reticulated water, electricity, telecommunications etc.
- Proximity from the existing urban area as it is more sustainable to develop land closer to a township. Typically five (5) kilometres (or a 10 minute drive) is deemed a reasonable timeframe for day to day shopping and an acceptable distance to cycle, while ten (10) kilometres (or a 20 minute drive) is considered by most people to be an acceptable distance to travel for weekly shopping.
- Impact of natural hazards such as bush fire or flood prone land.
- Protection of remaining non-fragmented prime agricultural lands.
- The current and potential future location of heavy vehicle bypass routes.

- Protection of areas considered to be of a high rural scenic value such as densely vegetated ridge lines.
- The level of amenity and aspect provided and therefore market desirability.
- Provide opportunities for large lot residential and rural small holdings on suitable land adjacent to existing development without prejudicing future urban growth. In this case, regard was had to the findings in relation to the opportunities for urban expansion (ie. residential zoned land, industrial and employment purposes land) contained in the previous section and the Employment Lands Study (Collie Pty Ltd 2008).
- The potential for land use conflict associated with existing non-compatible land uses such as industry, landfill, sewage treatment works etc.
- Existing land holding pattern (current size of lots in an area).
- Aligning zoning boundaries with cadastre boundaries or topographical features wherever possible.

As can be seen from the above, the location of residential large lots and rural small holdings subdivision and development on the land surrounding Inverell township has potential economic implications in relation to impacts on the viability of agricultural land uses, limitations on the expansion of critical employment generating development and cost implications to the community in relation to the construction and maintenance of services and infrastructure. If not properly planned and managed, it can also have environmental implications as a result of impacts on water quality, traffic safety and loss of biodiversity.

8.4 Recommended Subdivision and Development Controls

Based on the preceding supply and demand analysis and the consideration of the constraints and opportunities of the land, the *Inverell 'Living Lands' Strategy (Map 6 in the Appendix)* shows the locations surrounding the Inverell urban area considered suitable for rural residential development. A mix of rural residential lot supply is proposed that is consistent with Council's policy position and that is considered to be sustainable into the future. Consequently, it is proposed to introduce the following zoning provisions from the Department of Planning's Comprehensive LEP template:

8.4.1 Residential Large Lots (Inner) – (Zone "R5 Large Lot Residential" in the Standard LEP Template)

Larger residential lots located adjacent to the urban areas of Inverell with **minimum lot sizes of 2,000m² (with reticulated water and sewer) and 4,000m² (with reticulated water only).**

Shown **Green on the Map**, this zone has the following basic objectives:

- *To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving, and minimising impacts on, environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality.*
- *To ensure that large residential allotments do not hinder the proper and orderly development of urban areas in the future.*
- *To ensure that development in the area does not unreasonably increase the demand for public services or public facilities.*

- *To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones.*

Approximately 360 hectares of land to be zoned “R5 Residential Large Lot (Inner)” which will provide for lot sizes of 2000m² & 4000m² depending upon the availability of services. Given a significant proportion of this area will rely on infill development, the actual lot yield will be considerably less than the 360 hectares. These areas adjoin existing standard density development, are unconstrained and are located so that the provision of reticulated sewer can be made in the future if feasible. By limiting such subdivision to strategically located areas, this enables master planning to occur for future development and allows for a greater focus on future service provision.

8.4.2 Residential Large Lots (Outer) – (Zone “R5 Large Lot Residential” in the Standard LEP Template)

Larger residential land parcels, **minimum 1 hectare in size** located on generally unconstrained land on the fringes of the urban area and with access to sealed roads and with reticulated water only.

Shown **Yellow on the Map**, this zone has the following basic objectives:

- *To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving, and minimising impacts on, environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality.*
- *To ensure that large residential allotments do not hinder the proper and orderly development of urban areas in the future.*
- *To ensure that development in the area does not unreasonably increase the demand for public services or public facilities.*
- *To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones.*

This second “R5 Residential Large Lot” zone covers an area of approximately 1,349 hectares for the purposes of one (1) hectare lot subdivision.

8.4.3 Rural Small Holdings – (Zone “RU4 Rural Small Holdings” in the Standard LEP Template)

Relatively small rural lots and ‘hobby farms’ suitable for intensive agricultural pursuits located on often partially constrained land further from the urban area of Inverell, with **minimum lot sizes of 4 hectares where reticulated water** is available and **minimum 12.5 hectares where no water** is available.

Shown **Blue on the Map**, this zone has the following basic objectives:

- *To enable sustainable primary industry and other compatible land uses.*
- *To maintain the rural and scenic character of the land.*
- *To ensure that development does not unreasonably increase the demand for public services or public facilities.*
- *To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones.*

Approximately 2,790 hectares of “RU4 Rural Small Holdings” zoned land. These already fragmented lands are generally further from the urban centre, are provided with varying degrees of services and

are generally partially constrained in some way, whether it be from the presence of environmental constraints or their proximity to non-compatible land uses. If reticulated water is available, then a minimum lot size of 4 hectares is proposed. Alternatively if there is no reticulated water, then the minimum lot size is recommended at 12.5 hectares (which is the land area required to have a 1 megalitre farm dam without needing a license in accordance with the Department of Natural Resources *Farm Dams Policy*).

9.0 Management Issues

9.1 Development Time Frames

9.1.1 Residential

It has been estimated that there is currently just over 10 years of vacant residential land stock (ie approximately 410 lots @ 32 lots per year) in Inverell urban area (refer to **Section 7.3 – Existing Residentially Zoned Land Stocks**). However, this assumes that all currently zoned land will become available in this 10 year time frame.

It is also estimated that there is at least an additional 15 years of potential residential land (ie. 590 lots @ 32 lots per year) that has been previously identified, and, subject to rezoning, could also be available for residential development in the short term (refer to **Section 7.4 – Additional Land Suitable for Residential Purposes**).

Note: It is considered appropriate to oversupply the stock of residentially zoned land in rural Shires to allow for flexibility in the location of the release of land and to ensure that there is opportunity to take advantage of unpredicted growth without the delays associated with the need to rezone land.

Section 7.4 also identifies an additional 175 hectares or greater than 50 years supply of land that may be suitable for rezoning to residential in the future subject to further land capability assessment and a demonstrated demand for more land.

With in excess of 75 years of residential land supply identified in this Strategy and the future residential growth opportunities identified and preserved, Inverell will be well placed to respond to demand for residential housing for the foreseeable future.

9.1.2 Residential Large Lots and Rural Small Holdings

Land that should be considered for residential large lot and rural small holdings development has also be identified (refer to **Section 8.0 - Residential Large Lots and Rural Small Holdings**). It should be noted that the nominated candidate area boundaries have been aligned with property boundaries for mapping purposes and some land within these areas is still constrained in one or more ways. There has also been a significant amount of historic subdivision and considerable development generally consistent with the intent of the proposed Rural Small Holdings zone. These factors together with the inherent flexibility of the proposed planning provisions (in terms of lot sizes), makes it nearly impossible to predict lot yields and areas of development. As such, development time frames for future rural residential development are equally difficult to estimate. In this regard, monitoring of land stocks and subdivision registrations will be important in forecasting likely demand and managing the supply of land.

9.2 Monitoring

Ensure Sustainable Demand on Service Infrastructure – In identifying and planning for future urban expansion, consideration must be given to the timing and cost of providing public utilities and community services to meet the demand created by new development. A land monitoring system incorporating staging of development, would not only ensure that demand does not outstrip supply (and vice versa), but also it would help manage the costs associated with the provision and maintenance of essential infrastructure (DoP).

There is an undeniable nexus between land supply and market forces. Just as an under supply of land available for development impacts on affordability, an over supply will also have negative consequences for development. If developers are not able to make a reasonable return on their investment, they will be reluctant to speculate and subdivide land. Given the sensitivity of the local market and due to limited demand numbers, it is important that land stocks are constantly monitored in terms of numbers, location and size, to ensure that adequate choice is available to prospective buyers and to ensure that prices are not artificially inflated or decreased due to under or over supply.

It is important that Council establish a coordinated monitoring system to track the construction of new dwellings and the creation of new allotments. This system should extend from standard residential, medium density and infill housing, to fringe urban development, rural small holdings and general rural areas. Proper monitoring of development will assist in:

- measuring the take up of existing zoned or serviced land;
- identifying development and market trends; and,
- in determining the staging of future land releases and the rezoning of land to maintain adequate land supply.

The availability of choice is important for Inverell, as it does not have significant pressures for land development, but needs to be positioned to take advantage of any demand that may be produced in the future.

9.3 Provision of Infrastructure

Initially, staging of infrastructure and corresponding development should be planned to cover the demand for a 10 year period of growth. Consideration should also be given in the strategic planning for the staged and sequential augmentation of infrastructure over the longer term. The introduction of appropriate developer contributions will assist in covering the costs of required replacement and expansion of the existing networks.

While it is desirable for economic reasons, to progressively extend the existing road network and services without incurring additional costs associated with providing trunk mains and road connections to accommodate out-of-sequence development, this is not always practical where landowners and/or developers have different aspirations in relation to the timing of land development. In those

circumstances, it is considered that provided services can be extended at full cost to the developer, safe sealed access can be provided and development occurs in accordance with a cohesive underlying framework (an adopted Strategic Plan), then sequential growth is not crucial. This position is consistent with the intent to take advantage of opportunities for growth and market choice as they arise by providing flexibility in the sequencing of land releases.

9.4 Supply Philosophy

There are several reasons why Council should have a zoned land supply in excess of the typically projected 10 or 20 year demand. In country areas it is often necessary to 'over zone to create opportunity', as the market forces are such that they do not offer the profit opportunities to developers that are available in faster growing regions. That is, the pressure from the market to develop land as it becomes available is not the same. It is recognised that in country areas, just because land is suitable and zoned for development does not guarantee it will come on to the market. It is not uncommon for a land owner to "sit" on the land for many years until retirement or leave the land as an inheritance. It is also prudent planning, where population and development bases are relatively small, to have a land bank available to cater for unforeseen demand. For example, if a significant employment generating industry is wishing to relocate to Inverell, it is important that Council can encourage that move by having a land stock zoned and readily available for development to accommodate the resultant population influx. If Inverell is to continue to prosper and grow, it is important to be ready to respond to opportunities as they arise. In taking into consideration market forces and the inevitable changes in the needs and desires of the residents, it is also important to provide people with living choices and hence the need for a range of lot sizes and a number of different release areas in a variety of suitable locations.

Conversely, there are a number of equally important reasons not to excessively over supply land including the impact on market forces as discussed earlier, the unsustainable demand placed upon services and the failure to strategically expand. Consequently, given the relatively small development numbers involved, it will be important to properly monitor the uptake of land and actively respond through Council policy to the supply of land and the provision and timing of necessary infrastructure. It is considered that the *Living Lands Strategy* provides for the necessary land supply balance.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 Sustainability

In an era where ever increasing scrutiny is being placed upon the consumption of energy and the impact on natural resources, there is associated pressure for Council to actively demonstrate it is applying the principles of sustainable development in accordance with the Local Government Charter (Section 8 *Local Government Act 1993*).

A major aspect of sustainability is the protection of biodiversity, and there are numerous legislative provisions Council must follow in this regard. The *Living Lands Strategy* acknowledges Council's

environmental and sustainability responsibilities and attempts to strike a balance whilst recognising the positive benefits strategic residential and rural residential development can provide such as:

- revitalising rural communities and providing attractive places to live;
- increasing Council's rate base;
- providing confidence to the agricultural sector (knowing where rural residential development is to occur);
- conserving high value landscapes;
- controlling the cost of the provision of community services.

10.2 What the Strategy will Achieve

Previous sections to this report have discussed the likely growth of Inverell and identified the subsequent demand for housing. It was found that while population growth is not significant, lot demand has increased and trends for the supply of land within the residential and rural residential areas are upwardly focused.

A detailed constraints analysis has been undertaken to assess the capability of the land to accommodate further development both within and surrounding Inverell. Following consideration of a range of factors, the land identified as having development potential has been considered in relation to its highest and best use. Land use recommendations have then been made that will meet the anticipated demand for 'living land'. In this regard, assumptions were made in relation to the potential lot yields to be obtained following the exclusion of land due to environmental, servicing and lot fragmentation constraints. Emphasis is placed on the need to ensure that the Inverell property market is attractive to developers and that the land remains price competitive within the region. This is best achieved by ensuring:

- the efficient provision of public infrastructure;
- unconstrained land is available for development when demand dictates (ie. there are no unnecessary delays in the supply of land for the various housing options);
- controls are in place to ensure that the 'living land' product is of the highest quality;
- 'living land' is accessible to community services and facilities; and,
- there is a variety of housing choice.

It is considered that the proposed strategy is well balanced and sustainable in that it provides opportunities to meet the long term needs of the community for 'living land', while also having regard to the provision for employment opportunities and the protection of the unique rural character and sensitive ecology of the area. Through the provision of a choice of attractive, well-planned and efficiently serviced living opportunities for the residents of the area, this Strategy will assist in encouraging the future growth of the town and the region.

10.3 Where to From Here?

The *Inverell 'Living Land' Strategy 2009* has been prepared as one of the pre-requisites to the preparation of a comprehensive Inverell Land Use Strategy (ILUS). The findings and recommendations of this report (once adopted by Council), together with those of the recently completed Rural Land Use Study, Employment Lands Strategy, Heritage Study and Traffic Study will be fed into the ILUS which is to be a consolidation of all of the strategic planning work. The ILUS will be a single concise document with quality mapping that will be exhibited throughout the Inverell Local Government Area. Comments on the ILUS will be invited and following consideration of the issues raised, a report will be placed before Council together with recommendations for any amendments. If adopted, the ILUS will be used to guide the preparation of the comprehensive Draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) containing the proposed new zoning provisions and planning controls to cover the entire Shire. The Draft LEP will be further exhibited and comments invited before the Plan is finally made by the NSW Minister for Planning.

APPENDICES

Map 1 – Infrastructure and Accessibility Map

Map 2 – Natural and Man-made Constraints

Map 3 – Environmentally Sensitive Land

Map 4 – Cumulative Constraints

Map 5 – Residential Land (Vacant, Proposed, Future)

Map 6 – Inverell Living Lands Strategy



INVERELL SHIRE

Review of Living Lands Strategy



SEPTEMBER 2011

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APPENDICES

A. Amended LLS map

1 INTRODUCTION

Habitat Planning has been engaged by Council to provide a review of the *Living Lands Strategy* (LLS) prepared by HDB Planning in July 2009. The review is limited to the matters raised by the NSW Department of Planning (DoP) and any consequent changes required to the text and mapping to address the issues raised.

It is not the intent of this report to provide a complete review of the LLS, which the DoP has acknowledged to be comprehensive and soundly based.

Given our experience in the preparation of new Local Environmental Plans for a number of Councils throughout NSW over the past five years, we have also identified matters that have now become standard practice for dealing with some of these issues, to ensure that the strategic planning work undertaken for Inverell is consistent with current practice.

2 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES

The NSW Department of Planning (DoP) was provided with a copy of the LLS in July 2009. By letter dated 10th September 2009, the DoP advised that:

The Department's review of the strategy has found that, in general, the document has been well thought out and has employed planning principles that will ensure sustainable management of the Shires [sic] agricultural lands through the provision of strategically placed rural lifestyle allotments. Apart from this, the Department would like to provide the following comments for your consideration on how the strategy could be further developed:

1. *Whilst the strategy has provided a constraint's [sic] analysis and found that a considerable amount of currently zoned residential, future residential and rural residential land is constrained by one or several physical attributes, an assessment of whether this land should be backzoned is not provided.*
2. *The Department believes that the proposal to create RU4 land with a MLS [minimum lot size] of 4ha (with town water) would be contrary to the objectives of the proposed zone. One of the main objectives of the RU4 zone is 'to enable sustainable primary industry and other compatible land uses'. Essentially, this zone is intended for larger lot sizes that would enable productive agricultural use of the land. The proposed MLS of 4ha would in most cases, be inadequate to achieve this objective. It is suggested that such a lot size is more in keeping with the objectives of the R5 – Large Lot Residential zone. Alternatively, if Council wish to maintain the RU4 zoning, a MLS greater than [the] 4ha proposed could be considered to satisfy the objectives of the zone.*
3. *Reference to Map 6 of the draft strategy shows several discrepancies with the proposed industrial growth areas as mapped in Council's Employment Lands Strategy (ELS). These relate to both proposed zoning changes and locations of buffer zones. An example of this is the draft LLS proposal to zone the 'Ring Street expansion' area as 'Rural Small Holdings', however this area has been identified in the ELS as an area for potential industrial*

expansion. These have been listed in greater detail on the attached map. It is important that Council have a consistent approach to the intended use of these areas and that this is reflected accurately in all of Council's strategic work.

4. *The potential zoning of the airport land as R5 Residential Large Lot (combination hangar/dwelling style development) will require careful consideration and investigation to ensure that this important piece of infrastructure will not be compromised.*

Consequently, it is considered that the review of the LLS should seek to address these issues and recommend revision of the text and/or mapping where appropriate, or alternatively, provide Council with further justification for the recommendations included in the LLS, to provide the DoP with a greater level of comfort with the recommendations.

The issues raised by the DoP are addressed below in the order raised in their correspondence.

2.1. EXISTING RESIDENTIAL LAND

It is noted that the LLS has identified constraints to the development of some of the existing urban zoned land within Inverell. These constraints may relate to the physical features of the land (slope etc) or natural hazards (such as flooding and bushfire). As well as physical constraints there are some areas such as South Inverell where market resistance to residential development is as much an impediment to development.

However, the LLS does not recommend that these lands be zoned to reduce their development potential or to prevent development that was previously envisaged on the lands (commonly referred to as 'back zoning'). The DoP has requested an assessment of whether these lands should be 'back zoned'.

The existing residential areas, however, do provide some opportunities for infill development and, in many cases, alternative housing forms (such as medium density) owing to their convenient location and the existing subdivision pattern in the area.

The demographics of Inverell are consistent with most regional centres in that they display an aging population and an overall decrease in household size. Over the next 10 to 15 years, these two factors will influence housing design and form and the market will need to deliver alternative housing styles to cater for these sectors of the market. The existing residential areas are ideally located to provide this style of housing, in close proximity to services and recreational areas.

The potentially constrained land in South Inverell comprises a number of larger allotments which total approximately 19 hectares in area. The areas are located south of Macintyre Street and to the east and west of Borthwick Street. These lands are located in close proximity to a substantial network of parkland and open space adjacent to Spring Gully, which joins into the Macintyre River parklands. The affected urban sites are currently zoned 2(a) (Urban Residential Zone) under the Inverell LEP 1988.

The aim of the 2(a) zone *is to set aside lands within Inverell township for predominantly residential purposes. Other uses to be permitted are to be compatible with the residential amenity of land within the zone.*

The objectives of the zone are:

- (a) *to make general provision to set aside land to be used for the purposes of housing and associated facilities;*
- (b) *to allow detailed provision to be made, by means of a development control plan, to set aside specific areas within the zone for varying housing densities as well as other associated urban and tourist facilities;*
- (c) *to allow a variety of housing types within existing and new residential areas;*
- (d) *to encourage greater visual amenity by requiring site landscaping and permitting a greater variety of building materials and flexibility of design; and*
- (e) *to allow development for urban purposes other than housing within the zone only if it does not detrimentally affect the character or amenity of the locality.*

Dwelling houses are the only development permitted without the need to obtain development consent. Uses that are prohibited in the zone are:

Abattoirs; aerodromes; animal boarding establishments; bulk stores; cemeteries and crematoriums; drive-in theatres; extractive industries; forestry; generating works; heliports; institutions; junk yards; liquid fuel depots; mines; motor showrooms; recreation vehicle areas; sawmills; stock and sale yards; timber yards; transport terminals; warehouses.

All other uses are permissible with consent in this zone.

Whilst the primary aim of the zone is to provide land for residential development, the land use table and the zone objectives envisage that other uses will be permitted, and are appropriate, within this zone. Of particular relevance to the current issue are objectives (b) and (e), which enable the development of *other associated urban and tourist facilities and urban purposes other than housing.*

The LLS does not attribute any residential development potential to the South Inverell land for the purpose of calculating existing residential land supply within the township. **This does not mean that the land has no development potential at all.**

The LLS recommends retention of the urban zoning of the land. The equivalent zone under the NSW Standard Instrument LEP is R1 General Residential. This zone, similarly to the current zone under the Inverell LEP 1988, also allows for a range of non-residential uses which provide facilities and services that are required by an urban population.

The South Inverell area has a considerable amount of public housing and there are a number of related community facilities and services that are likely to be required and which would be permissible and appropriate in the R1 zone.

Further, the land is located in close proximity to the township of Inverell and enjoys excellent vehicular accessibility via the urban road network and excellent pedestrian and

cycle accessibility via the network of open spaces and parks along the river and creek. The land has access to all urban services. The land is located between existing residential development to the south and open space to the north. Much of the land in the vicinity has been developed for residential development and these larger vacant allotments are anomalous to the residential character of the area.

In reviewing the LLS, we note that it identifies one of the natural constraints to the development of existing zoned urban land is the potential for flooding, particularly in parts of South Inverell. That area of South Inverell subject to flooding is not, in isolation, undevelopable unless the land is located within the floodway and the velocity of the floodwater is a danger to life and property. The subject lands are located some distance from the main flood channel of the Macintyre River and are **not** identified in Appendix Map 3 of the LLS as being located in an area of *“high flood hazard”*. Consequently, appropriately sited and designed development could be undertaken on the land without that development impacting upon the behaviour of floodwaters nor being susceptible to damage from flooding.

It is not considered appropriate for the land to be zoned for open space or environmental protection, given the low level of flood affectation and the existing urban character of the area. An open space zoning would require Council acquisition of the land, which is not warranted for this area given the abundant areas of open space already provided for the current and future residents; and the low level of flood hazard compared to other parts of the township.

Given that dwellings could be built on the land (subject to satisfying Council's flood level controls and requirements) and that the land could be used for purposes other than dwellings under the existing controls, it is appropriate to recommend an equivalent zoning of the land under the new LEP so that current land owners are not unduly restricted in regard to the future use of their land, nor unduly financially penalised by reduction in land value.

Appropriate adjustment of the wording included in the LLS is recommended in Section 4 of this report, to ensure that there is no confusion regarding the retention of urban development potential, notwithstanding the constraints on the land.

2.2. RURAL SMALLHOLDINGS – 4 HECTARES

The LLS was prepared in 2009, prior to many new Standard Instrument LEPs being gazetted. Over that time, the standard practice of the DoP has been to restrict the use of the rural zones to land where rural production, rural landscape or rural activities are the primary purpose of the land.

Areas traditionally described as 'rural living' or 'hobby farms' are now considered by DoP to be more residential in nature and they commonly require that areas with this type of character are zoned as large lot residential areas, rather than rural areas.

The LLS includes a recommendation for the areas on the fringes of Inverell to be zoned RU4 – Rural Smallholdings, with varying minimum lot sizes (MLS) between 4 hectares and 12.5 hectares. The 4 hectare minimum is recommended for areas serviced by reticulated water, and the 12.5 hectares is recommended for areas not serviced by

reticulated water as this is the minimum area required to harvest sufficient water for stock and domestic purposes.

Whilst the Standard Instrument LEP allows areas which are zoned similarly to be subject to different minimum allotment sizes, it does not allow the use of additional descriptions in zones to differentiate between areas, such as “inner” and “outer” as contained in the LLS.

Consequently, there are three options available to address this issue:

1. Undertake analysis of the area serviced by reticulated water, or which could be readily serviced by extensions of the existing infrastructure, and zone those areas for denser development (such as R5 Large Lot Residential with a MLS of 4ha) and then apply the RU4 Rural Small Holdings zone to the areas unable to be serviced, with a MLS of 12.5 (or greater) hectares.
2. Apply the R5 zoning to the whole of the land recommended as RU4 Rural Small Holdings zone in the LLS and apply different MLS for the areas serviced and not serviced.
3. Apply the R5 zoning to the whole of the land recommended as RU4 Rural Small Holdings zone in the LLS and apply a MLS of 4 hectares, requiring **all** allotments created to be serviced by reticulated water. This would necessitate the extension of water services to enable subdivision and would ensure that the land is developed in an orderly fashion as services are able to be economically extended.

Whilst it is accepted that land owner demand in fringe areas is for a variety of lot sizes and the requirement to extend water would lead to subdivisions seeking to maximise yield to ensure a financial return on the land, it is considered to be a more efficient, sustainable and environmentally responsible course of action to ensure that the allotments are provided with reticulated water.

Given the location of the land recommended to be zoned as Rural Small Holdings and the extensive network of water infrastructure throughout those areas, it is considered appropriate for the third option to be adopted for these lands. This will involve a change of the mapping and text to amend the reference to these lands to R5 Large Lot Residential and recommend a minimum allotment size of 4 hectares. Other constraints, such as vegetation, slope, watercourses etc will be factored into design and will most probably lead to a variety of lot sizes between 4 and 10 hectares, notwithstanding the minimum available.

Section 4 details the changes required to the LLS to achieve the above.

2.3. MAPPING ANOMOLIES

The DoP has raised concerns with an anomalous situation in the LLS regarding several sites identified in a separate study (the Employment Lands Strategy, or ELS) as being potentially suitable for industrial expansion, or lands identified as part of a buffer to potentially offensive or hazardous land uses. It is not uncommon that land could reasonably, sustainably and economically be used for different (and sometimes seemingly conflicting) purposes. The LLS recognises that some of the land identified for industrial expansion could be alternatively used for residential purposes. The LLS also

acknowledges that there is some residential development already existing within 'best practice' buffers around potentially offensive or hazardous activities.

Since the DoP response on the LLS, Council has clarified that, of the sites identified as being subject to conflicting recommendations, the only area that is being considered for industrial development is the site in the north eastern area of Inverell, near Burtenshaw Road. Consequently, Council has advised the Department that in all other instances, the recommendations of the LLS will take precedence over the ELS.

The area in question represents a very small percentage of the land recommended for residential purposes and it is considered that its removal from the residential supply would have no impact upon the provision of a suitable level of residential lands to service the future needs of Inverell. It is also located in close proximity to existing industrial lands and/or conflicting land uses and the amenity value for residential development is consequently diminished.

Ensuring that Inverell has sufficient industrial land to cater for future growth in this sector is critical to the growth of the town. The ability to respond quickly to a demand for suitably located and serviced industrial land is required so that potential investment and growth is not lost to other regional centres.

2.4. LAND ADJACENT TO INVERELL AIRPORT

The LLS shows land adjacent to Inverell Airport as having potential for large lot residential development. The land is located on the north west edge of the airport in an area which contains some existing small holdings. The Department have queried the justification for this area to be included in a large lot residential area.

There has been some discussion of the site being used for the development of hangar/dwelling accommodation, although this is not identified in the LLS as a preferred development type for the area.

Given the importance of the airport to the future growth and development of Inverell, it is considered that, if proposed large lot residential development in this location was desired by Council, it should be subject to much more detailed investigations prior to any such zoning being applied.

It is therefore recommended that this area be identified in the LLS for investigation as future large lot residential development and that the land be zoned similarly to private land in the vicinity (i.e. a rural zone) until such time as a demand for, or a justification of, large lot residential development in the area is proven.

This would be best dealt with as a separate Planning Proposal, to avoid the potential for this matter to delay the principal LEP whilst the investigations are undertaken.

3 GENERAL ISSUES

Other issues arising from the LLS review include the following.

3.1 CURRENCY OF DATA

The LLS was prepared in 2009 and includes data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Council in regard to population trends, dwelling construction etc. The baseline data used in the LLS is from a consistent time period and is therefore readily comparable.

The next Census is due to be held in August 2011, with raw data usually being filtered out from the ABS from six months after that date. Reliable data on a range of relevant matters is usually not available until 12 months after the Census, and the earliest that much of the baseline data could be updated is mid-2012.

More recent building and subdivision activity figures are available from Council; however, no newer statistical information is available from the ABS. If the LLS were to be updated in regard to some of the data, but not all of it, it would no longer have consistency and the value of the data would be diminished.

The LLS identified 5 and 10 year trends in the building and subdivision activity and has shown that these are relatively constant, with occasional fluctuations. Overall, the number of allotments produced and the number of dwellings constructed is constant and there appears to be no reason to assume that the figures from 2009-2011 would be greatly different to the figures used in the report.

The data contained in the 2009 LLS is still reliable and it is therefore considered that the data does not need to be updated.

3.2 MAP REFERENCES

At several points in the LLS, reference is made to "*Map 7*" in the Appendices. There is no Map 7 and it assumed that this is a referencing matter that has not been updated from previous drafts of the LLS. Map 6 in the Appendices shows the recommendations of the LLS and it considered that a simple "search and replace" exercise will ensure appropriate referencing to the Strategy Map.

3.3 RU6 TRANSITION ZONE

The RU6 Transition Zone in the NSW Standard Instrument Template is predominantly used to provide an area of transition between incompatible land uses or zones. It is not able to be used to define future development areas, as proposed in the LLS. As it is not intended to zone the land shown in orange on Map 6 as residential at this stage, these lands should be retained as RU1 Primary Agriculture to protect them from fragmentation in the short to medium term.

The lands can be identified in the LLS as future residential land, as it is a strategy document and can be used for reference in future rezoning, as the need arises. Retaining the land in the LLS as future residential lands gives the community a clear indication of the Council's future desires for that land.

This change will require an amendment to the wording of Section 7.7.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

As outlined previously, it was not the purpose of this review to comprehensively re-write or question the analysis and recommendations contained in the LLS. The purpose of the review was to address issues raised by the DoP and to ensure that the LLS could be utilised as a sound background strategy to the preparation of the new LEP.

Our review has found that the LLS requires only minor changes and adjustment to address the issues and to provide background to the proposed LEP and zonings.

The following amendments to the LLS are therefore recommended:

1. That all references throughout the LLS to “Map 7” be amended to read **Map 6**.
2. That the wording in paragraph 1 of the executive summary be amended to remove all reference to “*Rural Small Holdings*”.
3. That the last dot point on the bottom of Page 8 be amended to remove the reference to “(inner)” as such descriptions are not accommodated by the NSW Standard Instrument LEP.
4. That the second last dot point on page 9 be amended to remove the reference to “*RU4 Rural Small Holdings*” and that the words “*where reticulated water is available and minimum 12.5 hectares where no water is available*” be deleted.
5. That the reference to “*Rural Small Holdings*” be removed from the first sentence of the only paragraph on page 13.
6. That the reference to “*Rural Small Holdings*” be deleted from the last sentence of the last paragraph in Section 5.6 of the report (page 36).
7. That the second dot point in Section 6.1 (page 38) be amended to read ***Some land previously identified for urban purposes has not been developed for that purpose due to the constraints applying to the land (e.g. residentially zoned land with significant constraints to development); and ...***
8. That recommendations in Section 6.3 (page 41) relating to future industrial development in Burtenshaw Road be expanded to include the introduction of controls to manage the interface with adjoining low density residential land.
9. That the first dot point in relation to Future Residential Land on Page 56 be amended to read ***“To protect and maintain land that may provide opportunities for future residential growth for Inverell”***.
10. That the second dot point in relation to Future Residential Land on Page 56 be amended to read ***“to retain the rural zoning of the land to minimise fragmentation in the short to medium term”***.
11. That the title of Section 8 be amended by the deletion of the words “*and Rural Small Holdings*”.
12. That the third sentence (currently commencing with *The new LEP will include a specific zone for “rural small holdings ...”*) of the second paragraph on page 58 be amended to read ***“the new LEP will not include a specific zone for “rural small holdings”, but will instead apply the R5 Large Lot Residential to allotments***

which are considered to be appropriate for larger rural living style development, but which are not of a suitable size for extensive agriculture. Minimum allotment sizes will enable a variation of allotment sizes across this zoning and Council will control development to ensure the protection of the environment and the achievement of desired urban design outcomes (ie. Efficient use of the land and service provision, accessibility to community services and facilities, environmental management, amenity issues and compatibility of land uses etc)."

13. That the first sentence of the second paragraph on Page 60 be amended to read *"It is recommended that the area which has been identified as suitable for "rural living" style allotments (as shown in blue on Map 6 in the Appendices) be zoned R5 Large Lot Residential (as required by the Department of Planning) and that a minimum allotment size of 4 hectares be applied to the land. These allotments should also be required to connect to reticulated water, ensuring that development will occur efficiently as it becomes economic to extend these services. Lots of this size...."*
14. That subsection "vi." commencing on Page 60 be deleted in its entirety and that the following subsections be renumbered accordingly.
15. That the first sentence of the first paragraph on Page 61 be amended to delete the words *"and rural small holdings development"*.
16. That the first sentence of the third dot point on Page 62 be amended by the deletion of the words *"and rural small holdings"*.
17. That the first sentence of the last paragraph in Section 8.3 be amended by the deletion of the words *"and rural small holdings"*.
18. That an additional paragraph be added after the first paragraph of Section 8.4, which reads *"The R5 Large Lot Residential Zone has been applied to a range of rural fringe, rural living and hobby farming areas in the lands surrounding the township of Inverell. There are 3 different subdivision minimum standards proposed, ranging from 2000 square metres to 4 hectares, depending upon location and availability of services. The variation of lot sizes enables larger residential allotments of varying sizes to meet market demand and to address environmental considerations. The Department of Planning considers that allotments within the minimum allotment sizes proposed are residential in nature and discourages the use of the RU4 Rural Small Holdings Zone for those lands."*
19. That the title of Section 8.4.3 be amended to *"Residential Large Lots (4 Hectares) – (Zone "R5 Large Lot Residential" in the Standard LEP Template)"*
20. That the first paragraph of Section 8.4.3 be amended by the deletion of the words *"where reticulated water is available and minimum 12.5 hectares where no water is available"*.
21. That the last paragraph on Page 63 immediately after the dot points, be amended to change the words *"RU4 Rural Small Holdings"* to *"R5 Large Lot Residential"*.

22. That the last paragraph of page 64 be amended by the deletion of the last 2 sentences and their replacement with ***"Reticulated water is readily available to the majority of this land and should be provided as subdivision occurs. This will ensure that subdivision is managed efficiently by ensuring that the lots are only created as the extension of services enables the provision of water in a cost efficient manner."***
23. That the title of Section 9.1.2 be amended by the deletion of the words *"and Rural Small Holdings"*.
24. That the first sentence of the first paragraph on Page 65 be amended by the deletion of the words *"and rural small holdings"* wherever they appear.
25. That the second sentence of the first paragraph on Page 65 be amended by replacing the words *"Rural Small Holdings"* (at the end of that sentence) with ***"Large Lot Residential"***.
26. Inclusion of the amended Living Lands Strategy map.

5 CONCLUSION

The Inverell Living Lands Strategy provides a sound strategic basis for residential zoning through the new Inverell Local Environmental Plan. The DoP has advised that it *"has been well thought out and has employed planning principles that will ensure sustainable management of the Shires [sic] agricultural lands through the provision of strategically placed rural lifestyle allotments."*

Consequently, this review has sought to address issues raised by the DoP and general issues arising from the passage of time since the preparation of the LLS in 2009, which has resulted in a difference between current practice and the wording of the LLS. We consider that the recommended amendments will address the concerns of the DoP whilst providing internal consistency to the document and will bring its recommendations in line with current practice in zone selection in Standard Instrument LEPs.

APPENDIX A

Amended Living Lands Strategy map

Inverell Living Lands Strategy

AS AMENDED BY LLS REVIEW SEP 2011

