

# North Cooranbong Residential Development

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## Social Impact Assessment

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## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. THE BRIEF .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 OBJECTIVE .....	6
2.2 SOCIAL ASSESSMENT .....	6
<b>3. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. THE DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 SITE DESCRIPTION.....	8
4.2 PROPOSED USE.....	8
4.3 ACCESS, TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC .....	8
4.4 ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS .....	9
4.5 EXISTING SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN COORANBONG.....	9
4.6 EXISTING SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN MORISSET .....	11
4.7 AVONDALE SCHOOL.....	13
4.8 SERVICE DEMAND AND SUPPLY .....	14
<b>5. DEMOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNITY PROFILE.....</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1 EXISTING COMMUNITY .....	17
5.2 FUTURE POPULATION .....	17
<b>6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1 LIFESTYLE 2020: A STRATEGY FOR OUR FUTURE .....	19
6.2 LAKE MACQUARIE SOCIAL PLAN .....	20
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
7.1 OVERVIEW OF ANALYSIS AGAINST THE SOCIAL IMPACT POLICY MATRIX .....	23
<b>APPENDIX 1: HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY PROJECTIONS, ABS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNITY PROFILE.....</b>	<b>34</b>
PREAMBLE .....	34
GENERAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS.....	36
CULTURAL DIVERSITY .....	38
FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS .....	40
EDUCATION .....	44
EMPLOYMENT .....	45
HOUSING.....	54
TRANSPORT .....	57
FUTURE GROWTH AND POPULATION (PROJECTED SOCIAL PROFILE) .....	58

## Executive Summary

This social impact assessment evaluates the likely impacts, opportunities and constraints of the proposed rezoning of a future urban precinct to the north of the existing Morisset Township. Analysis is undertaken primarily in relation to Cooranbong Township, within the context of Morisset and the Morisset District Planning Area.

Morisset Planning District is one of the fastest growing Districts in Lake Macquarie, although the majority of growth has been on the Morisset Peninsula. Western Lake Macquarie is positioned to control this development to the city's advantage, but not to avoid it - as the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has made clear through the Sydney Futures Forum ([www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au](http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au)) as recently as this year.

According to Lifestyle 2020, Cooranbong is intended to continue to provide a local commercial, retail, employment, educational and social focus for the surrounding residential and rural area. This role is intended to be strengthened by several factors, including new medium, low density and rural-residential development. Specific mention is made of the role of future low – density urban development in the vicinity of Cooranbong airport (located within subject site) as a factor contributing to strengthening Cooranbong's role in the LGA.

Lifestyle 2020 also identifies the village character of Cooranbong as requiring protection so that pressures for urban development are accommodated in a sensitive way, including with regard to social impacts.

The preliminary Draft Structure Plan<sup>1</sup> of the North Cooranbong proposal is based on a vision and development philosophy that, when implemented, will produce sound social development. Specific initiatives and principles featured in the plan that are supported by Key Insights and will deliver positive social impacts include intentions to:

- Respond to regional and local contexts, by building on existing urban form and character;
- Provide links with surroundings, by optimising accessibility and retaining natural landscape;
- Encourage sufficient use of existing facilities and infrastructure, by ensuring walkability;
- Reflect the history of the place, by retaining specific on-site features;
- Provide economically viable land uses that reinforce and complement the existing settlement of Cooranbong, by provision of sufficient and complementary new facilities;
- Create neighbourhoods with a clear urban structure and mix of housing choice.

The North Cooranbong project will provide the opportunity to build upon the community pride already existing within the Cooranbong community, as well as enhance opportunities for the community to expand and diversify. Other principles, such as those pertaining to responding to the natural environment and the remediation of contaminated land will also have positive social impacts, particularly benefiting local community health, identity and wellbeing.

It is estimated that the proposed residential component of the development will potentially provide some 1940 dwellings at full development and ultimately cater for an additional 5,044 new residents in the Cooranbong/Avondale area<sup>2</sup>. This increase is significant in terms of local needs as it

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<sup>1</sup> Architectus. Draft North Cooranbong Structure Plan. Prepared for Johnson Property Group, August 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Leyshon Consulting. Economic Impact Assessment – Proposed Retail Development Cooranbong, August 2004.

effectively doubles the existing population. However, the figure needs also to be viewed in context of the Morisset Planning District (population 19,160).

Cooranbong's highly individual, if not unique character has been shaped by its individual history of development, influenced primarily by the Adventist Church. This has created a population that differs from the demographic average of the rest of the region. However, any development proposal for north of Cooranbong would be likely to accommodate a more diverse range of residents from those who currently live in Cooranbong. New housing on any scale would likely be taken up by a market closer to the city and state averages, with the new population closer to that of Morisset and Morisset Peninsula than the Cooranbong township.

A diversifying local community in Cooranbong is likely to enrich the church rather than negatively impact on it. It is usually the case in local communities across Australia that the Church community is in the minority. Yet while church numbers are generally declining, many of these small local churches thrive. Church groups with very clear parameters are rules often are best at attracting new members (National Church Life Survey) and the Seventh Day Adventist community may well find itself in this position in Cooranbong. The challenge may be ensuring that the existing largely church based community is able to welcome and integrate new and diverse residents into the local area.

The new population is likely to be younger, principally comprised of couples with children under 15. The ability to buy a first home will be a major attraction. It must be accepted that the area – at this point – does not hold the social attraction for single people that Sydney does. Most of the buyers would be young couples.

While a new development at Cooranbong is somewhat distant from Sydney to be a commuter town – it will more likely support the development of CBD-style commercial facilities, restaurants and other leisure facilities, at Morisset. It would no doubt attract people who would commute to work on the Central Coast, in Newcastle and in some cases, in Sydney.

The existing population of Morisset or Cooranbong, especially those who have come to retire near the lake, will not be pushed out. Rather, they should benefit from improved local services. Some of these services will result from market recognition that older residents are a growing segment of the population, while others – cinemas and restaurants, for example – simply from increases in the size of the market.

Factors that may affect the social profile of future residents will be the size of housing lots, the price of housing lots, marketing strategies and specific building conventions or architectural design. Additions such as cycle ways and access routes to public green spaces will all influence the type of person that is attracted to the subdivision. Cooranbong is likely to benefit from an injection of diversity in housing options and population groups. It is well known that diversity within cultures, ages, lifestyles and family structures contribute to vibrant and sustainable communities.

This positive link between diversity of housing options with diversity and sustainability within the local population is a key theme of this report. The North Cooranbong development proposal provides an opportunity to expand and diversify housing options in an area traditionally dominated by large rural residential housing. The provision of mixed housing stock that can cater for a wide range of incomes, household structures and residential and work types, as well cater to all stages of the life-cycle, will build Cooranbong as a diverse, multigenerational and ultimately sustainable community. Mixed housing will also increase Cooranbong's capacity to accommodate

persons/students associated with the growth of Avondale College and the supporting ensemble of retail and service providers.

Potential positive impacts associated with the rezoning and subsequent residential development include:

- Contribution to the social mix of Cooranbong and Morisset Planning District, helping to maintain a vibrant sustainable community – i.e. Lot size mix, housing options, diverse marketing.
- Potential for affordable housing and adaptable housing. Sustainable housing stock increased.
- Potential to target key social groups, such as young families, first home-buyers, sustainable life-stylers, and young adults.
- Enhancement of housing options for existing local residents.
- Increase in eligible volunteers for community service.
- Jobs during the construction phase conservatively estimated at 9 initial jobs per \$1M in construction costs. These jobs would include a range of trades including excavation, landscaping, builders, tilers, roofers, concreters, plumbers, electricians etc.
- Multiplier effects throughout the region as a result of construction employment.
- Jobs in the supply industry as result of construction activity.
- Increased trade and economic activity in the surrounding area including more customers for urban centre of Morisset.

The potential negative impacts of the proposed development include:

- Increased noise in the local area, particularly during excavation / construction.
- Increased traffic on the local road system.
- Contribution to longer-term stress on government funded services, if extra services are not provided proportionate to increased population levels.
- Potential isolation from existing community if block size, aesthetics and design differs significantly from existing style and atmosphere.

In order to mitigate potential negative impacts Key Insights points to some areas for consideration by the proponent and Council:

- Shared resources (community, commercial, educative) will be key networking mechanisms between the existing Cooranbong community and new residents of the development.
- Education is important in Cooranbong. Links between the community and schools, and schools and schools, will help build a sense of local cohesion whilst maintaining individual aspirations and philosophies. The inclusion of a joint venture between the school and a community centre would contribute to this strategy, with the community being assured of a convenient and continuous public access mechanism.
- The expansion of the existing commercial centre would assist in focusing the community and offering equal benefits to existing residents.
- Physical networking in the form of cycleways, pedestrian paths that facilitate easy movement through and between the communities will help ease demarcation between new and old residential sites.

- A Cooranbong Community Development committee that is open to new and old residents, as well as community groups and service providers, would be valuable in networking the community and providing a focus for community development activity that is not specific to the Avondale community, but inclusive of it.

It is the conclusion of this report that Cooranbong, in conjunction with the commercial and community facilities associated with the project as well as the resources of the wider Morisset Planning District, will have access to sufficient services and infrastructure sufficient to support this level of development. With careful attention to issues of community coherence and integration at the planning stage, it has the potential to contribute to the realisation of the objectives of Lake Macquarie's Lifestyle 2020 strategy and Social Plan, as well as conform to the principles of DCP 1.

The proposed rezoning would deliver a net social and economic gain to the Morisset Planning District. Potential negative impacts can be mitigated with careful and strategic planning.

Ellen Davis-Meehan  
Director  
Key Insights Pty Ltd

## **1. Introduction**

As part of the rezoning application Key Insights has been asked to submit a proposal for a Social Assessment that addresses opportunities and constraints related to the development of the Cooranbong site.

The research includes demographic analysis, the anticipated social profile, an outline of existing services and facilities, an assessment of demand for social infrastructure were the development to proceed and an analysis of economic and social opportunities afforded by the development.

There are no major issues of concern other than the general issues associated with population growth, namely:

- Access to transport
- Access to community facilities / shops / convenience shops
- Affordable housing
- Adaptable housing
- Access to childcare and schools

## **2. The Brief**

### **2.1 Objective**

The overall aim of this Social impact Assessment is to inform the rezoning structure planning and process which has the objective of establishing the most suitable urban form for the subject site.

The objective of this technical Social Impact Assessment is to investigate the likely social and economic impacts of the development, with specific regard to:

- The existing social profile;
- Existing community and recreation facilities; and
- Anticipated social profile and its expected demand for community facilities.

### **2.2 Social Assessment**

Social assessment is conducted to inform socially sound development; that is, development that has investigated possible social impacts and their significance, and considered how to minimise any adverse impacts and maximise any positive impacts.

Social assessment assists in establishing the full facts about the development proposal as a tool to well-informed decision making. It can also contribute to informing the community about development proposals, and facilitate community participation in the planning and development assessment process.

### 3. Methodology

Key Insights Pty Ltd investigated the likely social and economic costs and benefits of the proposed residential development. Key research areas included: -

- Detailed demographic profile of the local community (Cooranbong and Morisset Planning District). Focus on local employment, transport needs, housing demand (including adaptable housing) and available services and the link between population growth and service demand and supply.
- Assessment of the likely profile of the new residential community including assessment of impacts and demands on local infrastructure; such as schools, childcare and health care facilities.
- Review of relevant planning documents (LMCC).
- Discussion of cumulative impacts on local businesses and local people, including economic impacts of the proposed development (number of likely jobs generated etc).
- Preparation of a Social Impact Assessment in accordance with Lake Macquarie City Council Policy.

#### Tasks

##### Demographic and community profile of the Cooranbong Planning District.

Essential to provide baseline data about the surrounding planning district including details about age, gender, occupation, income, family formation, employment and social trends. Sourced from ABS.

##### Document research & Council Liaison

Review the current research including Council's Social Plan and Lifestyle 2020. Draw out relevant information and refer to other expert reports being prepared for the development. Define the opportunities for the residential development to fit with existing planning documentation.

##### Prepare Likely Social Profile

Predict the likely profile of the new residents and analyze potential contributions to, and impacts on Northern Cooranbong. Include consideration of walkability, connectivity, open space and impacts on existing services.

##### Prepare Social Impact Assessment Report

Write a report that synthesizes and responds to:

- The existing social profile
- The existing community and recreation facilities and services
- The anticipated social profile and the expected demand for community facilities

The SIA includes an impact matrix designed against Lake Macquarie Council's Social Impact Policy.



## **4. The Development**

### **4.1 Site Description**

The subject property is a 278.2ha parcel of land located in Northern Cooranbong. The site is situated north of Freemans Drive, west of Avondale Road and east of Alton Road.

The site contains Cooranbong Airport and Avondale College School of Aviation. There are currently two poultry farms in the core study area.

The site has excellent views to the Watagan Mountains.

### **4.2 Proposed Use**

It is understood that Lake Macquarie Council has recently rezoned the land for Investigation as part of their Local Environmental Plan 2002, with the view to the land being suitably located for residential purposes subject to land capability.

The proponent has a number of ideas for the site, but in the first instance is seeking to add value through a Masterplan and rezoning.

The proponent proposes the subject land be used for a mix of residential, commercial, educational and recreational purposes. According to the Structure Plan Option 10<sup>3</sup>, the site will include 90ha of retained landscape and 188.2ha of developable land.

The total land available for residential dwellings is 161.8 ha. This is estimated to potentially provide some 1940 dwellings with an on-site population of about 5,044 persons. There will be 17 ha for school use (already existing – Avondale School) and 1.5 ha for community use.

### **4.3 Access, Transport and Traffic**

Cooranbong is well located for access to a range of significant regional centres. It is located six minutes off the F3 freeway and is therefore easily accessible from Sydney, Newcastle and the Central Coast. Cooranbong is located within a 50 minute drive from Newcastle CBD (44km), and a 1.5 hour drive from Sydney CBD. It is located 4km from Dora Creek, 6km from Morisset and 41km from Cessnock.

Morisset Bus Company runs daily general public services between Cooranbong and Morisset Railway Station, which is located on the main northern railway link connecting Morisset to Sydney and Newcastle. There are 12 services from Cooranbong to Morisset and 9 services from Morisset to Cooranbong per day. There are a number of bus stops along Freemans Drive.

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<sup>3</sup> Structure Plan Option 10, Avondale, Cooranbong. Prepared by Architectus, 27.10.04.

Morisset Bus Company provides school services to the area, servicing the local Cooranbong Primary school and providing services further a field for Avondale College from such areas as Kurri Kurri and the Central Coast. The proposed expansion in population is likely to lead to increases in existing bus services, particularly for school students who tend to be high users.

The Traffic Implication report prepared for North Cooranbong<sup>4</sup> has taken a co-ordinated approach and looks at on-site road structure as well as the possibilities of improving the existing transport network through provision of additional traffic, pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure.

Improvement of the Cooranbong's existing transport network as outlined in the study will have positive social impacts. It will benefit Cooranbong's existing community and enhance access to existing town centre. The commitment to include cycleways will provide substantial social benefits in terms of connectivity, inclusiveness, safety, accessibility and public health for multiple age groups within the new community. It should also contribute to lowering car usage.

#### **4.4 Assessment of Economic Impacts**

The proposed rezoning and subsequent development, if approved, would increase economic activity in the immediate area by way of a population increase. This would benefit existing local business and contribute to stimulating increased economic development within Cooranbong Township, the Morisset Urban Centre, and the wider Morisset Planning District. The potential of the proposal to stimulate the local economy is confirmed by the Economic Impact Assessment prepared for the proposal which found that the increased population would lead to the need for additional retail, commercial and other services in the local area<sup>5</sup>.

There would also be substantial benefits for the building industry and supply chain as a result of housing development<sup>6</sup>. There would be employment generated in the building sector throughout the construction stage of the proposed subdivision development. It is likely that local suppliers would be used as far as possible.

#### **4.5 Existing Services and Facilities in Cooranbong**

Freemans Drive is the recognised commercial, retail and community centre of Cooranbong.

##### **4.5.1 Retail and commercial facilities**

Cooranbong is currently serviced by the following businesses located in a small shopping complex on the corner of Freemans Drive and Alton Road:

- Hair Salon

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<sup>4</sup> Johnson Group. North Cooranbong Rezoning: Traffic Implications. Stage 2 Report.

<sup>5</sup> Leyshon Consulting. EIA: Proposed Retail Development – Cooranbong, August 2004

<sup>6</sup> The level of building activity and economic impact would be dependent on the number of lots, style and size of the housing and timeframe for implementation. This detail would be available at D.A. stage.

- Bakery
- Pharmacy
- Welcome Mart supermarket
- Cafe
- Total Physio Centre
- Clothing store
- Newsagency / Australia Post
- First National Real Estate
- Music store providing tuition, a recording studio and general music sales
- Audiometrist
- Optometrist
- Beauty Salon
- The Elephant shop
- Takeaway shop
- Medical Practice with 3 Doctors
- Medical practice with 1 Doctor
- Watchmaker (located in private residence in Alton Road)

Other businesses in Cooranbong, mostly located along Freeman's Drive are, include:

- Cooranbong Auto Centre
- Cooranbong Animal Hospital
- Denture Clinic
- Pottery studio
- True Value Hardware
- Adventist bookshop
- Sanitarium Health Foods

#### 4.5.2 Medical Facilities

Cooranbong is serviced by two Medical Centres, Cooranbong Medical Centre and Southlakes Medical Group.

Cooranbong Medical Centre is staffed by one G.P. Monday – Friday. Southlakes Medical Group is staffed by 3 part-time doctors over from Monday – Friday, with both Monday and Friday being half days. Only 1 G.P. is in the practice at any one time, equating to a service capacity of 1 full time doctor over a four day week.

The combined G.P services offered within Cooranbong equate to 2 full time G.Ps working slightly less than a Monday – Friday week.

#### 4.5.3 Recreational facilities

Cooranbong is located approximately 6 kilometres from Lake Macquarie and accompanying lake based recreational facilities. Local recreational facilities include:

- Cooranbong Park, which has playground equipment and a covered stage
- Cooranbong Recreation and Equestrian Reserve

#### **4.5.4 Public transport**

Morisset Bus Company runs 9-12 daily public services between Cooranbong and Morisset, and provides school services to and from the area (See Section 4.3).

#### **4.5.5 Educational facilities**

- Hideaway Preschool
- Cooranbong Public School (primary)
- Seventh Day Adventist School (adjacent to site – primary and secondary)
- Seventh Day Adventist College.
- Avondale Community Preschool

#### **4.5.6 Community and recreational facilities and services**

All these services listed below are in an approx range of 2.5 to 3 km to the site depending on which access road is used Avondale Road or Alton Road. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has a strong presence in the area, operating the schools and colleges, retirement villages and nursing home.

- Cooranbong Community Services Centre, offering crisis financial assistance, counselling, elder care and home care services.
- Cooranbong Park, with a playground and covered stage for performances
- Hideaway Preschool
- Primary school
- Seventh Day Adventist School (adjacent to site)
- Seventh Day Adventist College.
- Aged care Nursing Home
- 2 Retirement Villages
- SES and Rural Fire brigade
- Catholic Church
- Seventh Day Adventist Church

### **4.6 Existing Services and Facilities in Morisset**

Morisset Town Centre is the recognised commercial, retail and community centre of Morisset District. It serves the local communities of Dora Creek, Cooranbong, the Morisset Peninsula, Mandalong, Wyee Point and Wyee. As would be expected of a township with this role, Morisset is well provided in terms of commercial, retail and recreational facilities.

#### **4.6.1 Retail and commercial facilities**

According to Council, there are in excess of 464 businesses currently operating in the Morisset – Cooranbong area. Morisset currently offers 9000 sqm of retail space and 4000 sqm of office

space<sup>7</sup>. The closest major shopping centre to Morisset is at Tuggerah 27km, or 20 mins away by car.

At present, Bi Lo is the largest store in Morisset and is open 24 Hours. A Coles complex with over 20 specialty shops is also planned for Morisset.

“Centennial Centre” is located in the main street of Morisset (Dora Street). Ray White Real Estate, who lease the shops in Centennial Centre reports that centre has a:

- Café
- Real Estate
- Salvation Army shop
- Clothes shops
- Health food shop
- Travel Agent
- St George Bank
- Photo shop
- Accountant
- Fabric Shop

On Dora Street, other shops include:

- Optometrists
- Dry Cleaners
- Garage
- Bread shop
- Pharmacy
- Photographic Shop
- Surf shop
- Newsagents
- Bowling Club

#### *Morisset East Industrial Area*

Morisset East Industrial Avenue is located at Advantage Ave, Gateway Bvd, Accolade Ave, and Alliance Ave. Dowling Real Estate Morisset estimates that there are roughly 150 businesses in that area. These include:

- Caltex Service Station
- Mitre 10
- Morisset Mega Markets
- Exhaust Centre
- Tyre Barn
- Car Body Repairers
- Morisset Pots
- Power Barn

#### *4.6.2 Community and Sporting facilities*

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<sup>7</sup> [www.lakemac.com.au/business/city\\_town\\_morisset.asp](http://www.lakemac.com.au/business/city_town_morisset.asp)

Community and Sporting facilities within Morisset include:

- Morisset RSL & Country Club
- Southlakes Neighbourhood Centre
- Morisset Branch Library
- Public Swimming Pool
- Morisset Indoor Sports Centre
- Several Park areas
- Several sports ovals
- Morisset and District Tennis Centre
- Fire Station
- Showground

#### 4.6.3 Medical Facilities

Morisset Township is serviced by one local G.P. who is currently “stretched”.

Southlakes Medical Group operate a limited outreach G.P service in Morisset three half-days a week, but their books are currently closed to new patients.

There are currently about 8-9 doctors in the Morisset District.

## 4.7 Avondale School

Avondale School is located on land associated with the subject site. Discussions with Avondale School Principal, Dr David Faull, indicate that the school has a 6-year Masterplan to increase enrolments and develop a large public access multi-purpose and sporting facility. The current population of Avondale School is 55% non-Adventist, and 45% Adventist.

Avondale School has a current enrolment of approximately 866 students. It has plans to expand the school enrolments by up to 350 students over a 6 year time frame, beginning 2005. Avondale School offers three tiers of education: an Early Learners (Pre-school) program, a Primary School component (K-6) and a Secondary School (7-12).

Avondale School's Early Learners program has a current enrolment of 185 students with a capacity for 200 places.

The Primary School has a current enrolment of 406 students and has 2 streams across Kindergarten to Year 6. In 2005, the School will be commencing 3 streams of Kindergarten with a view to increase all grades to 3 streams and grow the primary school by 100-150 students over 6-8 years.

The Secondary School component has a current enrolment of 460 students and currently has 3 streams across Years 7-12. Upon enrolment demand, the school has plans to expand to 4 streams across years 7-12.

According to Mr Faull, the expansion of Avondale School is not dependent upon the population growth associated with the proposed development. He feels that general trends toward local population growth within Morisset, Bonnells Bay, Morisset Park and Cooranbong (and other development proposals in these areas) will contribute to feeding the school's expansion.

As reported above, Avondale School has a fair split of Seventh Day Adventists and non-Seventh Day Adventist students and offers "quality education with a Christian bias". Although the secondary school is not "selective" per se, current Year 6 students are assessed and incoming students are accepted if they match the ability-level of current students. Dr Faull estimates that about half of the applications for incoming secondary students are accepted into Year 7. This is because school cannot cater to large numbers of students with special learning needs.

The school has recently submitted plans to Council regarding the development of a Multi-purpose Centre. This centre is proposed to double as a publicly accessible community centre, but be managed by Avondale School. The Multipurpose Hall/Community Centre proposed by Avondale School includes a 1200 -1500 capacity hall with a quality sound system, 2 full size basketball courts, squash courts and possibly a swimming pool. The School must currently transport students either to Morisset or to Avondale College to access such facilities.

Mr. Faull reports negotiations regarding the proposed centre to be continuing with Council. The school is "quite relaxed" in regards to the Centre being built on Council land and being a public facility. This option is desirable to the School primarily because of the significant financial savings associated with it being a joint-venture.

#### 4.8 Service Demand and Supply

Previous primary research by Key Insights regarding the capacity of services in Morisset is also incorporated into the following summary of existing and anticipated service demand:

*Local schools* – Avondale School has plans to expand the school and increase enrolments by up to 350 students over 6 years. The proximity of the school to the development site will increase its attractiveness, and it is likely to enrol a higher than typical proportion of new residents<sup>8</sup>. However, the selection process of Avondale School, as well as its stated values, may mean that there will be some constraints on families accessing its services.

Cooranbong Public School indicates that it has ample playground space to give over to demountables but will not give a figure on capacity levels. Morisset High School and Morisset Primary School are currently operating at below-capacity level<sup>9</sup>. However, previous research by Key Insights indicates that Morisset High School is getting to the stage of needing to look at its capacity and planning in light of the number of local residential development proposals in the area.

Figure 4.8.1 (below) compares current primary and secondary enrolments, capacity levels, and anticipated student population growth. **The figures suggest that there is likely to be a need for a increased public primary school places in Cooranbong over the mid to long term to cater for**

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<sup>8</sup> Typically, there is a 30:70 ratio of students from a new development who attend non-government: government schools. Department of Education indicates that proximity of Adventist school to site could mean the ratio shifts to 50:50.

<sup>9</sup> Previous research conducted by Key Insights: Morisset SIA Morisset Park Urban Development.

**population growth associated with the development as well as other infill development in the local area.** The Department of Education has indicated that it would be likely to upgrade and expand the existing Cooranbong Public School to cater for an expected 300-400 extra students, in preference to creating a new school site within or close to the development<sup>10</sup>.

**Figure 4.8.1: Existing school enrolments and anticipated additional enrolments**

	Existing enrolments	Stated capacity level/plans for expansion	Extra/vacant student space	Anticipated new student population at full development <sup>11</sup>
<b>Primary</b>				
Avondale School	406	556	150 places	<b>Approx. 500 additional students</b>
Cooranbong Public School	254	Likely to have capacity to expand for 300-400 extra students.	300 – 400 places	
<b>Secondary</b>				
Avondale School	460	660	200 places	<b>Approx. 350 additional students</b>
Morisset High School	950	1050	100 places	

*Health services* – There is 1 full time and 3 part-time G.Ps operating within Cooranbong, equating to just under 2 full-time G.Ps working a Monday to Friday week. The recommended NSW ratio of doctors per population is 1 per 1500 people making the existing Cooranbong population fairly well serviced (considering that many rural and regional towns fall well short of this ratio). National trends show regional shortages of doctors and difficulties in attracting new doctors to regional and rural areas. However, it would be hoped that the growth anticipated for Cooranbong would attract more GPs and the proponent should consider some attractive medical suites within the commercial space. (At DA stage).

*Aged care* – Cooranbong has a number of aged care facilities and Cooranbong older people appear well catered for. Factors increasing pressure on aged care include general trends of an aging national population.

*Childcare* – Lake Macquarie Council has recently approved the relocation of Cooranbong Preschool in Cooranbong, but this new facility will not provide any new places beyond existing levels. It is also understood that an amended version of a proposed childcare centre at Morisset Industrial Park is pending approval. Council has also recently acquired funding for increased family day care positions in selected locations within the District, including Cooranbong. Current childcare providers within Morisset Planning District identify increasing need for increased services, particularly in the 0-2 age group<sup>12</sup>, and it is unlikely that new and pending approvals will have the capacity to cater far beyond present waiting lists. Due to anticipated trends towards younger families (identified in our report and by Leyshon Consulting), there is likely to be a need for more localised publicly accessible childcare services located within Cooranbong if rezoning is approved.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Lesley Greenwood, Demographic analyst, Department of Education.

<sup>11</sup> Figure uses trends associated with Morisset population growth and patterns which indicate approximately 10% of population attending primary school and approximately 7% attending secondary school.

<sup>12</sup> As above



*Public transport* – Planning Districts on the western side of Lake Macquarie are generally noted as having very poor public transport systems, particularly on the weekends. Cooranbong is linked to Morisset via regular daily services, and Morisset is in turn linked to Sydney and Newcastle via the rail line. Southlakes Neighbourhood Centre and Southlakes Youth Centre report lack of adequate off-rail transport as an issue in the area<sup>13</sup>.

*Community and Recreational Facilities* – Cooranbong has limited sporting facilities, but ample passive recreational opportunities afforded by its natural amenity, such as bushland and open space. There are sufficient ovals within Cooranbong to cater to growing population. Morisset is well-served in recreational and sporting facilities; although the local youth services reports a lack of youth based recreational activities in Morisset Township itself.

The future Morisset Multipurpose Centre is currently under construction and will open in September/October 2004. The North Cooranbong project is likely to support an appropriate community centre that is flexible enough to cater to changing community needs and which is accessible to the general public. The inclusion of a child-care centre as a permanent tenant co-located with the community centre is an option. The inclusion of recreational facilities such as a BBQ area and playground, as well as a small sporting provision such as a handball or half or full size basketball court, could be included within community centre vicinity.

The provision of Community Facilities needs to be investigated in light of the current Avondale School proposal which includes the provision of a large multipurpose centre and recreational facilities (2 basket ball courts, possibly a swimming pool) within the vicinity of Avondale School. **It is recommended that the proponent looks into opportunities to negotiate with Avondale School and Council regarding joint provision of this larger community facility.** If this proposal goes ahead with adequate provision for public access, it will negate the need for the smaller community centre described above. However, the smaller centre described above is sufficient to cater to population growth associated with the proposed North Cooranbong development.

*Young people* – The Southlakes Youth Service, presently operating an outreach service in Bonnells Bay, reports a lack of recreational facilities for young people within the Morisset District. Cooranbong young people are well served by local Churches, but their needs are likely to expand as this part of the demographic expands and diversifies. Educational and recreational services offered by Avondale College add to the opportunities available to Cooranbong young people.

*Retail and commercial facilities* – The Economic Impact Assessment conducted by Leyshon Consulting identifies a clear need for an additional neighbourhood-scale centre within Cooranbong to service the proposed development. This centre would support a full-line supermarket and additional specialty retailing, and preferably be grafted onto the existing Cooranbong Centre. Key Insights' social analysis affirms Leyshon Consulting's recommendation. Adequate provision of local retail facilities contributes to a sense of local identity, provides spatial community focus and reduces car usage. The inclusion of a small café and/or convenience shop, preferably adjacent to any on-site community facilities, is also desirable.

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<sup>13</sup> As above

## 5. Demographic and Community Profile

A comprehensive demographic profile of the existing community, including an anticipated social profile of the new population, is attached in Appendix 2.

A brief summary of key points is included below.

### 5.1 Existing community

- Cooranbong has an unusually strong affiliation with the Seventh Day Adventist church.
- Cooranbong has an older population, with a high rate of residents aged over 75.
- There are high levels of residents born overseas.
- There are low levels of indigenous Australians compared to Morisset.
- The level of couples living without children is high but below the Australian average of 36%.
- People in northern Cooranbong are the most likely to be married, least likely to be widowed and most likely to be separated - but not divorced. Divorce is not as common in the Cooranbong area as in other areas
- The influence of the Seventh Day Adventist development of resources in the Cooranbong area is evident in a number of unusual features of education in the area.
- There is an outstanding statistical anomaly in the percentage of children in the area who attend a non-government, non-Catholic school – in this case, the Avondale schools.
- A high proportion of residents in Northern Cooranbong have attained a Bachelor degree and an unusually high proportion for the region has postgraduate degrees:
- The labour force in northern Cooranbong is unusually small, with more of the resident population at the Census out of the labour force than in it.
- There is considerable resilience in employment in the Cooranbong area, where the participation rate is low largely because of the age of the population.
- The largest sector of employment is manufacturing, followed by Health & community services and then Education, compared to retailing in Lake Macquarie and across NSW.
- The proportion of professionals is significantly higher in northern Cooranbong and Cooranbong. The proportion of elementary clerical and sales workers is low.
- Northern Cooranbong has more townhouses and villas than Morisset, while Cooranbong has a higher proportion of flats.
- Cooranbong residents have high car usage. However, the rate of people walking to work is higher than across Lake Macquarie, reflecting the planned location of work and residences.
- Levels of income do not reflect the economic strength of the community, which is better analysed as the collective assets of the community: the schools, college, and aged care facilities owned by the church.

### 5.2 Future population

While the demographics of the community can be understood in an historical context, they are of limited value in projecting what the community might look like in future. Cooranbong's future growth and development can be better understood as an amalgam of the community around it, its links to the regional service centre, and the broader growth patterns affecting western Lake Macquarie.

Key points include:

- Any development proposal for north of Cooranbong would be likely to accommodate residents different from those who live in Cooranbong.
- New housing on any scale would likely be taken up by a market closer to the city and state averages. This would mean a younger population, principally of couples with children under 15. Commuters to Sydney and first home buyers will also be attracted.
- Employment in northern Cooranbong is concentrated in different industries from those which employ most Australians. The particular patterns should not be expected to repeat with new arrivals in the area who are not part of the historical community. Patterns of employment are more likely to follow Morisset and the Morisset Peninsula.
- Based on the population in surrounding areas, the male partner would most likely be a tradesman aged 35 to 39, and earning \$600 a week in manufacturing or over \$1,000 in construction if he is in a building trade. His female partner would work part-time in health and community services, from the time their youngest child starts school, and earn \$200 to \$300 a week depending on how many shifts she gets. She will leave the labour force at about 45 years of age.
- The average age of the Cooranbong region would lower due to population growth associated with the proposal.

There is no doubt that the development will have a significant social impact upon Cooranbong, The challenge is to undertake this demographic shift with as little disruption to the existing amenity and cohesiveness of the community and with maximum continuation of Cooranbong's existing character and identity.

## 6. Contribution to the Lake Macquarie City Council Strategies

There are a number of relevant policy documents that cover the proposed development site. Salient points from these reports are referenced below and specific suggestions for the development of the site are made where appropriate.

### 6.1 Lifestyle 2020: A Strategy for our Future

Through extensive community consultation and workshops Lake Macquarie City Council has produced a Plan titled *Lifestyle 2020: A Strategy for Our Future*. The forward by the then Mayor, John Kilpatrick emphasises the following:

*"The Plan focuses on the things that we believe matter to people. These include ways to protect the Lake and waterways from the impacts of urban growth, the maintenance and enhancement of the City's physical setting, and creating jobs for the City's residents to meet the demands in population growth.*

*It also focuses on making our centres safe and dynamic by encouraging business and housing growth within them, providing housing to satisfy lifestyle changes and improving the community and recreation facilities for all residents."*<sup>14</sup>

According to *Lifestyle 2020*, the population of the Morisset Planning District will increase by 7,909 persons, to a total population of 25,000 by 2020. The future pattern of urban settlement is to encourage urban growth within larger settlements, predominantly Morisset. The village character of Cooranbong is identified for protection that ensures that pressures for urban development are accommodated in a sensitive way, including socially.

According to *Lifestyle 2020*, Cooranbong will continue to provide a local commercial, retail, employment, educational and social focus for the surrounding residential and rural area. This role intends to be strengthened by several factors, including new medium, low density and rural-residential development. Specific mention is made of the role of future low – density urban development in the vicinity of Cooranbong airport (located within subject site) as a factor contributing to strengthening Cooranbong's role.

The proposed rezoning has the opportunity to directly contribute to the *Lifestyle 2020* agenda in the following ways:

- Building upon Cooranbong's role as a local centre within the Planning District via increased residential development.
- Encouraging a range of dwelling types and thereby encouraging diversity within population
- Providing a mixture of lot sizes and housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their life cycle, and in one area if they so choose.
- Encouraging opportunity for housing that meets special needs, such as older people or people with physical or mental disabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> Lake Macquarie City Council – *Lifestyle 2020; A Strategy for Our Future*. Page 1.

- Ensuring the development connects with existing areas.
- Providing adaptable housing that encourages home-based employment activities, particularly home-offices
- Contributing to safe, convenient and readily accessible access and transport links for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Incorporating quality public open spaces for passive and active recreation.

## **6.2 Lake Macquarie Social Plan**

Lake Macquarie Social Plan incorporates a community profile, an assessment of needs, and a set of strategies and action plans based on broad community concerns. It emphasises meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups within the community. In order to assess needs the Social Plan utilises a number of methods, including the *Lake Macquarie Social Planning Quality of Life Study*, as well as a range of community workshops and consultations.

The Social Plan describes Morisset Planning District as being one of the fastest growing Districts in Lake Macquarie, although the majority of growth has been on the Morisset Peninsula.

It reports that Morisset District residents strongly value the low key rural nature of their District, have a strong sense of community, and a high level of regard for the history and heritage of their district.

This value of neighbourhood character should be maintained in the proposed residential development through creating a village atmosphere, promoting the bushland setting and providing informal public meeting spaces such as park areas or garden seats throughout the development.

Respondents in the study listed a number of specific requests or concerns regarding Morisset Planning District. Resident requests that are relevant to the subject proposal include:

- Size and style of building blocks to keep low key rural atmosphere
- Use parks and buffers between housing developments
- More footpaths
- Improved street lighting
- Need to investigate economic and tourist opportunities for district
- More cycleways
- Need for more and improved buses and taxi services.
- Employment (particularly for youth)
- Improved road safety
- Improved protection of the environment, especially waterways
- Retain bushland.

Whilst the above issues arise in relation to Morisset Planning District, they are not unique to Morisset District and Cooranbong. Many apply across Lake Macquarie Districts and are indicative of Lake Macquarie residents' attitudes towards service provision and future development more generally.

## **6.3 Development Control Plan No.1 – Principles of Development (DCP No. 1). Prepared by Urban Design Team LMC<sub>2</sub> Consulting Group. Adopted by Council 22 March 2004.**

DCP1 is a support document to the LEP 2004 that provides guidance and detailed requirements for development in Lake Macquarie. An objective of this Plan is to implement the Lifestyle 2020 Strategy by facilitating ecologically sustainable development.

DCP 1 requirements or desired outcomes are described through Performance Criteria. Performance Criteria allow applicants to be flexible and innovative in their cooperative response to development opportunities and constraints.

#### *Social Impact Assessment*

Section 2.2 of DCP deals with social impact as a Principle of Development. The intent of Council's requirements regarding Social Impact is to ensure that development will provide positive community benefits to the locality and the City. The Performance Criteria relating to this intent requires that the development maintain and/or enhances Social Equity of the community affected by and/or likely to result from the proposed development, both now and into the future".

The social analysis undertaken within this report concurs with the Social Impact Development Principle and Social Impact Assessment performance criteria as outlined in DCP 1.

#### *Cooranbong Action Plan*

Section 4.10 of DCP 1 sets out the Cooranbong Area Plan. It highlights Cooranbong as a Seventh Day Adventist Community and identifies it as requiring specific development solutions to suit the existing character and address local issues. The specific issue listed in DCP 1 as needing consideration, and that is relevant to this report, relates to Cooranbong's "strong sense of social identity, resulting from the area's history and development".

#### *Comments*

The Development Philosophy set out in the preliminary Draft Structure Plan<sup>15</sup> for the proposal includes provisions to acknowledge and respond to issues associated with the area's history, development and identity, specifically to:

- Respond to the regional and local context, via considering the urban form of the existing environment and building on the local character and place,
- Reflect the history of the place, via retaining features on the site which allow its history to be revealed and interpreted, and;
- Provide economically viable land uses that reinforce and complement the existing settlement of Cooranbong.

Keeping with the objectives outlined above, the North Cooranbong project will provide the opportunity to build upon the community identity and pride already existing within the Cooranbong community, as well as enhance opportunities for the community to expand and diversify. Further, the Draft Structure Plan outlines a place making and community building strategy which aims to integrate with and complement the existing Cooranbong Community. The expansion of Cooranbong's existing commercial centre in preference to developing a new on-site centre, is indicative of this strategy, and will impact positively in terms of community focus, identity and cohesion.

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<sup>15</sup> Architectus. Draft North Cooranbong Structure Plan. Prepared for Johnson Property Group, August 2004.

## **7. Conclusions**

There is no doubt that the subject development will have a significant social impact upon Cooranbong. Any development proposal for north of Cooranbong would be likely to accommodate residents different from those who live in Cooranbong, with the new population being closer to state and national averages. The challenge is to undertake this demographic shift with as little disruption to the existing amenity and cohesiveness of the community and with maximum continuation and enhancement of Cooranbong's existing character and identity.

Lake Macquarie Council acknowledges Cooranbong as a unique community with a strong social identity requiring specific development solutions. Cooranbong's history of development means that much of its existing community revolves about the Avondale Adventist Church. Concerns about the impact of the development on the Church community are noted but largely unfounded.

Religion and church based faith have shown historically to have a high degree of resilience and be able to withstand, even flourish, in challenging contexts. Cooranbong's church community is strong and well resourced. These factors give it solid grounding in the community, in terms of both influence and infrastructure. A diversifying local community in Cooranbong is likely to enrich the church rather than negatively impact on it. It is usually the case in local communities across Australia that the Church community is in the minority. Yet while church numbers are generally declining, many of these small local churches thrive. Church groups with very clear parameters are rules often are best at attracting new members (National Church Life Survey) and the Seventh Day Adventist community may well find itself in this position in Cooranbong. The challenge may be ensuring that the existing largely church based community is able to welcome and integrate new and diverse residents into the local area.

The positive link between diversity of housing options with diversity and sustainability within the local population is a theme that informs this paper as well as contemporary community development research and strategies. The North Cooranbong development proposal provides an opportunity to expand and diversify housing options in an area traditionally dominated by large rural residential housing. The provision of mixed housing stock that can cater for a wide range of incomes, household structures and residential and work types, as well cater to all stages of the life-cycle, will help build Cooranbong as a diverse, multigenerational and ultimately sustainable community. Mixed housing will also increase Cooranbong's capacity to accommodate persons/students associated with the growth of Avondale College and the supporting ensemble of retail and service providers.

Key Insights' brief for this project did not include comprehensive qualitative consultation with the existing Cooranbong residents. We are therefore not in the position to make a definitive statement regarding the social impact of the development on the social fabric of the Cooranbong community. As with any social group, Cooranbong's existing community is likely to contain various perceptions of, and responses to, issues of development, difference and change.

The injection of a large new population group with markedly different social characteristics and histories will be the most significant social impact of the development for Cooranbong. This injection of diversity will offer many benefits to the local community, as indicated above. The Avondale Church is strong in both

influence and resources and should be able to maintain its significant role within the community.

Whilst Key Insights feels that the benefits of diversity outweigh negative impacts, there are two possible trajectories that may require mitigation in the movement towards socially sound development:

- 1) the emergence of a dual community comprising on one side older and predominately Seventh Day Adventist residents and on the other new and diverse residents, and subsequent alienation between the groups, or, alternatively,
- 2) the loss of Cooranbong's existing unique characteristics and community identity as new and old dissolve into new and larger melting pot;

In order to mitigate potential negative impacts Key Insights points to some areas for consideration by the proponent and Council:

- Shared resources (community, commercial, educative) will be key networking mechanisms between the existing Cooranbong community and new residents of the development.
- Education is important in Cooranbong. Links between the community and schools, and schools and schools, will help build a sense of local cohesion whilst maintaining individual aspirations and philosophies. The inclusion of a joint venture between the school and a community centre would contribute to this strategy, with the community being assured of a convenient and continuous public access mechanism.
- The expansion of the existing commercial centre would assist in focusing the community and offering equal benefits to existing residents.
- Physical networking in the form of cycleways, pedestrian paths that facilitate easy movement through and between the communities will help ease demarcation between new and old residential sites.
- A Cooranbong Community Development committee that is open to new and old residents, as well as community groups and service providers, would be valuable in networking the community and providing a focus for community development activity that is not specific to the Avondale community, but inclusive of it.

## 7.1 Overview of Analysis against the Social Impact Policy Matrix

Social Impact	Comments	Significance	Measures
Population change	▪ Rezoning may allow provision of approx. 1940 housing lots, with an influx of approximately 5044 new residents	<b>High</b> Positive economic impact	▪ Inclusion of preferably off-site commercial and on-site community facilities will cater to local population growth. ▪ Morisset District has access



			to a wide range of services and can support this population growth.
Access for people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity to promote adaptable housing</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote adaptable housing</li> <li>▪ Provide accessible walkways and guttering</li> </ul>
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traffic report takes a coordinated approach to local traffic</li> <li>▪ Increased population may lead to improved bus service.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan for adequate bus routes and shelters within or accessible to the sub-division.</li> <li>▪ Include pedestrian corridors and cycleways, as recommended in Traffic report and Draft Structure plan</li> </ul>
Community Facilities and Services (recreation, cultural and social)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Onsite community facilities (neighbourhood centre) included in preliminary plan</li> <li>▪ Preliminary plans retain landscape corridors and creek lines</li> <li>▪ Potential public access multipurpose centre proposed by Avondale School includes a hall to seat up to 1500, 2 basketball courts, and possibly a swimming pool.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintenance of existing vegetation and wildlife corridors for passive recreation</li> <li>▪ Provision of open green space accessible via cycleways, landscaped pathways and/or pedestrian corridors.</li> <li>▪ Negotiation with Avondale school and Council regarding potential for joint development of large public access multipurpose centre (as proposed by Avondale).</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of on-site community centre with BBQ's, childcare centre and ½ or full size basketball court (provision of this facility should be viewed in light of proposed Avondale multipurpose centre which, if implemented, will meet demand for smaller community facility).</li> </ul>
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased population increases surveillance of 'after hours' activity.</li> <li>▪ Increased road traffic without increased pedestrian or bicycle measures may decrease public safety.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate lighting</li> <li>▪ Design roads for bikes and pedestrians, as indicated in Traffic Study</li> <li>▪ Implement Safety by Design Principles</li> </ul>
Cultural and Community Well-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cooranbong has unique cultural and</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include provisions to promote Adventist identity,</li> </ul>

Being (community structure and identity)	<p>heritage qualities (Adventist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to add to mixed communities, mixed housing urban renewal principles whilst respecting heritage</li> <li>▪ Mix of housing increases diversity and sustainability</li> <li>▪ Adventist Church is strong and well resourced.</li> </ul>		<p>culture and history in local area, as indicated in Draft Structure plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include access to public green spaces</li> <li>▪ Include attractive landscaping and user friendly pedestrian corridors</li> <li>▪ Explore idea of clustered or themed commercial/ community facilities, eg, alternative health services</li> <li>▪ Promote diversity and sustainability, including via mixed housing lots</li> </ul>
Health		<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the attractiveness of the area to potential GPs – consider medial suites</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of jobs in construction</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote local contracts</li> </ul>
Local Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased population equals increased business</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure commercial facilities complement existing commercial centre</li> </ul>
Linkages between development and existing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential to connect with and build on existing strong local community</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include cycleways and walkways between new and existing community.</li> <li>▪ Community, commercial and recreational facilities aimed at serving wider community.</li> <li>▪ Enhancement of housing options for existing local residents.</li> </ul>
Needs of particular groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Depends on project marketing – could provide for affordable housing, retirees, young families, first home buyers.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore affordable and adaptable housing options (Some smaller lots, home offices)</li> </ul>
Perceptions of risk or community fears		<b>Low</b>	
Social Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This development has the potential to address social equity for groups such as first home buyers and aged people, but this can not be determined before prices and marketing strategies are set.</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote to younger families.</li> <li>▪ Some higher density options may increase affordability &amp; accessibility across diverse social groups.</li> </ul>

The North Cooranbong project will provide the opportunity to build upon the community pride already existing within the Cooranbong community, as well as enhance opportunities for the community to expand and diversify.

The preliminary Draft Structure plan offered by the proponent is based on a vision that includes principles towards development that is sensitive to the needs and identity of the existing community, and if implemented accordingly, will do much towards achieving socially sound development. Other principles outlined in the Draft Structure Plan, such as those pertaining to responding to the natural environment and the remediation of contaminated land also have positive social impacts, particularly benefiting local community health, identity and wellbeing.

It is the conclusion of this report that Cooranbong, in conjunction with the commercial facilities associated with the proposal as well as the resources of the wider Morisset Planning District, will have access to sufficient services and infrastructure sufficient to support this level of development. Key Insights recommends that the proponent investigate the opportunity to work with Avondale School in a joint venture to provide a large public access multipurpose facility<sup>16</sup>, although the smaller on-site community centre (including BBQ,s, play ground, childcare facility, half or full-size basket ball court) will be sufficient to meet community and recreational demands.

With careful attention to issues of community coherence and integration at the planning stage, the North Cooranbong Project has the potential to contribute to the realisation of the objectives of Lake Macquarie's Lifestyle 2020 strategy and Social Plan, as well as conform to the principles of DCP 1. The proposed rezoning would deliver a net social and economic gain to the Morisset Planning District. Potential negative impacts can be mitigated with careful and strategic planning.

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<sup>16</sup> If this action is decided as the best option, the need for a smaller on-site community centre and basketball court as described elsewhere in this report will be met.

## Appendix 1: Household and Family Projections, ABS.

### 3236.0 Household and Family Projections, Australia

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This publication presents projections of households, families and living arrangements from 2001 to 2026. The projections are based on assumptions about changing living arrangements of the population. Three series (I, II and III) have been produced.

#### INCREASE IN NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in Australia is projected to increase from 7.4 million in 2001 to between 10.2 and 10.8 million in 2026, an increase of between 39% and 47%. This growth is faster than Australia's projected population growth of 25% for the same period.

**Lone person households are projected to show the greatest percentage increase of all household types over the 25-year projection period.** This is related to the ageing of the population and the fact that older women, in particular, are more likely to live alone than others. The number of lone person households is projected to increase by between 57% and 105%, from 1.8 million households in 2001 to between 2.8 million and 3.7 million households in 2026.

#### AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

**The average household size in Australia is projected to decline from 2.6 people per household in 2001 to between 2.2 and 2.3 people per household in 2026.** Australia's household size (2.5) in 2011 is projected to be smaller than New Zealand (2.6) and Japan (2.6), the same as the United States of America (2.5) and Canada (2.5), and larger than England (2.2).

#### THE CHANGING LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN

The number of children aged 0-14 years in Australia is projected to decline from 4.0 million in 2001 to 3.8 million in 2026. Most of these children live in two-parent families (81% in 2001), with a smaller proportion (19%) in one-parent families. In Series I the number of children in two-parent families is projected to decrease from 3.2 million in 2001 to 3.1 million in 2026, while the number of children in one-parent families is projected to decrease from 745,000 to 707,000. The Series II and III projections show a decline in the number of children in two-parent families (to between 2.9 million and 2.5 million respectively) and, conversely, an increase in the number of children in one-parent families (to between 875,000 and 1.3 million respectively).

#### THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS

The age groups 15-34 years are of particular importance in family and household formation. In 2001, 39% of 15-34 year olds (2.2 million) lived with either one or both of their parents, 24% (1.3 million) were parents themselves and 15% (825,000) were partners in couple families without children.

The number of young adults living with one or both of their parents is projected to either remain the same or increase between 2001 and 2026, with the number reaching between 2.2 and 2.4 million in 2026, accounting for between 38% to 41% of all people aged 15-34 years.

In two of the three projection series the number of young adults who are parents themselves is projected to decline between 2001 and 2026, to between 766,000 and 1.2 million, representing between 13% and 20% of young adults. Only in Series I is the number projected to increase, to 1.5 million people, representing one-quarter (25%) of young adults.

A further 896,000 to 976,000 people are projected to be living as partners in couple families without children in 2026, accounting for between 15% to 17% of all people aged 15-34 years.

### **THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF OLDER PEOPLE (AGED 75 YEARS AND OVER)**

In 2001 there were 1.1 million people aged 75 years and over in Australia, representing 6% of the total population. Over the period 2001 to 2026 this number is projected to more than double, to 2.5 million people (10% of Australia's population).

In 2001, 40% (447,000 people) of older Australians were living with a partner; 36% were partners in couple only families and 4% were partners in couple families with children. People living alone accounted for a further 34% (383,000) of older Australians while 13% (142,000) lived in non-private dwellings (NPDs).

By 2026 the number of older Australians living with a partner is projected to increase to between 957,000 and 1.2 million people (39% and 49% of all people aged 75 years and over, respectively). The number of people living alone is projected to increase to between 844,000 and 962,000, accounting for between 34% and 39% of older Australians, while the number of people living in NPDs is projected to increase in two of the three series (to between 247,000 to 334,000 people, or 10% to 14% of older Australians) but decrease in the third (to 128,000 people, or 5%).

### **CHANGING IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY TYPES**

Estimates of the number of families in 2001 in this publication differ from 2001 Census counts of families. See paragraph 53 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

The number of families in Australia is projected to increase from 5.3 million in 2001 to between 6.8 million and 7.1 million in 2026, representing growth of between 27% and 33%.

Of all family types, the number of **couple families without children** are projected to increase most rapidly over the period 2001 to 2026, increasing by between 54% to 73%.

Two of the three series project that the number of couple families without children will overtake the number of couple families with children, and become the most common family type in Australia, in either 2011 (Series II) or 2010 (Series III). The growth in the number of couple only families is related to both the ageing of the population, with baby boomers becoming 'empty nesters', and to declining fertility among younger couples.

Two of the three series project that the number of **couple families with children** will increase slowly over the projection period (between 5% and 19%), while in Series III this family type is projected to decrease by 19% between 2001 and 2026.

In contrast, the number of **one-parent families** is projected to increase by between 29% and 63% over the 25-year period. In 2001, around four out of every five one-parent families (83%) were female one-parent families. This ratio is projected to remain at around the same level between 2001 and 2026.

## **STATE AND TERRITORY PROJECTIONS**

Growth in the number of households (hereafter referred to as 'household growth') is projected to vary markedly across the states and territories, with those projected to experience high population growth between 2001 and 2026 projected to have faster household growth. Household growth is projected to range from between 12% to 23% in Tasmania to between 63% to 76% in Queensland.

### **New South Wales**

**The number of households in New South Wales is projected to increase by between 33% and 38%, from 2.5 million in 2001 to between 3.3 and 3.4 million in 2026. Family households, the most common household type in New South Wales, are projected to experience the largest numerical rise, increasing from 1.8 million households in 2001 to between 2.2 million and 2.3 million in 2026, an increase of between 24% to 28%.**

**Fast growth is projected to occur in lone person households. Female lone person households are projected to increase from 325,000 in 2001 to between 524,000 and 586,000 in 2026, representing growth of between 61% and 81%.**

### **Victoria**

The number of households in Victoria is projected to increase by between 35% and 41%, from 1.8 million households in 2001 to between 2.4 million and 2.6 million in 2026.

The number of families in Victoria is projected to increase slightly more slowly than families Australia-wide. From 1.3 million in 2001, the number of families in Victoria is projected to increase by between 24% and 30% to reach between 1.6 million and 1.7 million in 2026.

### **Queensland**

Between 2001 and 2026 Queensland is projected to experience the fastest household growth in Australia. Queensland households are projected to increase by between 63% and 76%, from 1.4 million in 2001 to between 2.3 million and 2.4 million in 2026. This growth is considerably faster than the projected national growth of between 39% and 47%.

Lone person households are projected to increase particularly quickly in Queensland, growing by between 87% and 153% (from 330,000 households in 2001 to between 617,000 and 835,000 in 2026).

In all three series couple families without children are projected to become the most common family type in Queensland, overtaking couple families with children in either 2015 (in Series I) or 2006 (in both Series II and III).

### **South Australia**

Household growth in South Australia is projected to be the second slowest of all the states and territories in Australia, increasing by between 17% and 26%, from 613,000 in 2001 to between 716,000 and 771,000 in 2026.

In 2001, couple families with children were the most common family type in South Australia, accounting for 44% of families. Between 2001 and 2026 this family type is projected to decline, both in number and proportion of all families, in all three series.

In contrast, couple families without children are projected to increase by between 31% and 45% between 2001 and 2026, becoming the most common family type in South Australia in either 2010 (in Series I) or 2005 (in Series II and III).

### **Western Australia**

Western Australia is projected to experience the second highest household growth in Australia over the period 2001 to 2026. Compared to projected national growth of between 39% and 47%, the number of households in Western Australia is projected to increase by between 49% and 60%, from 724,000 in 2001 to between 1.1 million and 1.2 million in 2026.

The fast household growth in Western Australia is attributable to fast growth in lone person households, which are projected to increase by between 72% and 139%, from 179,000 in 2001 to between 307,000 and 428,000 in 2026.

Couple families without children are projected to grow the fastest of all family types in Western Australia, becoming the most common family type by 2019 (Series I), 2009 (Series II) or 2008 (Series III), while one-parent families are projected to increase more rapidly in Western Australia than in Australia overall.

### **Tasmania**

Tasmania's household and family growth is projected to be the slowest of all the states and territories, reflecting the longer-term population decline projected for the state.

Lone person households are projected to be the strongest growing household type in Tasmania, increasing from 53,000 in 2001 to between 71,000 and 99,000 in 2026, representing an increase of between 33% and 86%. This growth is below the projected national growth of between 57% and 105%.

Tasmania's average household size is projected to become the smallest of all states and territories by 2026. The number of people per household in Tasmania is projected to decline from 2.4 in 2001 to between 2.0 and 2.1 in 2026.

In contrast to the projected growth in the number of families in Australia over the next 25 years (between 27% and 33%), Tasmanian families are projected to increase by only 3% to 4% (in Series II and I, respectively), or to decrease by 2% (in Series III) by 2026.

### **Northern Territory**

Household growth in the Northern Territory is projected to be the third fastest of the states and territories, increasing by between 41% and 45%, from 63,000 households in 2001 to between 89,000 and 91,000 households in 2026.

Unlike other states and territories, the Northern Territory has more lone male households (8,000 in 2001) than lone female households (5,000 in 2001). Both household types are projected to increase quickly between 2001 and 2026 (between 55% and 93% for males, and 66% and 153% for females).

Average household size in the Northern Territory is projected to decline from 3.0

people per household in 2001 to 2.7 in 2026, remaining the largest average household size of the states and territories.

The number of couple families without children is projected to increase rapidly over the projection period, increasing by between 50% and 67% from 15,000 families in 2001 to between 23,000 and 26,000 families in 2026.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

The number of households in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is projected to increase by between 31% and 39% over the projection period (a slower rate than Australia), from 120,000 households in 2001 to between 158,000 and 167,000 in 2026.

Couple families without children are projected to increase the most rapidly of all family types in the ACT. From 30,000 families in 2001, couple families without children are projected to increase by between 47% and 68% to reach between 44,000 and 50,000 in 2026. As a result of this growth, couple families without children are projected to become the most common family type in the ACT in two of the three projection series, outnumbering couple families with children in either 2013 (Series II) or 2011 (Series III).

### **CAPITAL CITY AND BALANCE OF STATE/TERRITORY HOUSEHOLDS**

In 2001 around two-thirds (63%) of all households in Australia were located in a capital city, with the remainder (37%) in the balances of state. Little or no change is projected in these proportions over the projection period, with capital cities accounting for between 63% to 64% of all households in Australia in 2026 and the balances of state/territory accounting for the remainder.

Overall, the capital cities are projected to experience higher rates of household growth than the corresponding balances of state/territory, except in Queensland.

**In two of the three projection series, Sydney, with 1.5 million households in 2001, is projected to record the greatest numerical increase in households over the projection period, with an extra 545,000 (Series I) to 561,000 (Series II) households by 2026, reaching between 2.0 and 2.1 million households.**

In Series III the balance of Queensland is projected to record the largest increase, increasing by 586,000 households, slightly more than the increase of 584,000 households projected for Sydney. The number of households in Melbourne is projected to increase by between 498,000 and 566,000 households, from 1.3 million in 2001 to between 1.8 and 1.9 million in 2026.



## 2001 CENSUS RATIOS

2001 Census ratios			
Capital city/balance of state	Average size of 'other families' (a)	Family to families ratio (b)	Average size of group households (c)
people	people	people	people
Sydney	2.145962	0.977549	2.327009
Balance of NSW	2.100012	0.989713	2.199462
Melbourne	2.132318	0.983896	2.321497
Balance of Vic.	2.089265	0.993367	2.201975
Brisbane	2.101772	0.986603	2.286383
Balance of Qld	2.117553	0.988177	2.214655
Adelaide	2.093401	0.991424	2.186595
Balance of SA	2.10247	0.991756	2.141437
Perth	2.117647	0.990134	2.262522
Balance of WA	2.181516	0.98585	2.195331
Greater Hobart	2.086842	0.993263	2.276693
Balance of Tas.	2.073955	0.994126	2.178351
Darwin	2.148241	0.984153	2.272396
Balance of NT	2.725641	0.860297	2.434732
ACT	2.074045	0.991087	2.299253

(a) The number of people living in 'other families', divided by the number of 'other families'.

(b) The number of 'family' households, divided by the number of families.

(c) The number of people living in group households, divided by the number of group households

## PROJECTED NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

	As at June 2011				State and territory government projections
	Series I	Series II	Series III		
Capital city/balance of state	'000	'000	'000	'000	
Sydney	1,718.8	1,725.9	1,728.3	(a)1,560.4	
Balance of NSW	1,072.5	1,099.4	1,108.0	(a)1,020.5	
Total NSW	2,791.3	2,825.4	2,836.3	(a)2,581.0	
Melbourne	1,509.0	1,523.9	1,529.1	n.a.	
Balance of Vic.	578.4	592.7	597.4	n.a.	
Total Vic.	2,087.4	2,116.6	2,126.5	(b)2,028.0	
Brisbane	780.5	796.1	801.4	(c)680.0	
Balance of Qld	952.1	977.3	985.6	(c)892.2	
Total Qld	1,732.5	1,773.4	1,787.0	(c)1,572.2	
Adelaide	487.9	500.5	504.8	n.a.	
Balance of SA	174.1	177.7	178.7	n.a.	
Total SA	662.0	678.2	683.5	n.a.	
Perth	643.9	655.1	658.8	(d)625.9	
Balance of WA	226.0	232.9	235.1	(d)239.1	
Total WA	869.9	887.9	894.0	(d)865.0	
Hobart	85.7	88.3	89.1	n.a.	
Balance of Tas.	119.0	123.0	124.2	n.a.	
Total Tas.	204.7	211.3	213.4	n.a.	
Darwin	44.7	45.2	45.3	n.a.	
Balance of NT	27.9	28.0	28.0	n.a.	
Total NT	72.6	73.2	73.4	n.a.	
Total ACT	137.1	139.4	140.1	(e)140.0	
<b>Total Australia</b>	<b>8,558.4</b>	<b>8,706.4</b>	<b>8,755.0</b>	<b>..</b>	

(a) 1991-based projections.

(b) 1996-based using halftrend and Series II projections.

(c) 1991-based projections, Series A.

(d) 1996-based projections, medium scenario.

(e) 2001-based projections, medium series, metropolitan areas only.

## Appendix 2 Demographic and Community Profile

### Preamble

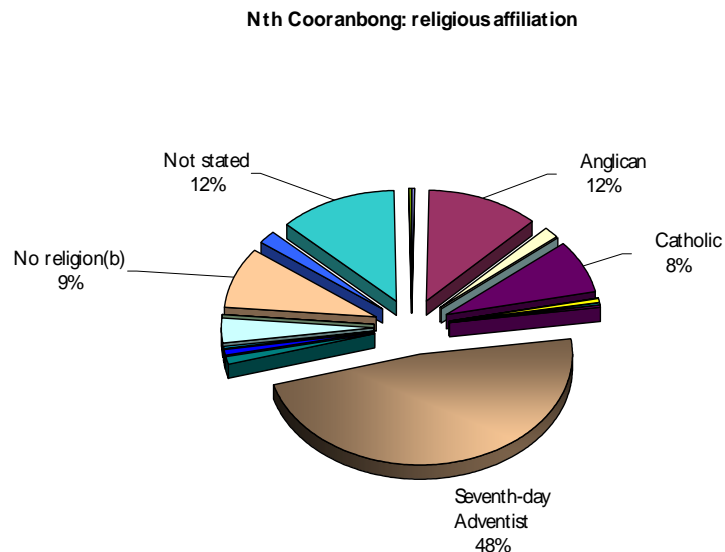
This study examines the northern Cooranbong area, represented by Census Collection District 1120 501. A Census Collection District is the smallest unit for which the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publishes statistics and the primary source for this analysis is the Census of 2001.

The Bureau defines the Urban Centre of Cooranbong as two adjoining Collection Districts, 1120 505 and 1120 507. This study considers the Urban Centre of Cooranbong for comparison, and in aggregation with northern Cooranbong for comparison with other regions.

Figures from the Australian Taxation Office publication *Taxation Statistics 2000-01* are also used. These are published by the Bureau of Statistics for Local Government Areas and by the ATO for Postal Areas (Postcodes).

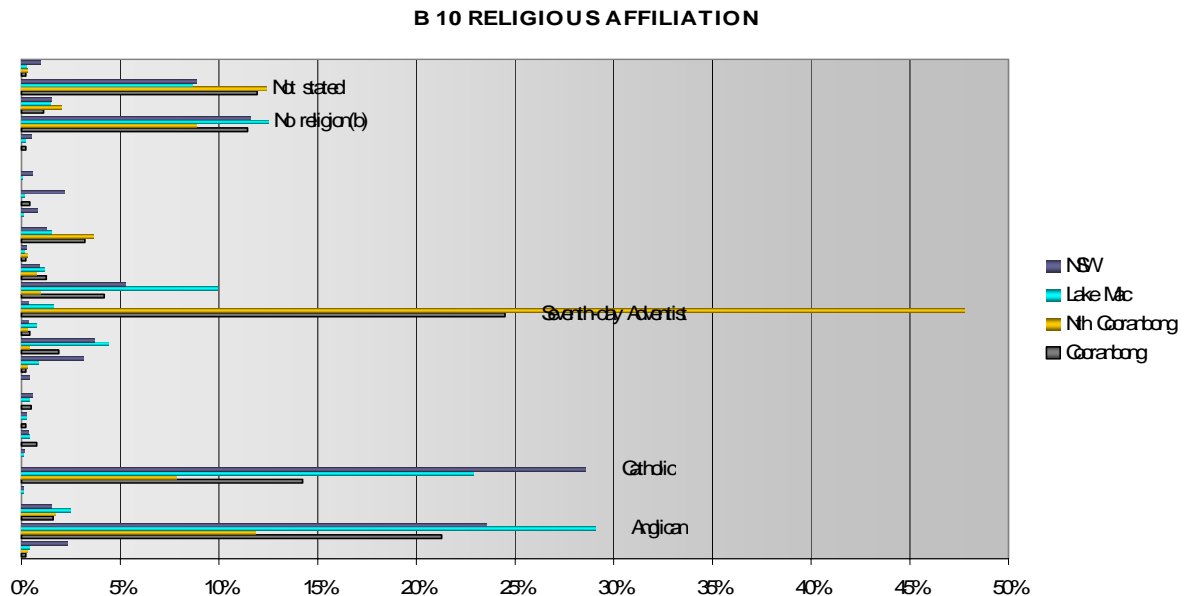
The study also refers to figures more recent than 2001 where they are available and relevant. The principal source is the Bureau's publication (on CD-ROM) *NSW Regional Profile 2004*, which includes statistics from the ATO, the Department of Family and Community Services and other sources. The most recent figures on employment and unemployment are the quarterly report *Small Area Labour Markets*, from the Department of Workplace Relations.

One social characteristic stands out in considering northern Cooranbong. Even more than the neighbouring urban centres of Cooranbong and Morisset, the population has a strong affiliation with the Seventh Day Adventist church.



This figure is completely atypical. The Catholic Church makes up 28.6% of the NSW population (but not in northern NSW) and Anglicans 22.9%. Anglicans exceed Catholics in Lake Macquarie in almost equivalent inverse proportion to the NSW population.

The proportion of Adventists across the State is about one-third of one per cent.



(The percentage of the population adhering to the Adventist faith might be even higher. Citizens are required to answer all Census questions, but in practice some do not. The question regarding religious affiliation is one of a small number to which some citizens have a conscientious objection.)

The historical reasons behind this anomaly are clear.

The Adventist church developed a planned a community at Cooranbong. It was not limited to a church and housing, but included manufacturing industry (at the Sanitarium food company), schools, a higher education institution (originally a theological college), and aged care.

Viable planned communities are not easily achieved but Cooranbong had a strong organising principle in the church itself.

A string of otherwise anomalous demographic features in Cooranbong and Northern Cooranbong seem logical against this historical background.

The first of these – the high proportion of residents over 75 – can be explained by the aged care facilities built in the community. The residents cannot be a consequence of natural population factors: a population does not have more members aged 80 than 40 unless it received migrants at an advanced age.

In this case, the facilities cater for Adventists from a wide area, indeed from around the world, who choose to spend their retirement in a like-minded community.

As this study will illustrate, the industry sectors which offer the greatest proportion of employment are those created with the community – such as manufacturing,

education, and health & community services – and not those which dominate employment in the surrounding areas, such as retailing.

Even levels of income do not reflect the economic strength of the community, which is better analysed as the collective assets of the community: the schools, college, and aged care facilities owned by the church.

While the demographics of the community can be understood in an historical context, they remain anomalous. They are of limited value in projecting what the community might look like in future.

It might be more fruitful to consider Cooranbong and Northern Cooranbong as part of the growth of the wider Morisset community, which this study will endeavour to do.

The area of the proposal is substantial and lies between urban Morisset and the Watagans, adjoining a semi-rural area that has distinctive infrastructure and historical characteristics. It is by definition vacant, so existing data limited to its precise boundaries would be effectively null.

Its future growth and development can be better understood as an amalgam of the community around it, its links to the regional service centre, and the broader growth patterns affecting western Lake Macquarie.

## **General Population Characteristics**

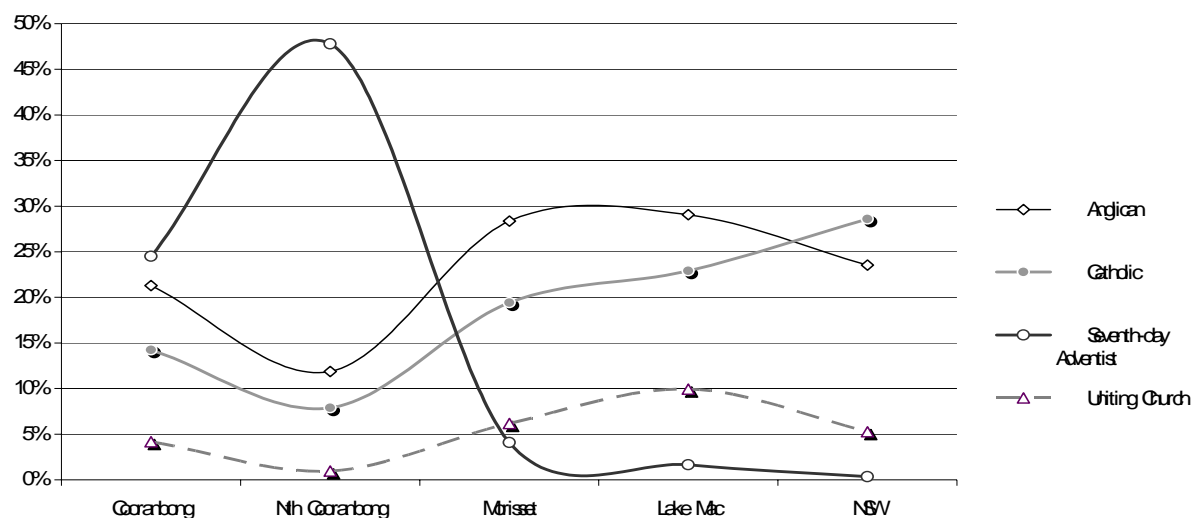
### **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION**

Source: (ABS Census 2001 Basic Community Profile, Table B 10)

As mentioned in the Preamble, the proportion of the population who described themselves to the Census as Seventh Day Adventists was unusually high, but understandable in terms of Cooranbong's history.

Considering the area as part of the Morisset region, however, it becomes clear that new developments are unlikely to replicate the central organising principle of the existing community:

**B 10 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION BY SELECTED CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(%total population)**



## TRANSIENCE OF POPULATION

Source: (ABS Census 2001 Basic Community Profile, Table B 22)

The proportion of the NSW population at an address on Census night other than where they were 12 months before was 21.9%. In Lake Macquarie it was 18%.

The corresponding figures for the Cooranbong region were within this range:

	Nth Cooranbong	Cooranbong	Total Cooranbong	Morisset
Same address 1 year ago(d)	723	1,087	1,810	778
Different address 1 year ago(d)	167	287	454	211
	19%	21%	20%	21%

However, the figures for people who had moved in the five years between Censuses were markedly higher in Cooranbong than in Morisset:

Same address 5 years ago(e)	436	711	1,147	572
Different address 5 years ago(e)	411	591	1,002	346
	49%	45%	47%	38%

A very high proportion of these, on closer analysis, was mainly women living in Northern Cooranbong (at Census 2001) that made the greatest difference:

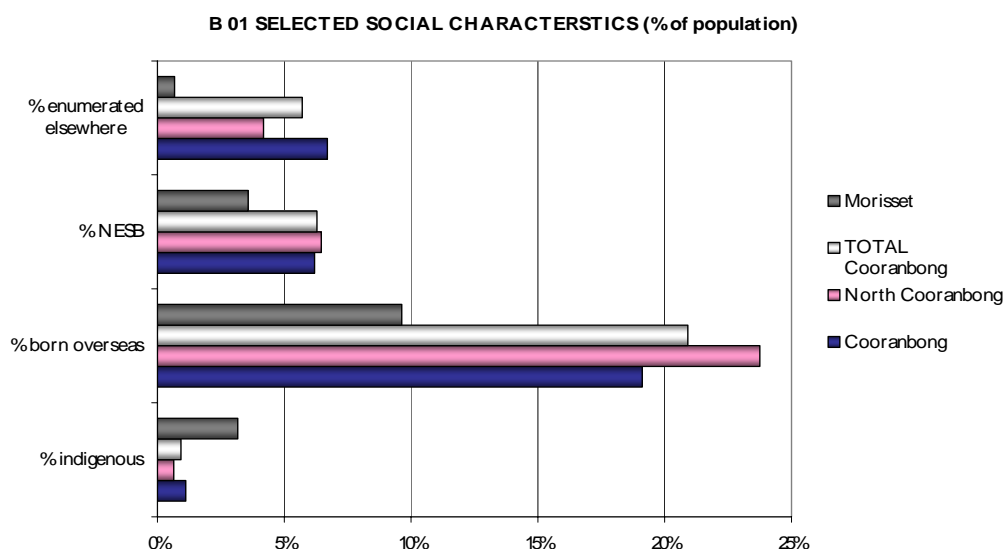
	Northern Cooranbong			Cooranbong			Morisset		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
Same address 5 years ago	214	222	436	364	347	711	288	284	572
Different address 5 years ago	194	217	411	284	307	591	175	171	346

Transience of the population is highest in metropolitan areas where immigrants tend to look for work, and where young people move for educational opportunities and

then work. It tends, therefore, to be associated with lower income earners. In Cooranbong, however, it appears to be associated with retirement.

## OTHER SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Source: (ABS Census 2001 Basic Community Profile, Table B 01)



The differences between the Morisset and Cooranbong communities on other measures are consistent with the outline above of the planned Cooranbong community.

The percentage of people who were counted at the Census “elsewhere” than a private dwelling is significantly higher in the Cooranbong area with its residential facilities for aged people and students.

## Cultural Diversity

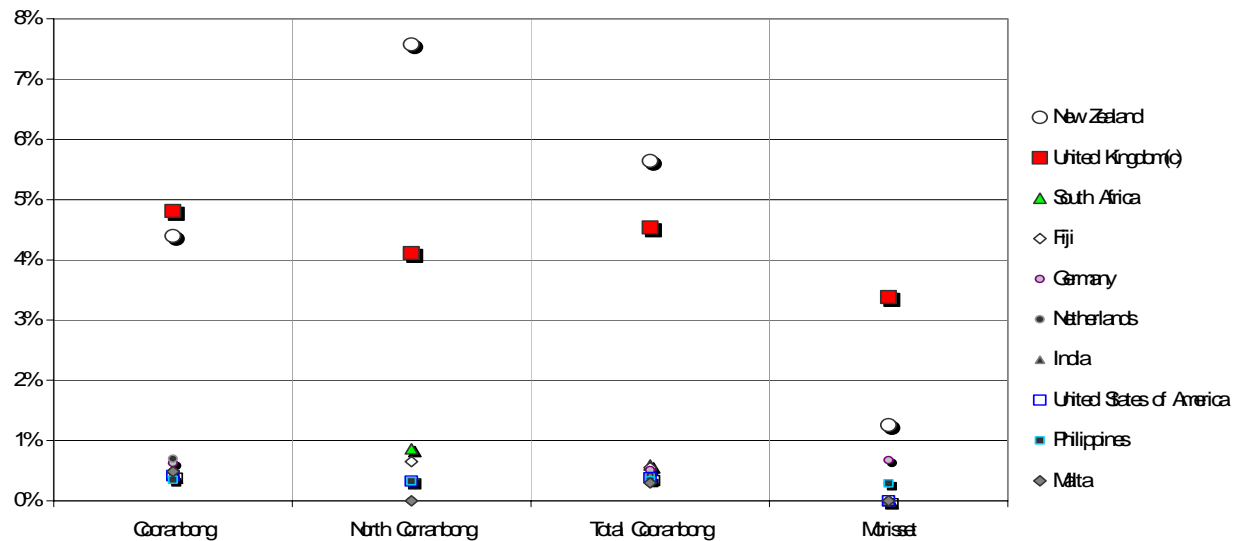
The percentage of the population born overseas is around double the proportion found in Morisset. Most people in the region are Australian-born, as the chart above implies:

Cooranbong	Northern Cooranbong	Total Cooranbong	Morisset
77.89%	72.62%	75.83%	85.04%

However, while people born in the UK are usually the largest group of residents born overseas in any Australian community, in Northern Cooranbong there is a much larger proportion from New Zealand and an unusually high proportion born in South Africa.

The proportion born in the UK, on the other hand, is broadly consistent across the region.

**B 06 %POPULATION BORN OVERSEAS (by top ten countries of birth)**



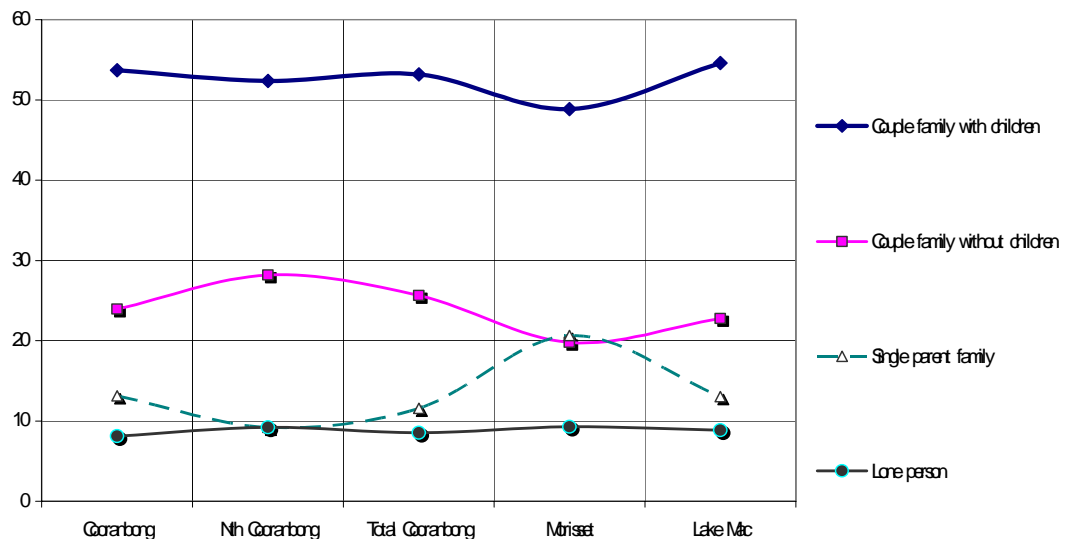
The proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home – an indicator of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) is also about double the proportion in Morisset:

	Cooranbong	Northern Cooranbong	Total Cooranbong	Morisset
% NESB	6.19%	6.46%	6.29%	3.58%

While the most common community languages in NSW are Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, and Greek, the most common in Northern Cooranbong are Spanish (13 speakers) and French (six); in Cooranbong, the most commonly used language is Samoan (15 speakers), while 11 residents speak Spanish; and in Morisset, there are eight people who use Italian at home and six who use French.

The proportion of indigenous Australians in the population is about three times higher in Morisset Township than in the Cooranbong area:

**B 17 SUMMARY OF FAMILY TYPES: residents by % of population**





	Cooranbong	Northern Cooranbong	<b>Total Cooranbong</b>	Morisset
% indigenous	1.12%	0.64%	0.93%	3.17%

## Families and Households

The living arrangements of Australians have changed considerably in the past century and, importantly for projecting what communities of the future might look like, continue to do so.

The Census of 2001 found that 72 per cent of Australians still live in family households, which remain the principal economic and social construct of communities.

Couple families with children comprise larger households. They are also the most “successful” economic unit, attracting more high incomes than other types of family and – although the Census does not measure it – spending more in the community.

Morisset has a significantly higher number of residents in single-parent families, an indication of divorced or separated parents with children. This is one of the family types which has grown considerably since the 1970s. Divorce is not as common in the Cooranbong area as in other areas (discussed under Social Characteristics).

The number of couples living without children is higher in northern Cooranbong but still below the average of 36% for Australia.

Such households can comprise young couples waiting to start a family, as women in Australia are marrying and starting families at a later age than they used to. This type of family can alternatively consist of an older couple whose children have left home; with life expectancy increasing, this is increasingly common.

Indeed, this is the fastest growing type of family in Australia<sup>17</sup> and the Bureau of Statistics projects that it will exceed the number of couple families with children in six or seven years.

The proportion of people living alone is remarkably consistent across this region.

The Bureau of Statistics suggests in the same projections published in June this year that lone households will be the fastest growing type of household as the population ages.

Female lone person households in particular are expected to grow from 325,000 in NSW in 2001 to between 524,000 and 586,000 by 2026 – an increase of 61 to 81 percent over 25 years. At the Census, 32 women aged 75 or older lived alone in ncompared to six men suggesting a significant skew towards widows.

The type of family in which people live has an obvious impact on household size and therefore on demand for accommodation. More lone-person households, and more couple households without children, mean a reduction in the size of the average household. The Bureau of Statistics predicts a fall from 2.6 persons per average household in 2001 to 2.2 or 2.3 by 2026.

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<sup>17</sup>Source: *Household and Family Projections, Australia* (June, 2004 - ABS Catalogue no. 3236.0)

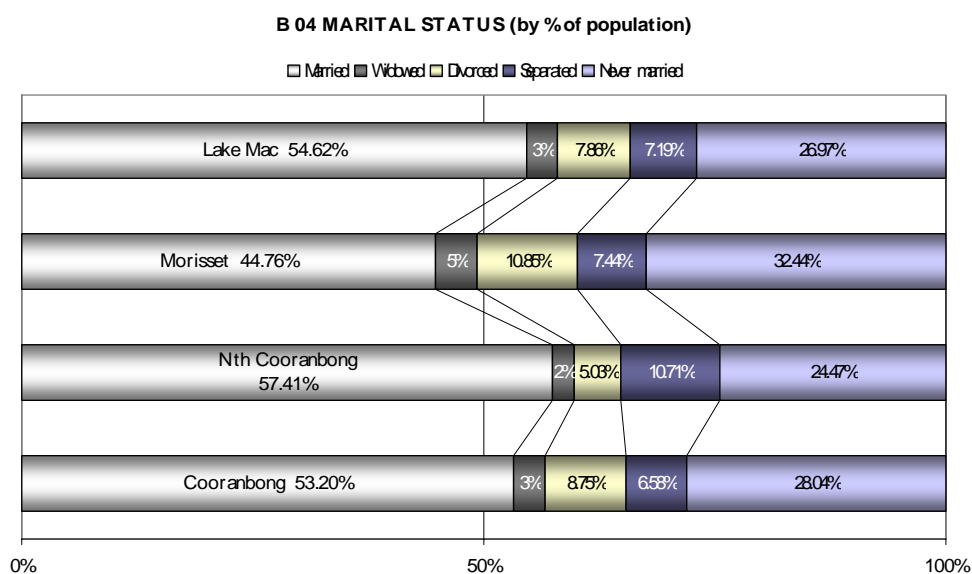
As household sizes contract, the demand for new dwellings increases faster than the population. Housing 1,000 people when the average number per dwelling is 2.6 requires 385 dwellings. But to house the same number when the average per dwelling is 2.3 would require 50 dwellings more.

number of residents	Cooranbong	Northern Cooranbong	Total Cooranbong	Morisset	Lake Mac
Couple family:					
with children under 15 and non-dependent children	62	17	79	47	4,540
with children under 15 without non-dependent children	335	202	537	238	46,681
with dependent students (15-24) and non-dependent children	32	25	57	42	4,926
with dependent students (15-24) without non-dependent children	41	49	90	20	5,856
with children under 15 & dependent students & non-dependent children	9	6	15	0	2,548
with children under 15 & dependent students without non-dependent children	148	67	215	28	10,886
with non-dependent children	48	67	115	89	14,268
<i>Total</i>	<i>675</i>	<i>433</i>	<i>1,108</i>	<i>464</i>	<i>89,705</i>
Couple family without children	301	233	534	188	37,405

One parent family:					
with children under 15 and non-dependent children	13	0	13	17	1,300
with children under 15 without non-dependent children	92	47	139	96	10,199
with dependent students (15-24) and non-dependent children	7	3	10	9	721
with dependent students (15-24) without non-dependent children	19	0	19	10	1,423
with children under 15 & dependent students & non-dependent children	3	3	6	0	460
with children under 15 & dependent students without non-dependent children	0	8	8	10	1,887
with non-dependent children	31	15	46	54	5,438
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>21,428</b>
Other family	14	9	23	14	1,256
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>1,906</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>149,794</b>
Lone person	102	76	178	88	14,512

## MARITAL STATUS

Source: (ABS Census 2001 Basic Community Profile, Table B 04)



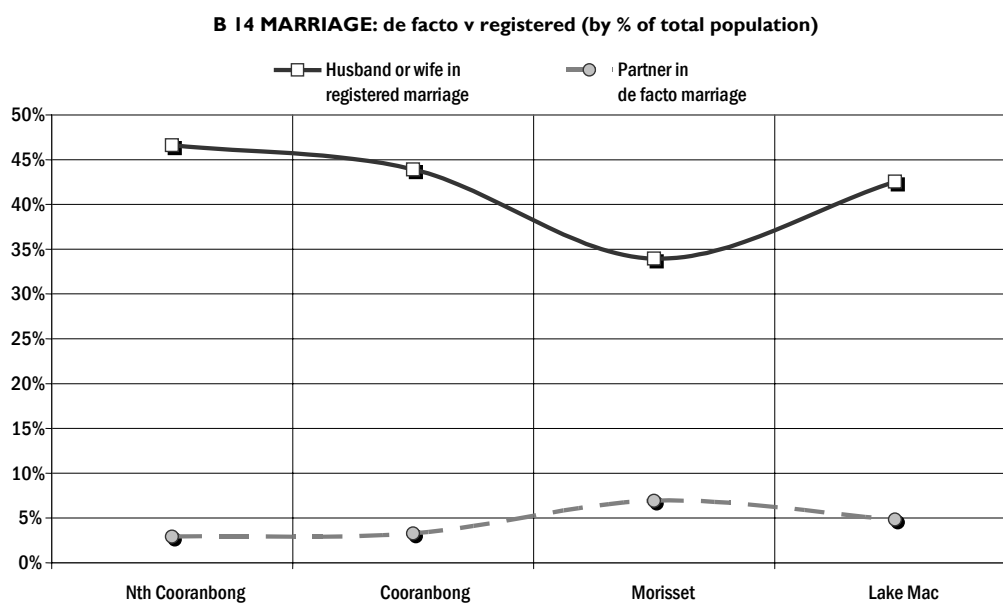
Residents of Morisset are the least likely in this comparison to be married, and most likely to be divorced or never to have married.

People in Northern Cooranbong are the most likely to be married, least likely to be widowed and most likely to be separated - but not divorced.

There is a correlation between marital status and income, although the stronger correlation is between families and income, which this study considers later.

There is a further correlation, however, between types of marriage – i.e., social (de facto) marriage and legal (registered) marriage – and socio-economic circumstances.

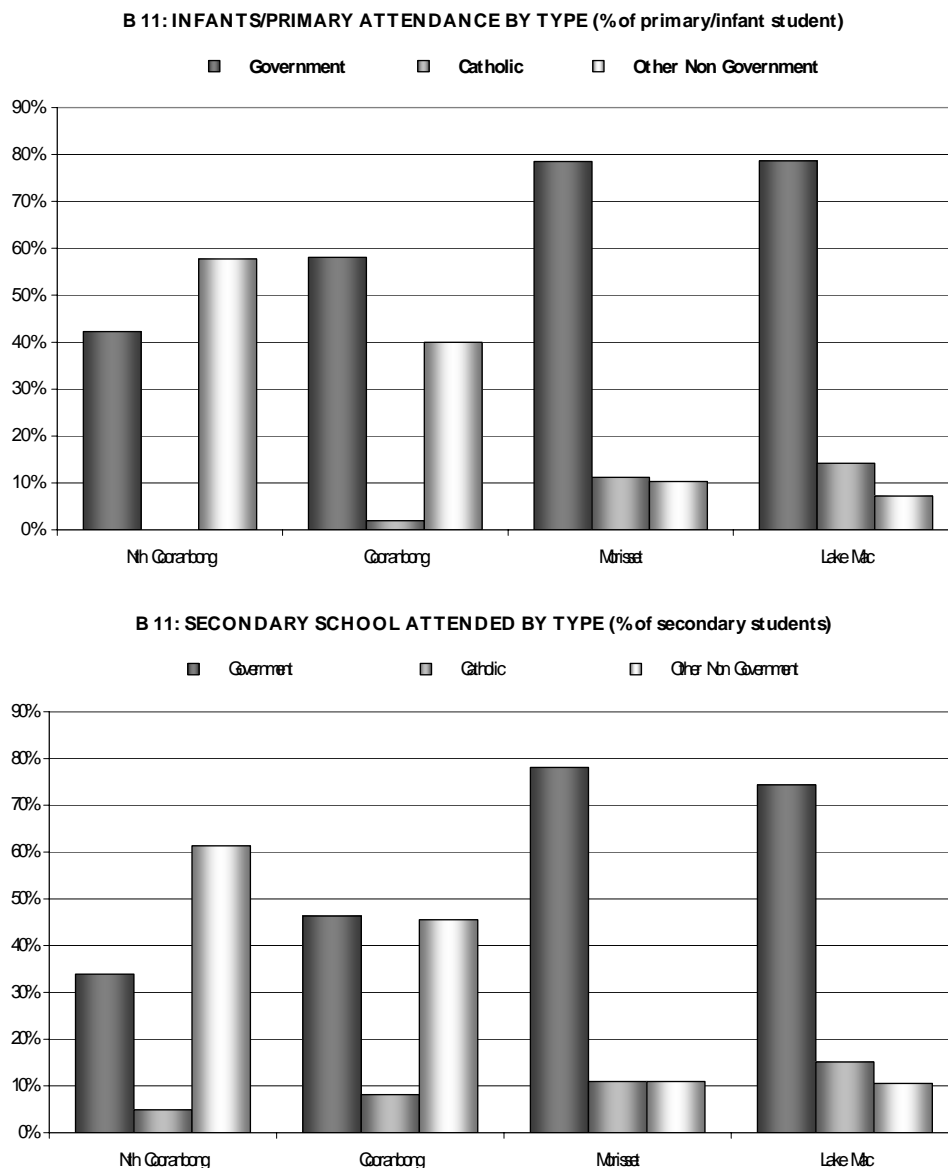
Statistics cannot generate reliable conclusions about any individual or couple, but high concentrations of de facto relationships tend broadly to coincide with lower socio-economic circumstances.



## Education

The influence of the Seventh Day Adventist development of resources in the Cooranbong area is evident in a number of unusual features of education in the area.

The outstanding statistical anomaly is the percentage of children in the area who attend a non-government, non-Catholic school – in this case, the Avondale schools. About 12% of Australian students attend schools that are part of neither the government nor Catholic systems. These figures are dwarfed in northern Cooranbong:



This is clearly the result of available schools in the neighbourhood – itself part of the church's deliberate planning.

But the impact does not stop at Cooranbong: in Windermere Park, Bonnells Bay and Silverwater (all on the Morisset Peninsula, where Adventists also form an elevated proportion of the population) more than 20 per cent of secondary students are at independent schools, a large percentage presumably, if not all, at Avondale.

Attendance at independent schools usually correlates to high individual incomes in the community. This study considers Income in another chapter, but it is probably fair to say that income is not relevant to members of the church who wish their children educated within a church school.

It must be concluded that residents of the region consider the Avondale schools a community asset.

Education is also a key indicator of socio-economic advantage. People with a bachelor degree or higher are significantly more successful in finding employment, while skilled people are more likely to attract higher salaries.

A high proportion of residents in Northern Cooranbong have attained a Bachelor degree and an unusually high proportion for the region have postgraduate degrees:

<i>B 23 post school qualification</i>	<i>Nth Cooranbong</i>	<i>Cooranbong</i>	<i>Morisset</i>	<i>Lake Mac</i>
Postgraduate Degree	3.91%	2.52%	1.36%	1.13%
Grad Diploma and Grad Certificate	1.30%	1.17%	0.49%	1.05%
Bachelor Degree	8.72%	7.74%	5.67%	6.44%
Bachelor Degree or higher	13.93%	11.43%	7.52%	8.63%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	8.07%	7.83%	5.67%	5.73%
Certificate	17.45%	17.73%	20.10%	21.01%
Not stated(b)	17.84%	12.33%	13.19%	10.54%
Not applicable(c)	42.71%	50.68%	53.51%	54.11%

It should probably be noted at this point that education in Cooranbong is not simply about learning. With a relatively substantial number of institutions, including a tertiary institution, teaching is a significant employer.

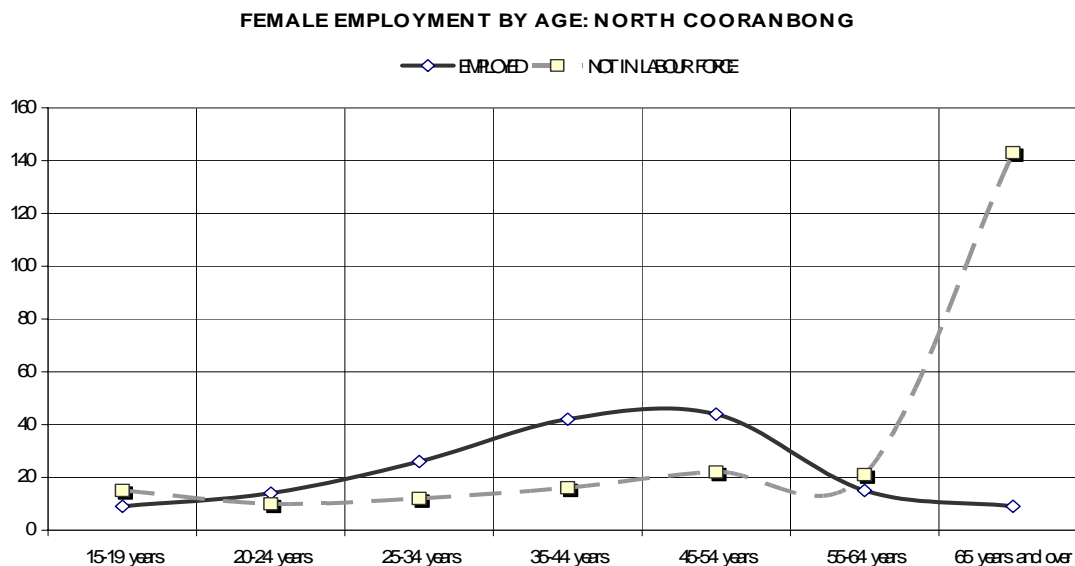
## Employment

### LABOUR FORCE

The labour force in northern Cooranbong is unusually small, with more of the resident population at the Census out of the labour force than in it.

	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	TOTAL LABOUR FORCE	NOT IN LABOUR FORCE
Northern Cooranbong	328	30	8.38%	358	394
Cooranbong	497	58	10.45%	555	517
Morisset	349	58	14.25%	407	376
Lake Macquarie	70,111	7,393	9.54%	77,504	57,595

Unemployment rates for small areas are always volatile because a change in the employment status of a few people can alter the rate considerably. When the participation rate falls below 50 per cent, the volatility is even greater.



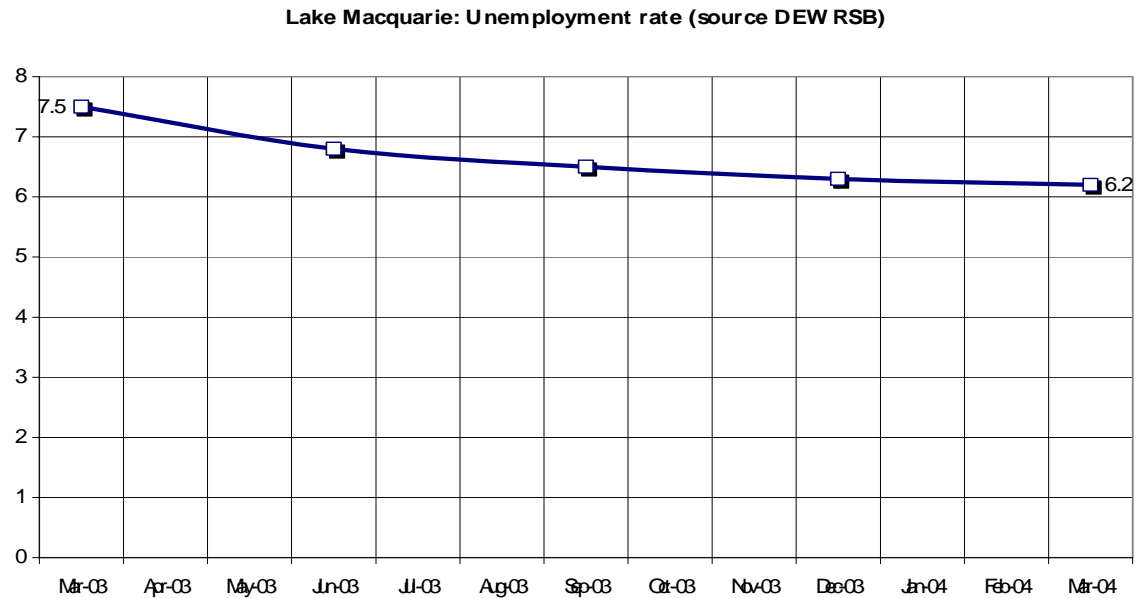
Lake Macquarie City Council, using its broader definitions of the Cooranbong area to establish its planning areas, has compiled a snapshot from the Census of 2001 on unemployment which differs slightly from the figures above:



The relativities are similar to those obtained from the smaller-area analysis undertaken for this study.

In fact, unemployment has fallen significantly across Australia since 2001, making the Census figures misleading. They are, however, the only figures published for areas smaller than Local Government Areas.

The latest Small Area Labour Market figures available from the Department of Workplace Relations, for the March quarter of 2004, show the change in Lake Macquarie in the past year:



These suggest that unemployment in the Morisset region is almost a third higher than the figure for the city as a whole. The relativities mentioned above suggest that it is lowest in Cooranbong (and Wyee, where development has been restricted).

This means considerable resilience in employment in the Cooranbong area, where the participation rate is low largely because of the age of the population. This study mentioned the relatively high number of women over 75 in northern Cooranbong: they probably have been out of the labour force for at least 30 years, as women tend to leave the labour force in large numbers from the age of 45. In fact, considering the relatively low participation in paid work by women 30 years ago, it is possible that most of them were never in the labour force.

## INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

More Australians were employed in retail trade than any other industry sector at the 2001 Census date, about 15 per cent of the work force.

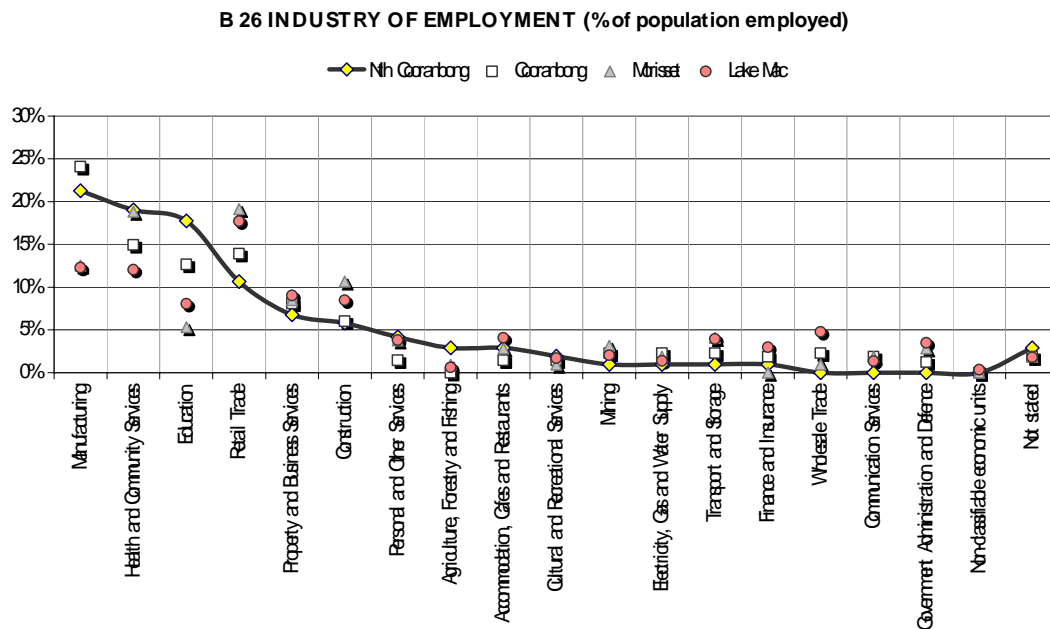
Manufacturing employed about 12 per cent of workers, Property & Business services 11 per cent and Health & community services 10 per cent.

Together, these four industries employed 48 per cent of all workers.

**In Lake Macquarie, retailing is the largest employer, but in Cooranbong the largest sector of employment was in manufacturing, followed by Health &**



**community services and then Education.** (This is true of both the Urban Centre of Cooranbong as defined by the Bureau of Statistics and the neighbouring CCD used to measure northern Cooranbong in this study.)



As the chart shows, the Morisset urban centre was quite different. Education, in particular is not such an important sector of employment, while Construction is significantly more important in Morisset than in Cooranbong or, indeed, Lake Macquarie as a whole.

To understand the differences it is necessary to refer again to the historical development of Cooranbong. Its schools and college are important sites of employment in education; its aged care and retirement facilities are significant employers in Health & Community Services (which also employ Morisset residents); and its principal industry for decades was the Sanitarium food plant.

Moreover, the community was planned to accommodate its members as well as creating employment. Many, if not most, of the workers at Cooranbong sites live in Cooranbong.

This is not true of the Morisset region generally, nor of Lake Macquarie.

According to the 2001 Census, only 47.4 per cent of workers who live in Lake Macquarie – fewer than half – work in the city. One in three works in the City of Newcastle.

One per cent work in Cessnock, 1.5 per cent in Maitland, and nearly two per cent in Port Stephens.

Just over 5,000 people – about 7.5 per cent of the Lake labour force – work in the Sydney Statistical District (which includes Wyong Shire and Gosford).

The enabling factor is transport. Morisset has a railway station – which is why the immediate area of the station is the services centre of the region – and is close to the

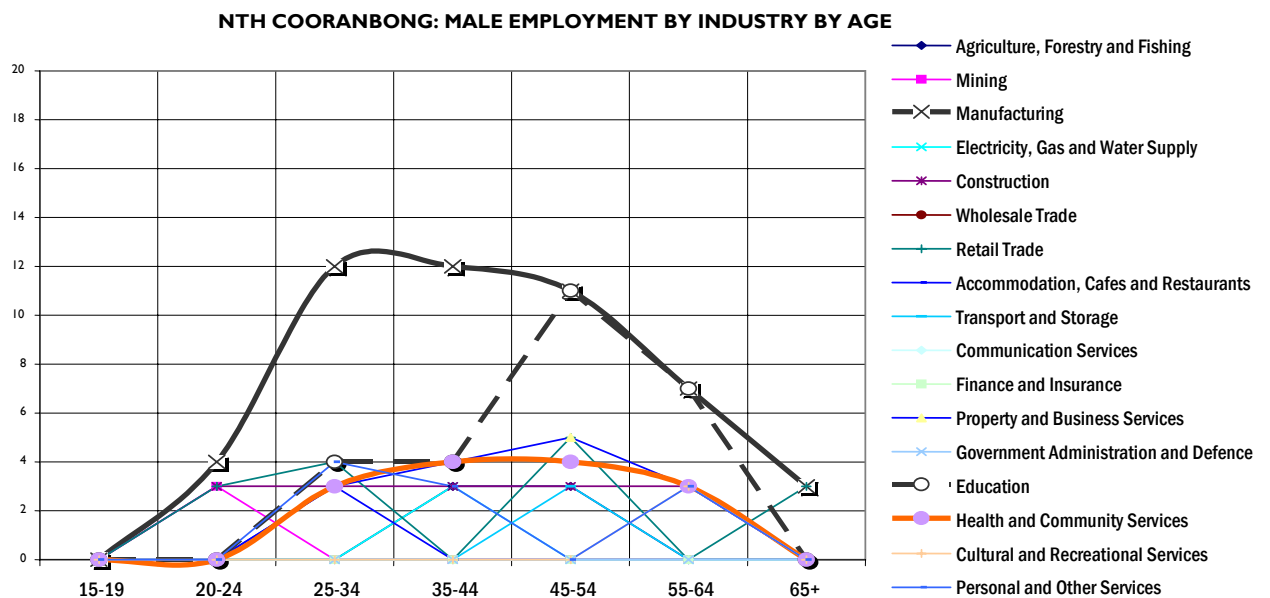
F3 freeway. There are other railway stations in the city – Cardiff and Fassifern being the main ones – and there are many centres with good road access. But none is as convenient as Morisset to both.

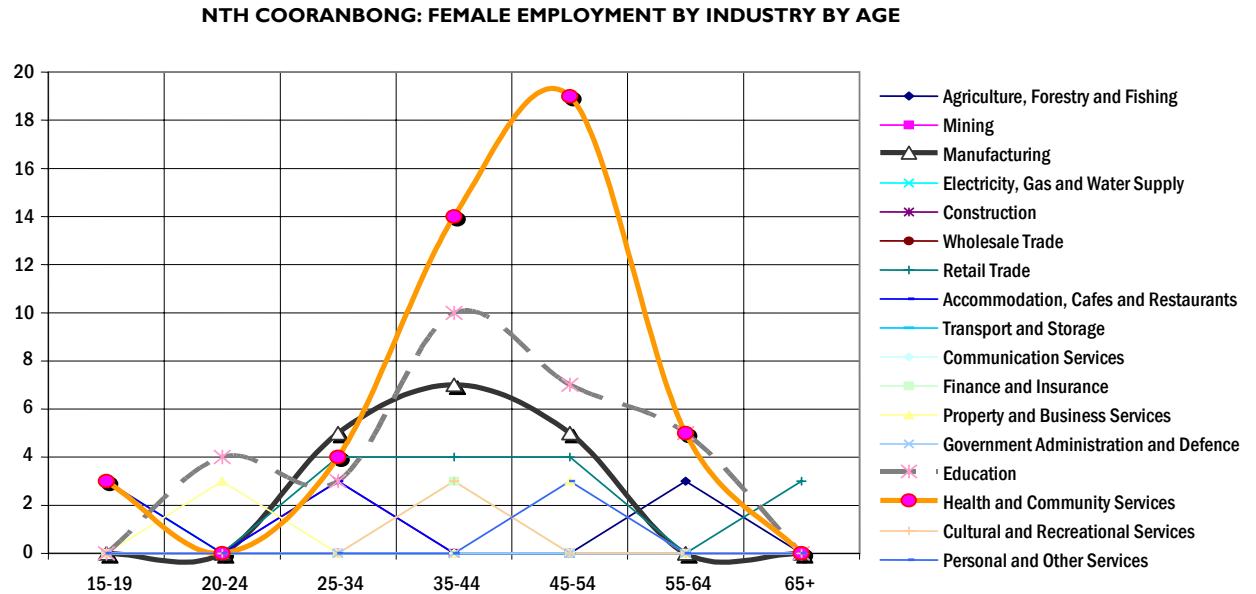
One location which is similarly convenient, when compared to, say, Fassifern with its rail link or West Wallsend next to the F 3, is Cooranbong: close to the freeway via Mandalong Road, and accessible from the railway station via Freemans Drive.

**While many of Cooranbong’s present residents clearly have employment in the community, future residents would be able to take advantage of the transport links as residents of Morisset and Morisset Peninsula do already.**

## MALE and FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

Male and female employment patterns differ considerably.





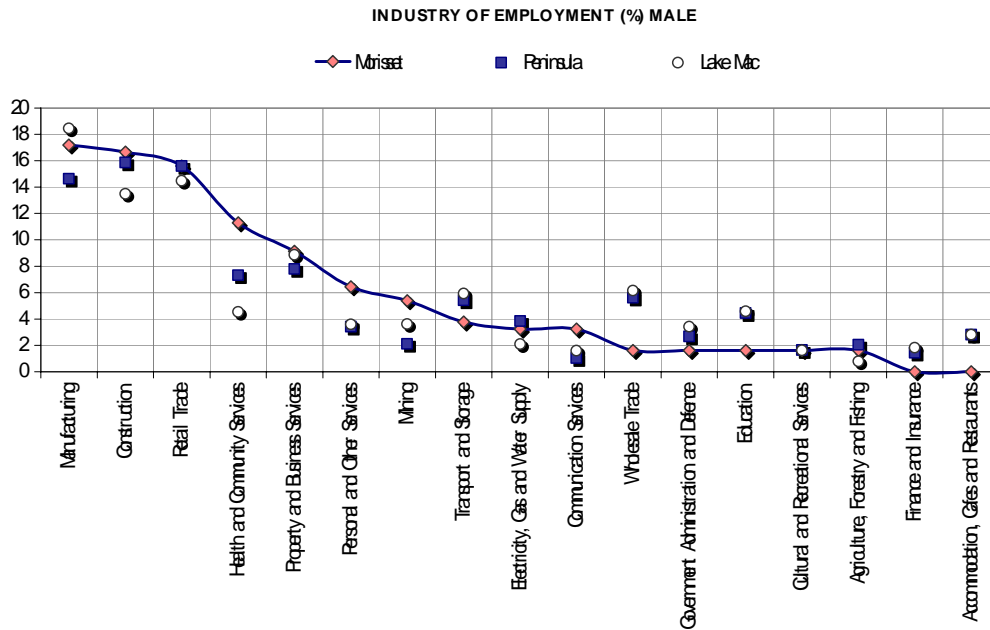
As noted above, employment in Northern Cooranbong is concentrated in different industries from those which employ most Australians. Australia is one of the most segregated countries along gender lines when it comes to employment, and this is clear even in an unusual population like Northern Cooranbong.

Education is clearly one sector employing both males and females, but females dominate employment in Health & community services.

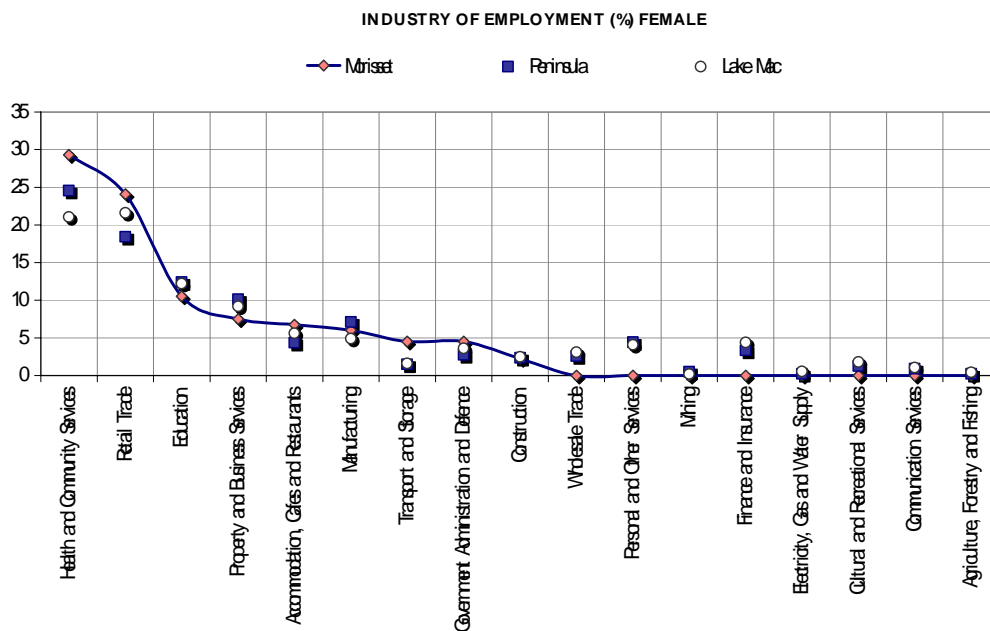
The particular patterns should not be expected to repeat with new arrivals in the area who are not part of the historical community.

**Patterns of employment are more likely to follow Morisset and the Morisset Peninsula.**

Manufacturing remains a major employer for males in those areas but is joined by Construction and Retailing. Education is less significant.



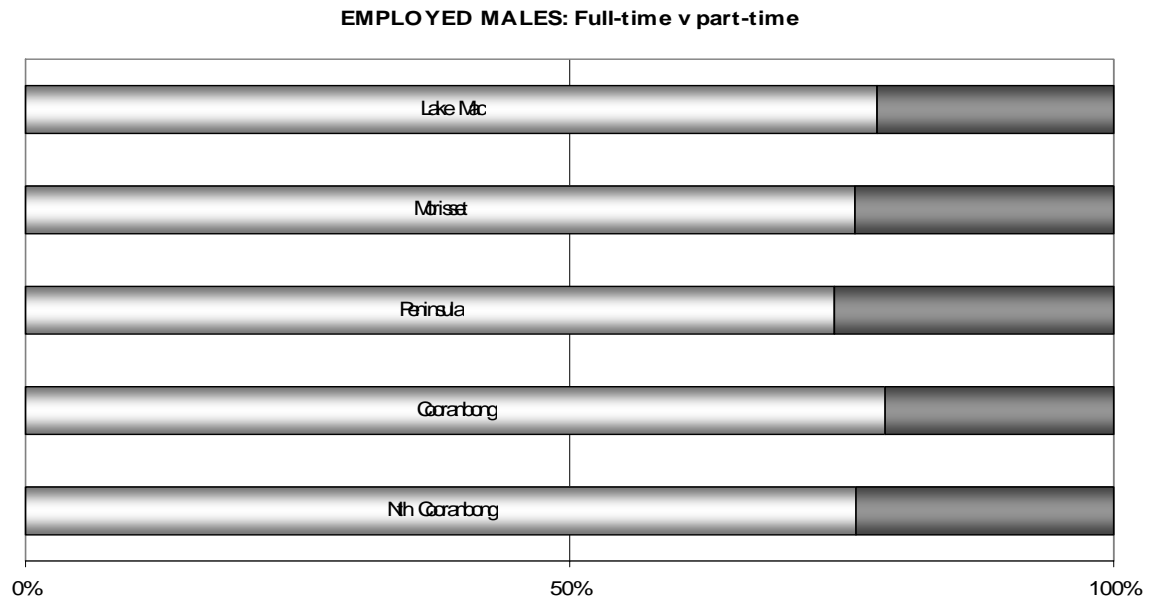
For women, Health & community services remains the strongest sector of employment; Education is less important but still significant; and Retailing is of greater significance. Accommodation, cafés and restaurants appears as a significant sector whereas it is almost negligible in Cooranbong today.



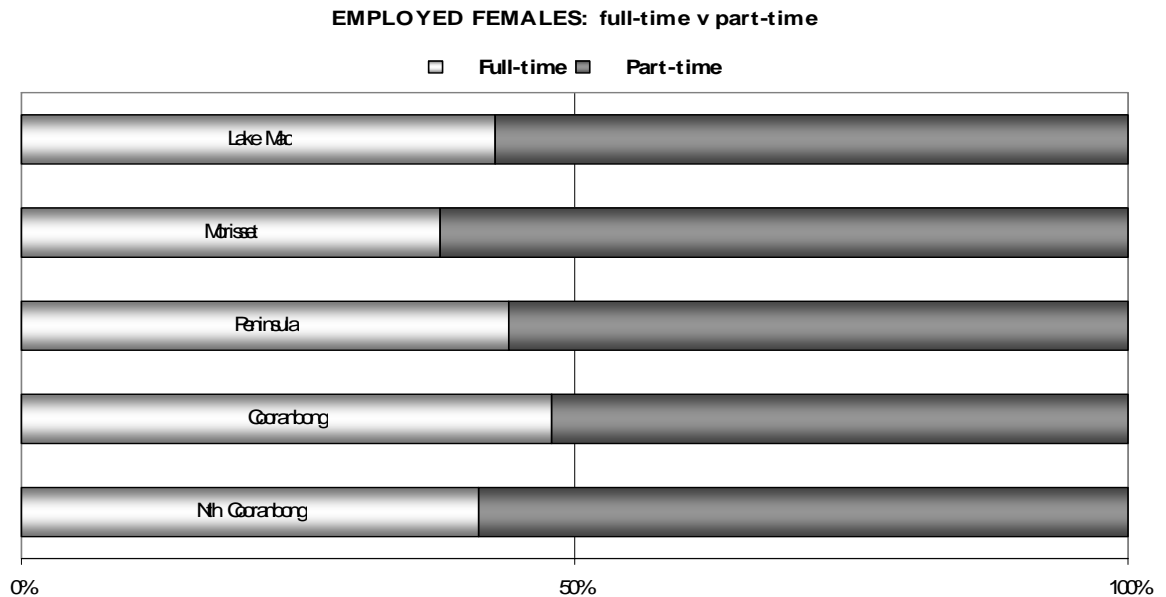
Property & business services is a significant sector of employment for both males and females in Morisset, which will likely remain the services centre of the region as long as it retains its excellent transport links.

## PART-TIME v FULL-TIME

Male workers are significantly more likely to have full-time employment than part-time.



Female workers are more likely to be employed on a part-time or casual basis.

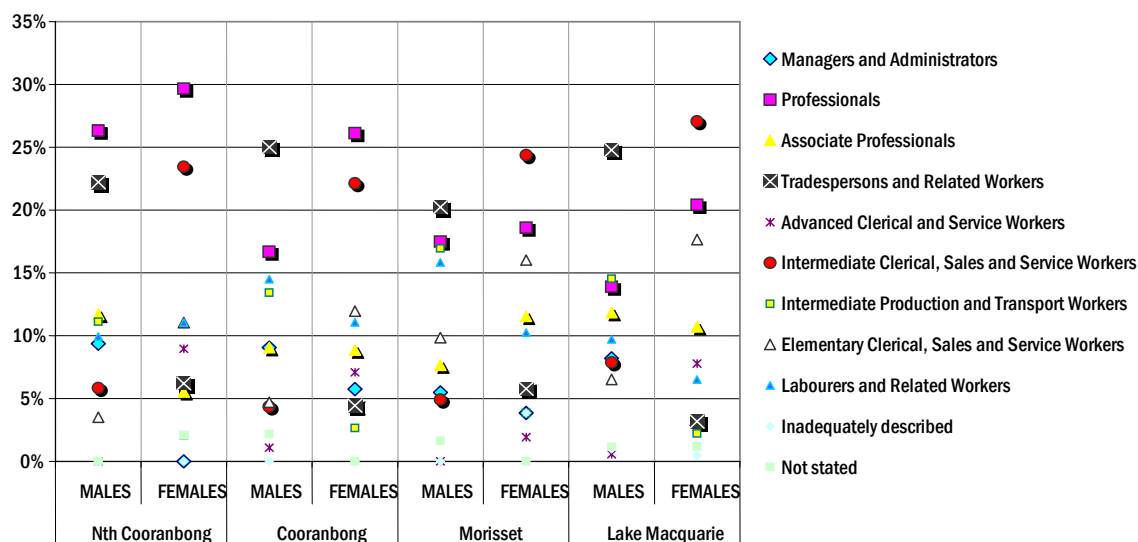


There appears to be slightly more full-time work for women in Cooranbong than other areas in the region but the number of full-time workers is still less than 50 per cent.

This is common across Australia because the industries in which women tend to find employment – particularly Retailing and Health & Community services – are the most casualised industries.

## OCCUPATION

B 27 OCCUPATION: MALE v FEMALE



The proportion of employed people describing themselves as Professionals or Managers & Administrators is the key indicator of socio-economic advantage, while the proportion of Labourers and Elementary workers in Clerical, Sales & Service positions is the principal indicator of disadvantage because such jobs tend to attract low pay.

In each of the area analysed, the number of women describing themselves as Professionals is higher than the number of men; and the number of men describing themselves as Managers & Administrators is higher than the number of women.

	Northern Cooranbong		Cooranbong		Morisset		Lake Mac	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Managers and Administrators	9%	0%	9%	6%	5%	4%	8%	3%
Professionals	26%	30%	17%	26%	17%	19%	14%	20%
Associate Professionals	12%	6%	9%	9%	8%	12%	12%	11%
Tradespersons and Related Workers	22%	6%	25%	4%	20%	6%	25%	3%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	0%	9%	1%	7%	0%	2%	1%	8%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	6%	23%	4%	22%	5%	24%	8%	27%
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	11%	2%	13%	3%	17%	4%	15%	2%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	4%	11%	5%	12%	10%	16%	7%	18%
Labourers and Related Workers	10%	11%	14%	11%	16%	10%	10%	7%
Inadequately described	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%
Not stated	0%	2%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%

**The proportion of professionals is significantly higher in northern Cooranbong and Cooranbong. One reason could be that these areas are home to senior workers in the education and health care facilities.**

Another reason, however, is that the proportion of elementary clerical and sales workers is low. Elementary positions tend to be filled by younger people entering the workforce from school. The proportion of such workers is therefore related to the age profile of the area. An “older” area like Cooranbong will have fewer elementary

workers, and professionals and managers will therefore constitute a higher percentage of the workforce.

Tradespersons are predominantly male and, in each of these areas but northern Cooranbong, constitute the largest male occupational group.

The Bureau of Statistics publication *Australia in Profile: A Regional Analysis 1996*<sup>18</sup> found that Lake Macquarie had the 8<sup>th</sup> highest proportion in Australia of people with a vocational qualification (and Port Stephens the 4<sup>th</sup> highest).

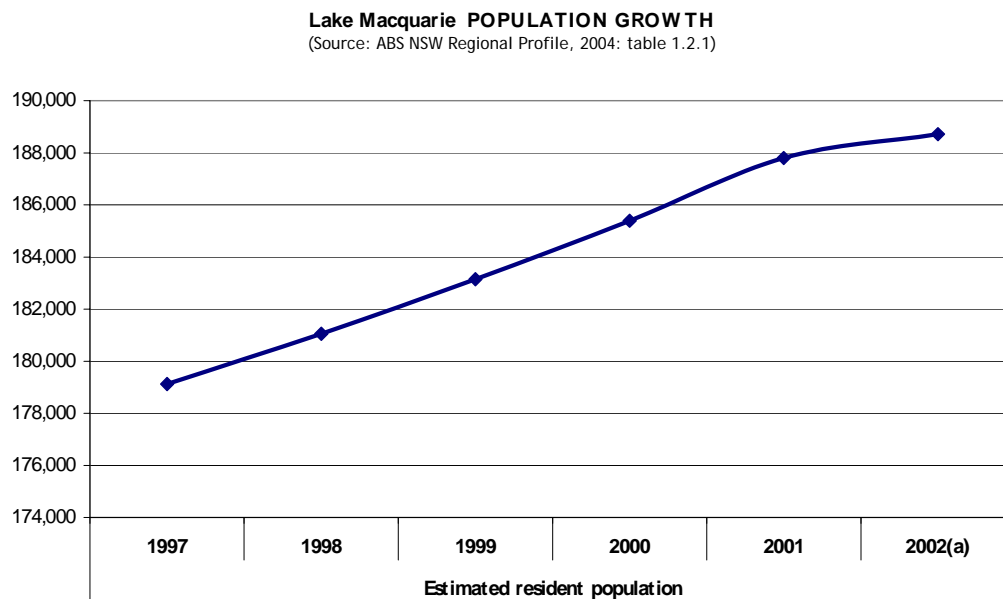
With trades employment locally in construction, manufacturing, mining, and electricity generation, and with easy transport access to other employment sites, western Lake Macquarie is a natural location for tradespersons.

## Housing

Residential buildings approved in Lake Macquarie in 2002-03 comprised 730 houses and 84 other residential buildings.

The total value of residential construction approved, including alterations and additions, was \$181 million.

Assuming the Census measure still applied a year later, and each dwelling housed on average 2.6 persons, 814 new dwellings would accommodate 2,116 residents. This would represent an increase in population of about 1.2 per cent from the 2001 Census figure, close to the annual rate of growth from 1987 to 2002:



The relation between population increase and housing is not direct and immediate. More than half of Lake Macquarie's growth is natural increase:

<sup>18</sup> ABS Cat No 2032.0 p 37. The 2001 edition employed different geographic areas, so no comparison is available.

	Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Net migration	Population change
Source: NSW Regional Profile 2004	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Lake Macquarie (C)	2,035	1,528	507	407	914

Natural increase comprises babies, and most are born into established households and do not require additional dwellings, at least not immediately. Over time, however, average household sizes will dictate the demand for more dwellings. Across Lake Macquarie, separate dwellings comprise 80 per cent of the housing stock, and accommodate 90 per cent of the population.

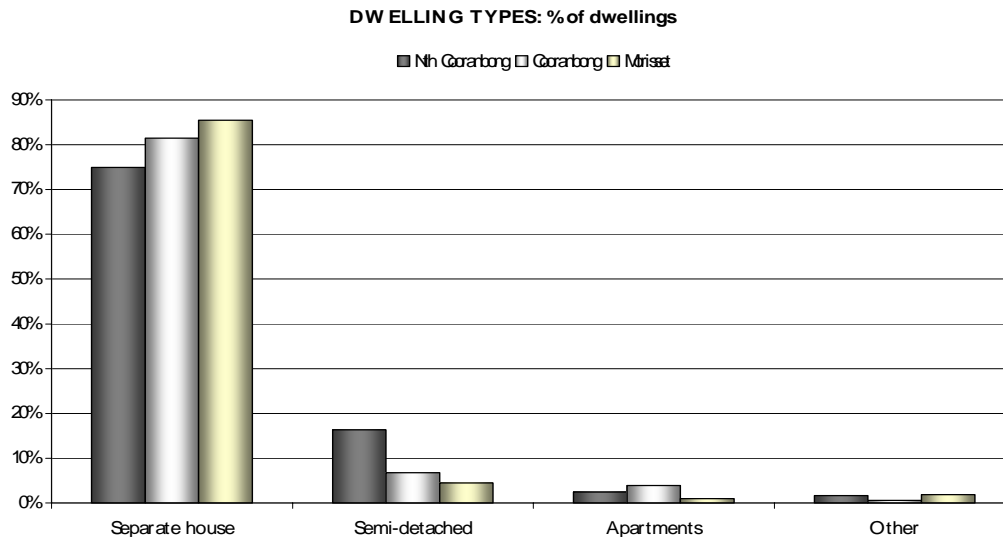
<b>B18 dwelling structures: Lake Macquarie</b>	<i>Dwellings</i>	<i>Persons</i>
<b>Separate house</b>	<b>57,647</b>	<b>158,130</b>
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc. with:		
One storey	3,579	6,146
Two or more storeys	1,280	2,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>8,921</b>
Flat, unit or apartment:		
In a one or two storey block	2,206	3,480
In a three storey block	38	48
In a four or more storey block	39	65
Attached to a house	331	525
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,614</b>	<b>4,118</b>
Other dwelling:		
Caravan, cabin, houseboat	1,257	1,954
Improvised home, tent, sleepers out	24	43
House or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.	176	425
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>2,422</b>
Not stated	433	860
Unoccupied private dwellings	4,976	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,986</b>	<b>174,451</b>

About 45 per cent of dwellings were fully owned and 27 per cent were being purchased. About 15 per cent were rented in the private sector, and 5.4 per cent of dwellings – 3,600 - were owned by a housing authority at the Census<sup>19</sup>.

These figures varied slightly for the area under study. Morisset has more separate housing, Northern Cooranbong has more townhouses and villas, Cooranbong a higher proportion of flats:

<sup>19</sup> These figures do not add to 100%. Some residents did not state tenure type on the Census.





The Cooranbong area has, however, been largely quarantined from population pressures by its “collective” ownership and planning decisions have not related directly to the demands placed on other areas.

If Morisset is taken as an example (not Morisset Peninsula, which has a substantial population in aged and retirement village living, particularly around Bonnells Bay) of what the market prefers, there is a greater demand for separate houses.

Cooranbong has not experienced that demand, at least in part because of deliberate choices to accommodate older people within a unique community. Many of these residents, as this study shows, are people who live alone and can be more comfortably accommodated in smaller dwellings like townhouses (in Northern Cooranbong) or flats (Cooranbong urban centre). These are also appropriate dwellings for students and visitors.

Apart from other factors, an older population renders issues of natural increase less significant as a driver of new housing.

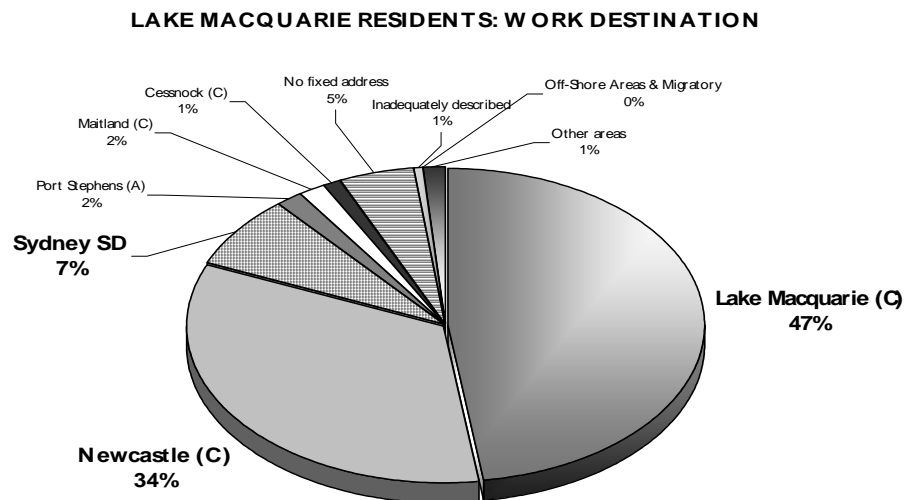
A population closer to the city average in age would tend to live in larger households to accommodate children, and would require larger dwellings – a higher proportion of separate houses.

There would appear to be sufficient land in the area to satisfy that need, without impinging on the distinct character of the existing community.

Given the clear and historically compelling organisation of the existing community, any change in its character would be a decision made by its own collective leadership, not forced on it by external forces.

## Transport

As mentioned above, more than half the workers who live in Lake Macquarie travel outside the city for work<sup>20</sup>.



Driving one's own car is the most common method of getting to and from work, comprising more than 65 per cent of journeys from Lake Macquarie to work sites either within or beyond the city. The city has 1.64 cars per dwelling, and there is a registered motor vehicle at more than 90 per cent of dwellings.

Travelling as a passenger in a car is the second most common method, comprising just over seven per cent of journeys from Cooranbong, Northern Cooranbong and Morisset, and just over six per cent from Lake Macquarie as a whole.

Train, either alone or in conjunction with another mode of transport, makes up about 10 per cent of journeys from Morisset, and about five per cent of trips from both Cooranbong and Cooranbong North. Comparison across the city is not really viable, as the railway runs only west of the lake, but about 1.4 per cent of workers from Lake Macquarie use the train.

Cycling to work is not common: 2.4 per cent in Cooranbong, 2.2 in Northern Cooranbong, nil in Morisset and about half of one per cent across the city as a whole.

Simply walking to work is much more common. While it accounts for about 1.7 per cent of journeys to work across the city, it is the way to work for 5.5 per cent of people in Northern Cooranbong, five per cent in Cooranbong, and 7.6 per cent in Morisset. (The figures for the Cooranbong area reflect the planned location of work and residential sites; the higher figure in Morisset probably reflects the concentration of employment sites in the centre of the town.)

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that 7,714 people who live in Newcastle work in Lake Macquarie, more than 1,000 from Maitland and about 800 each from Cessnock and Port Stephens.

The greater use of other means of transport reduces reliance on the car, but about 57 per cent of workers in Cooranbong and Northern Cooranbong drive their own car to work, while only 48 per cent do so from Morisset. The implications are that Morisset is convenient for walking or rail travel; Cooranbong for walking and for rail, though slightly less so than Morisset.

### **Future Growth and Population (Projected Social Profile)**

The principal driver of growth in housing is the growth in population in the Greater Metropolitan Region from Kiama to Port Stephens.

Growth in this large area is currently 1,000 people per week – of whom 600 represent natural increase.

The greater region includes four of Australia's ten largest urban centres: Sydney, the Illawarra, the Central Coast and Newcastle district.

Morisset and Cooranbong are near the boundary of two of them.

Western Lake Macquarie is positioned to control this development to the city's advantage, but not to avoid it - as the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has made clear through the Sydney Futures Forum ([www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au](http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au)) as recently as this year.

In particular, the excellent transport access which exists already to serve Cooranbong and Morisset from north and south makes the area highly attractive, while the environment between Lake Macquarie and the Watagans adds to the attraction.

Morisset possesses a solid base of services, such as financial services, on which to build a commercial centre and expand its recreational and other businesses. The region is well supplied with schools and even a tertiary institution, aged care and community health facilities.

From transport to banking, these represent social infrastructure which other areas in the Greater Metropolitan Region have yet to develop.

The existing population of the region is quite mobile. Lake residents work in Newcastle, on the Central Coast and in Sydney; thousands of Newcastle residents work in Lake Macquarie. Retail and leisure services are accessible in Newcastle and on the Central Coast as well as within Lake Macquarie itself or, further afield, in Sydney.

Full advantage has yet to be taken of Morisset's location. In part, this is a result of the longstanding attraction of the lake foreshore as a retirement area. As development of the Morisset Peninsula has shown in the past decade, however, retirement homes and weekenders are no longer the principal drivers of new housing.

Cooranbong's highly individual, if not unique character has been shaped by its highly individual history of development.

Given the strong and clear organising principle behind it, the Adventist church, it is difficult to see how that character would be changed except by decision of the community, including the church's membership.

Cooranbong has comfortably retained its individual character while development has continued at Dora Creek and on the Morisset Peninsula. Many church members live in both those areas. It can in all likelihood continue to do so with development west of the F3 freeway as well.

Any development proposal for north of Cooranbong would look to accommodate residents different from those who live in Cooranbong.

The Adventist church places the greatest emphasis on family, and has notably translated this into action by accommodating and caring for older members of its community at Cooranbong and educating the younger members of not only the church community.

This has created a population that differs from the demographic average of the rest of the region. New housing on any scale would likely be taken up by a market closer to the city and state averages.

This would probably mean a younger population, principally of couples with children under 15.

Based on the population in surrounding areas, the male partner would most likely be a tradesman aged 35 to 39, and earning \$600 a week in manufacturing or over \$1,000 in construction if he is in a building trade.

His partner would work part-time in health and community services, from the time their youngest child starts school, and earn \$200 to \$300 a week depending on how many shifts she gets. She will leave the labour force at about 45 years of age.

However, the services sector generates about 75 per cent of employment in Australia, and Sydney is the greatest single generator of jobs.

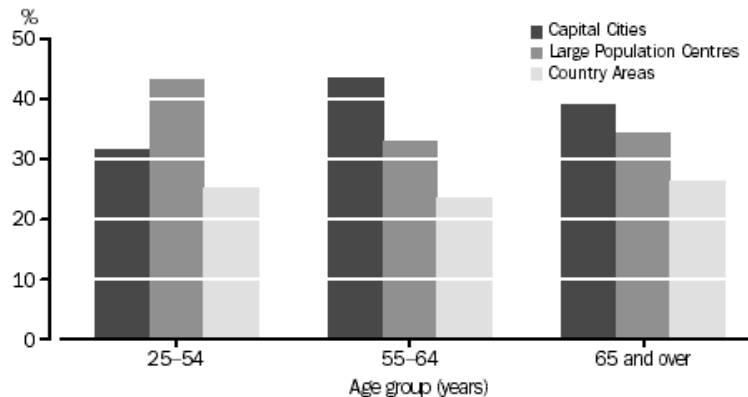
While a new development at Cooranbong is somewhat distant from Sydney to be a commuter town – it will more likely support the development of CBD-style commercial facilities, restaurants and other leisure facilities, at Morisset – it would no doubt attract people who would commute to work on the Central Coast, in Newcastle or in Sydney.

Some of these would be single people, principally male, and earning in a higher range than the local tradesman while working in business or property services in northern Sydney. There might also be some single women who, earning less income, find it easier to buy their own property north of the Hawkesbury but still with transport links that make travelling to work as easy as if they lived in south-western Sydney. With a more attractive environment to come home to.

The ability to buy a first home will be a major attraction. Only one house in eight sold in Australia today is being sold to a first homeowner.

But it must be accepted that the area – at this point – does not hold the social attraction for single people that Sydney does. So most of the buyers would be young couples.

They will not all be from Sydney at all, nor will they want to go there to live although they might pursue work there. Four out of five people in Australia moving to coastal areas are under 50, and most came from non-capital city areas:



Source: ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

This will lower the average age in the Cooranbong region, especially when these couples start a family.

It will also increase the size of the average household in that area – but not as much as might be expected.

Such couples will delay starting a family because of the financial imperative of the mortgage (this study has not discussed mortgages in Cooranbong because the market as it stands lacks depth and liquidity) and the pursuit of their careers.

This particular trend is one reason that the Bureau of Statistics forecasts a reduction in the size of the average household in Australia over the next two decades, an impact being felt already.

The other factor in this reduction is the ageing of the population. A consequence of this ageing is that lone-person households will grow in percentage terms faster than any other kind of household, while the couple-household where the children have left home will grow faster in number than any other kind.

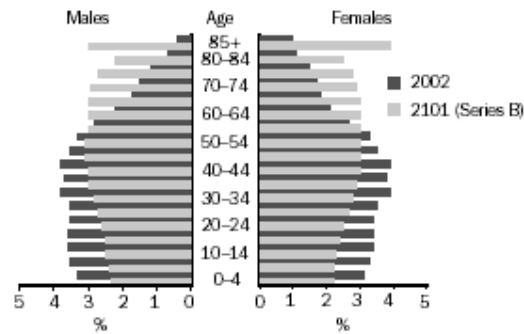
The average household size is expected to go from 2.6 (the average in 2001 in Lake Macquarie, NSW and Australia) to 2.3 or 2.2 by 2026.

Housing 1,000 people at 2.6 per household requires 385 dwellings. At 2.3 it requires 50 more, and at 2.2 a further 20. Housing demand will grow faster than population increase.

There should be more couples without children than couples living with children within seven years. But probably not in Cooranbong.

The existing population of Morisset or Cooranbong, especially those who have come to retire near the lake, will not be pushed out. Rather, they should benefit from improved local services. Some of these will result from market recognition that older residents are a growing segment of the population, while others – cinemas and restaurants, for example – simply from increases in the size of the market.

The following chart from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows the trend dramatically by looking 99 years ahead to a time when people over 85 will outnumber every five-year age band:



Source: Population Projections, Australia, 2002-2101 (ABS cat. no. 3222.0), 2003.

Ironically – perhaps happily - for the older resident who may consider retirement in the Westlakes area, there is strong evidence in areas like the Great Lakes Shire that a population with a high median age tends to create more job opportunities for older workers.