

Riverside @ Tea Garden  
**Statement of Social Impacts**

for  
Crighton Properties Pty Ltd

June 2008

**Duo Consulting Pty Ltd**

ABN 43 122 246 762

ACN 122 246 762

**Hunter**

---

PO Box 741

Newcastle NSW 2300

0422 00 22 44

matt@duoconsulting.com.au

**Illawarra**

---

PO Box A279

Shellharbour NSW 2529

0411 291 460

crispin@duoconsulting.com.au

**Online**

---

[www.duoconsulting.com.au](http://www.duoconsulting.com.au)

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## Document Tracking

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Matthew Crozier	Duo Consulting P/L	Second Draft	2 / 3/ 2007
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# Contents

CONTENTS		
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		
1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	4	
2. THE DEVELOPMENT	5	
1.1. SITE LOCATION	5	
1.2. SITE DESCRIPTION	6	
1.3. PROPOSED USE	6	
3. METHODOLOGY	7	
3.1 STATISTICAL PROFILING	7	
3.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION	7	
3.3 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AIMS	7	
4. POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS	9	
4.1 POPULATION PROJECTIONS	9	
4.2 HOUSING SUPPLY	10	
5. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TEA GARDENS	11	
5.1 AGE DISTRIBUTION	11	
5.2 POPULATION STABILITY	13	
5.3 FAMILY STRUCTURE	11	
5.3.1 Marital Status	11	
5.4 ETHNIC DIVERSITY	15	
5.4.1 Ancestry	15	
5.4.2 Religion	17	
5.4.3 Language	18	
5.5 HOUSING	20	
5.6 HOUSEHOLD SIZE	20	
5.7 INCOMES	22	
5.8 EMPLOYMENT	23	
5.9 EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE	24	
6. SCOPE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS	26	
6.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE	26	
6.2 ACCESSIBILITY & MOBILITY	27	
6.2.1 Public Transport	27	
6.2.2 Pedestrian & Bicycle	30	
6.3 RETIREMENT LIVING AND AGED CARE	30	
6.4 COMMERCIAL	31	
6.5 RECREATION	33	
6.5.1 Sporting and outdoor facilities	33	
6.5.2 Beaches	34	
6.6 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	35	
6.6.1 Community Halls	35	
6.6.2 Library	35	
6.6.3 Preschool	36	
6.6.4 Tea Gardens Grange Facilities	36	
6.6.5 Rural Fire Service Station	36	
6.6.6 Places of Worship	36	
6.6.7 Post Office	36	
6.6.8 Veterinary Services	36	
6.7 EMPLOYMENT	38	
6.8 HEALTH	40	
6.9 EDUCATION	40	
6.9.1 Primary Education	40	
6.9.2 Secondary Education	42	
6.9.3 Tertiary and Adult Education	43	
7. HOUSING	44	
7.1 COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND HOUSING DENSITY	44	
7.2 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	47	
7.2.1 Home Ownership	47	
7.2.2 The rental market	47	
7.2.3 The impact of Home Business Development	47	
7.2.4 Housing Stress	48	
7.2.5 Measures to enhance affordability	48	
8. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	50	
APPENDIX 1 – DRAFT CONCEPT SITE PLAN		
APPENDIX 2 – FEEDBACK FORMS FROM PLANNING FORUM		
APPENDIX 3 – FORUM ATTENDEES AND POINTS RAISED		
APPENDIX 4 - PLANNING FORUM NEWS LETTER		

## Executive Summary

The Draft Concept Plan and Project Application for Riverside at Tea Gardens (Appendix 1) were developed as part of an extensive community consultation process. The Draft Concept Plan and associated Project Application propose the following uses:

- 980 lots comprising:
  - 779 at 450sqm or greater
  - 44 lots that are less than 450sqm
  - 157 medium density dwellings
  - A tourism precinct comprising 50 lodge houses and 15 townhouses
- A 800sqm expansion of the Myall Quays Shopping Village
- Up to 15,000 sqm of additional retail / commercial floor space.
- Two proposed 'home business precincts', included in the dwelling totals above.
- A series of community facilities in neighbourhood centres throughout the site that will serve neighbourhood functions. The exact form of these remains to be determined.

The new facilities, parks and landscaping will be managed under a community title arrangement. Only the roads will be dedicated to and managed by Great Lakes Council.

This Social Impact assessment examines services and facilities in the vicinity of Tea Gardens and their capacity to accommodate the growth in population proposed by the Riverside development.

This assessment examines the current profile of the Tea Gardens community and its access to key services. It then discusses the likely impact of Riverside on those services making recommendations where it is felt services could be enhanced by the development or require augmentation to accommodate Riverside and its population.

The assessment also examines issues such as employment opportunities in the locale, urban design and housing affordability and draws a number of conclusions.

Assessment is also provided of the likely cumulative impacts from other developments proposed in the Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest areas. It is important to note that, unlike other sites proposed for development in the area,

Riverside is already zoned to allow for mixed use development providing a degree of certainty of outcome that may not exist for other proposed sites. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to expect the proponents of Riverside to provide facilities and social capacity to accommodate future developments. However, this analysis provides discussion of the likely implications of further growth.

The Social Impact Assessment makes the following recommendations with regard to enhancing the lifestyles of the residents of Tea Gardens and the overall cohesiveness of the community.

Overall it is clear that the development of Riverside has the potential to significantly enhance the services and community facilities in Tea Gardens. Indeed, the existing development of the commercial precinct at the site has already significantly enhanced services to residents.

Tea Gardens is well located and served with schooling and medical facilities and has access to a variety of employment nodes.

The following recommendations are designed to ensure that the community gains maximum benefit from the development and that any potential for adverse effects are carefully mitigated:

- 1 Riverside should have roads constructed to allow a bus a loop through the development bringing public transport access to within walking distance of each dwelling. This will be particularly important for school bus pickups but as the community grows will allow for the potential for convenient public transport services.
- 2 It is recommended that attention be paid to the provision of a comprehensive network of cycle ways through the Riverside site connecting all community facilities and places of interest. This network should be provided as part of the development and should, particularly, provide ease of access to the commercial centre and connect directly to the Council planned cycle way network and to the foreshore so as to augment community mobility.
- 3 It is recommended that, as part of discussion regarding developer contributions, consideration be given to contributing to the provision of a multipurpose community function / meeting facility in line with Council's

- Section 94 plan for the area. This should be located within walking distance (400m) of the Riverside commercial precinct.
- 4 It is recommended that Crighton Properties give consideration to a contribution to the upgrade of library facilities either on site or as part of the provision of a multi use community facility in line with Council's Section 94 plan.
  - 5 It is recommended that Crighton Properties keep the Principals of both Tea Gardens Public School and Bulahdelah Central School informed of the growth of school age population at Riverside in order to assist school planning. However, it is noted that school facilities in the area are sufficient to accommodate the expected growth in population from Riverside.
  - 6 The community facilities and telecommunications being provided in the home business precincts may provide the opportunity for distance learning, in effect providing a learning hub accessible to the wider community. It is recommended that Crighton Properties should hold discussions with TAFE and the University of Newcastle on facilities that would suit these sorts of community learning facilities. These could be located in the multi use community facility or in the business precinct hub or commercial centre.
  - 7 The opportunity exists to consolidate certain Council facilities, including sporting facilities, on to one site as part of the Myall River Downs Development. This would represent a significant upgrade of current facilities and should be pursued by Council to provide capacity for future population growth in the Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest area.
  - 8 The Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2006) sets out a range of facilities that it would like to see developed in Tea Gardens (Appendix 5). It is recommended that these provide a guide to discussions with Council about what facilities be provided at a new consolidated facility. However, it is important to note that it would not be appropriate or equitable for Riverside and its residents to be expected to meet the cost of the full list of desired facilities. The list may, nonetheless, provide a useful guide both for this development and for contributions from subsequent developments in the area.
  - 9 The Myall Quays Commercial Centre provides commercial and retail space that is adequate for the current population. As the population of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest grows it is recommended that an additional 8,500sqm of retail space be allowed over the next 10 years and that the demand for retail space be reviewed at that point to ensure the adequacy of future retail floor space provision. The provision of 15,000sqm of retail and commercial space should adequately facilitate this expansion.
  - 10 Whilst health services are well provided for in the area, it is recommended that the Concept Plan be submitted to the Population Health Unit of the Hunter New England Health Service who will provide detailed recommendations on measures to optimise preventative health.
  - 11 It is recommended that as Riverside is developed a case be made to provide a further 50 beds in the aged care hostel facility at Tea Gardens Grange.
  - 12 It is recommended that development of the two home business precincts be carefully monitored with consideration being given to the provision of similar facilities in neighbouring developments or in the town's 2b zone should the demand for these precincts outstrip supply.
  - 13 It is recommended that the availability of permanent rental housing stock at Riverside and in the wider Tea Gardens community be monitored by Crighton Properties and that the developer's marketing should target investors should the supply of available rental accommodation dwindle.

# Part A

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BACKGROUND

# 1. Introduction & Background

This paper analyses the likely social impacts of the Draft Concept Plan and Project Application for the development of Riverside at Tea Gardens.

The site, along with a neighbouring site at Myall River Downs which Crighton Properties intends to seek approval to develop in parallel, form the vast majority of future land release in the community of Tea Gardens and, as such, will have a profound impact on the future of that community.

For the purposes of this assessment of Riverside at Tea Gardens, the cumulative impacts of the development of other sites in the area are considered where appropriate. Cumulative impacts are most relevant where infrastructure is being provided that cannot be readily upgraded on a modular basis. For example, schools respond well to increments in population, being able to add additional classrooms as pressures require, but have an ultimate capacity for growth, beyond which new facilities are required.

It should be noted that Riverside differs from other sites in the area in that it is already zoned for development. As such Riverside has a greater level of certainty of outcome than other sites. Whilst this report considers some of the cumulative impacts of population growth in the Tea Gardens area it does not represent an assessment of the social impacts of the Myall River Downs site, or indeed any site other than Riverside. These will need to be considered under a separate cover when that proposal is assessed.

Riverside was formerly known as Myall Quays and the development has substantially commenced with 261 lots either on the market or sold with a substantial number of dwellings established. In all 300 standard residential lots have been approved, a further 20 duplex or small lots have approval (18 more are currently with Council), and 37 medium density dwellings have approval with 7 with Council for approval.

3,600 square metres of retail and commercial space is already provided at the Myall Quays Shopping Village including a 2000sqm supermarket, a number of specialty stores, and a 900 sqm medical centre. A 533sqm child care centre, a 1355sqm office building and a 220sqm service station all have DA approval but are yet to be constructed.

The existing precincts of Riverside contain a network of parks and open space and a major water body all of which are maintained by the Community Title Association.

The Draft Concept Plan and Project Application propose to complete the development of the site.

This assessment of social impacts starts by building a profile of the Tea Gardens Community and looking at demographic trends, it then examines current community facilities and the likely impact of growth on these and then examines the housing market prior to making recommendations regarding the social impacts of the development of Riverside and suggested steps to optimise that impact.



## 2. The Development

### 2.1 Site Location

Tea Gardens is a small town located on the Northern shores of Port Stephens on the Southern boundary of the Great Lakes LGA.. It neighbours the small coastal community of Hawks Nest being connected via a bridge over the Myall River. It is located approximately:

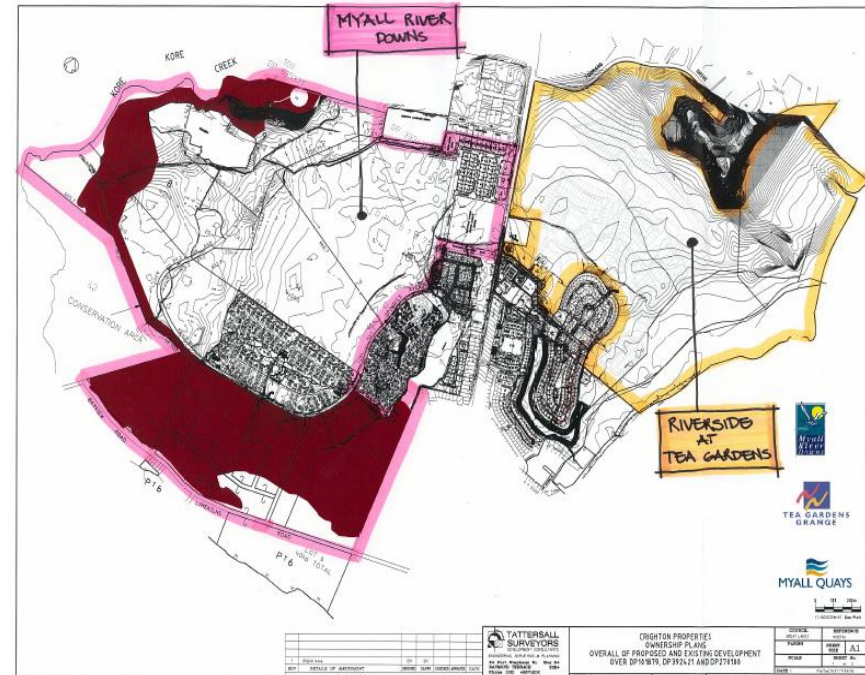
- 75km or one hour's drive North of Newcastle on the Pacific Highway.
- 110km south or an hour and a half from Forster –Tuncurry
- 51km or 40 minutes from Raymond Terrace
- 46km or 35 Minutes from Medowie
- 39km or 30 minutes from Bulahdelah

Map 1: Regional location



The Riverside at Tea Gardens site comprises approximately of 230 ha of land that lies between the Myall River in the West, the Myall Road to the East and is broadly bounded by Toonang Drive and the Shearwater Estate to the North and by the existing development to the South. The site is to the North West of the existing Tea Gardens township and is located on the entry road into the existing town providing the edge to the community.

MAP 2: Riverside and Myall River Downs Site Location



## 2.2 Site Description

The Draft Concept Plan and Project Application cover 179ha of the total site land with the remainder already developed or subject to existing approvals.

The site has been identified for development in the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Conservation and Development Strategy and in the 2006 Hawks Nest Tea Gardens Housing Strategy. The site has a zoning of 2(f) Mixed Residential-Commercial under the Great Lakes LEP 1996 and is currently controlled by the Great Lakes Development Control Plan 22 which sets out development controls for the site.

The site is also covered by the 2006 Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest Section 94 Contributions Plan which sets out parameters for open space and service provision for the community.

## 2.3 Proposed Use

The Draft Concept Plan (Appendix 1) proposes the following uses:

- 980 lots comprising:
  - 779 at 450sqm or greater
  - 44 lots that are less than 450sqm
  - 157 medium density dwellings
  - A tourism precinct comprising 50 lodge houses and 15 townhouses
- A 800sqm expansion of the Myall Quays Shopping Village
- Up to 15,000 sqm of additional retail / commercial floor space.
- Two proposed 'home business precincts', included in the dwelling totals above.
- A series of community facilities in neighbourhood centres throughout the site that will serve neighbourhood functions. The exact form of these remains to be determined.

The new facilities, parks and landscaping will be managed under a community title arrangement. Only the roads will be dedicated to and managed by Great Lakes Council.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Statistical Profiling

The statistical data used in this report is largely derived from the ABS 2006 Census.

ABS data has been supplemented with other data sources from local government and private developers where possible to provide an up to date picture. Information gathered during the Design forum and other community engagement assists in providing an up to date picture and more subjective statements are used at times when necessary or where it is felt they add perspective and value to the analysis.

### 3.2 Community Consultation

Between 1 and 3 February 2006 Crighton Properties held a planning design forum for the Myall River Downs and Riverside at Tea Gardens (formerly Myall Quays) sites. This forum provided an opportunity, through facilitated sessions, for the community and various government agencies to detail their views on the future development of the Tea Gardens area.

143 people attended all or part of the forum. This included 10 representatives of Great Lakes Council, and 103 community members.

The Design Forum included a site and context tour, presentations on relevant issues and constraints, community workshops and a design studio session leading to a presentation to the community of the early basis for the Draft Concept Plan.

Details of the Design Forum and its outcomes are appended to this document. Appendix 2 provides a summary of feedback forms received after the final presentation, Appendix 3 is a list of attendees and points raised, and Appendix 4 is a follow up newsletter. These included considerable information on services and perceived deficiencies which have drawn on throughout this assessment of social impacts.

A further community meeting was held on 26 April to discuss the developed Concept Plan.

### 3.3 Social Impact Assessment Aims

This Social Impact assessment aims to examine services and facilities in the vicinity of Tea Gardens and their capacity to accommodate the growth in population proposed by the Riverside development.

It examines the current profile of the community and its access to key services and then discusses the likely impact of Riverside on those services making recommendations where it is felt services could be enhanced by the development or require augmentation to accommodate Riverside and its population.

For the purposes of this assessment of Riverside at Tea Gardens, the cumulative impacts of the development of other sites in the area are considered where appropriate. Cumulative impacts are most relevant where infrastructure is being provided that cannot be readily upgraded on a modular basis. For example, schools respond well to increments in population, being able to add additional classrooms as pressures require, but have an ultimate capacity for growth, beyond which new facilities are required.

The assessment also examines issues such as employment opportunities in the locale, urban design and housing affordability and makes recommendations with regard to enhancing the lifestyles of the residents of Tea Gardens and the overall cohesiveness of the community.

# Part B

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## THE TEA GARDENS COMMUNITY

## 4 Population Growth and Projections

The population of Tea Gardens is growing rapidly by State standards and growth is accelerating. Between 1991 and 2001 the population of Tea Gardens doubled from 684 people to 1,372 people<sup>1</sup> an average annual growth rate of around 7.5% (around seven times the state average). By the time of the 2006 Census there were 2,094<sup>2</sup> people in Tea Gardens with an average annual growth rate of around 8%. Between 1991 and 2006 the population of Tea Gardens grew by 206%.

### 4.1 Population Projections

There are a number of projections for future growth for the Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest area. The total population of the two settlements at the 2006 Census was 3,155 (having grown from 2545 in 2001). Hawks Nest has a recent history of population decline (between the 2001 and 2006 Census counts the population declined by 9% from 1163 to 1061 people), set against the strong growth in Tea Gardens meaning that the projected growth is dominated by Tea Gardens.

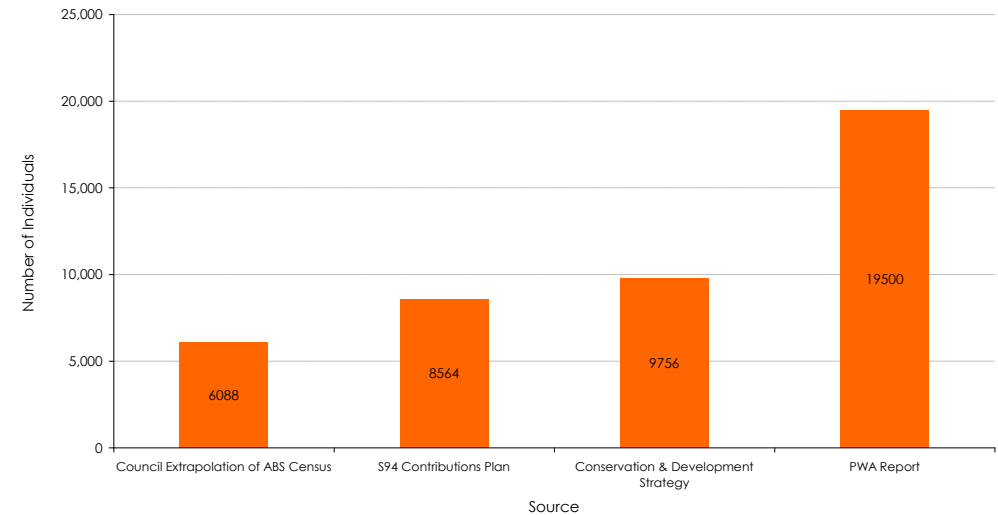
Graph 1, below, shows some projections for growth. There are wide variations in projections which are explained below.

- The first and lowest projection is based on an extrapolation of Census trends carried out in a summary report by Council. This sees the combined population growing by 3,543 people over the 30 years from 2001 to 2031. This approach was based on constant future growth rates rather than looking at percentage growth. This translates to a dramatic decrease in growth rates over time and as such looks very conservative, especially when the growth of around 600 people a year between 2001 and 2006 is taken into account.

<sup>1</sup> ABS Census 2001

<sup>2</sup> ABS Census 2006

Graph 1: 2031 Population Projections  
Hawkes Nest / Tea Gardens



- Council's S94 Contributions Plan predicts a population of 8,564 by 2031 which would represent growth of 6019 people over 30 years, an average of 4.1% annual growth. This is a high growth rate by State standards but remains a low average growth rate compared with the performance of the area over the past 15 years.
- Council's Conservation and Development Strategy sees a high growth rate scenario leading to growth of 9,756 people. Again, assuming growth based on increases of 750 people per 5 year period through the life of the Strategy, this forecast sees significantly declining growth rates.
- Planning Workshop Australia (2000) used a rate of growth of 6.48% and projected the population of Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens reaching 19,500 by 2031. They cite the improvements in road links to Sydney, the sea change phenomenon, increasing land supply and improving local facilities as reasons to expect growth to continue strongly.

The above projections of growth really only demonstrate demand. All show high demand and all show the community more than doubling in size over the next 25 years. The strength of demand for housing in Tea Gardens can be attributed to down shifters from Sydney and migrants from inland regional areas representing a very large potential market seeking accessible coastal locations in which to resettle. As well as State demographic shifts and vastly improved links to Sydney spurring growth, recent local improvements such as the sealing of the road to Williamstown Airport and Medowie will also be likely to provide a spur for growth.

The current down turn in the property market has led to a high number of vacant properties but this is likely to be a transient adjustment prior to strong growth resuming. Over time, demand for housing will build but supply of housing is limited in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest. The key to the future population of the area will undoubtedly be the supply of housing rather than demand.

For the purposes of this assessment it will be assumed that significant demand exists for the growth of Tea Gardens. It is not necessary to enter into the debate about the ultimate growth of the settlement. What is more relevant here is that Riverside will play a role in meeting demand for housing and how it will impact on the housing, services, lifestyle and facilities in Tea Gardens and for its surrounding residents.

## 4.2 Housing Supply

Assuming that supply of housing is set to be the key determinant of growth in Tea Gardens we can chart the ultimate growth of the community. There are four major green field developments identified by the Hawks Nest Tea Gardens Housing Strategy as well as growth from infill opportunities, particularly in the 2b medium density zone and the Shearwater low density development.

Table 1 provides a summary of likely dwelling and population growth. This estimates that the community will ultimately grow by around 9,403 people from 2006 levels. This figure will be used for the purposes of understanding cumulative impacts in this assessment.

Table 1: Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest projected dwelling supply

SITE	DWELLINGS	ESTIMATED POPULATION
2006 Population		3,155 (actual)
Riverside	980	2077
Myall River Downs	1,500	3,300
Hermitage	281	506
North Hawks Nest	750	1,650**
North Shearwater	350	770
Estimated Other*	500	1,100
Total	4361	12,558

\*Other dwellings based on combined infill dwellings this is an estimate only based on data provided in the TGHN Housing Strategy

\*\* Assumes a considerably higher permanent occupancy rate than is currently the case in Hawks Nest as a highest case scenario.

## 5. Demographic Profile of Tea Gardens

### 5.1 Age Distribution

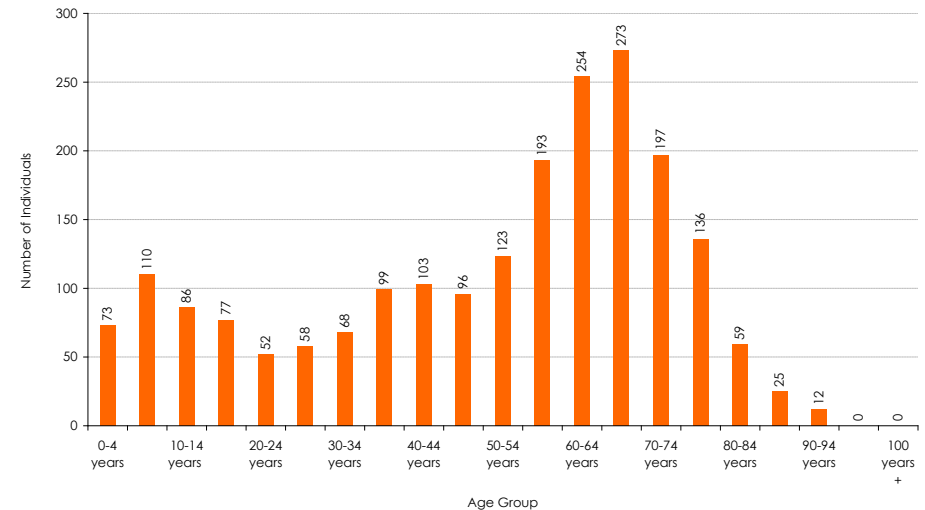
The age composition of the population of Tea Gardens is markedly older than the State Average. Graphs 2, 3 and 4 show that at the time of the 2006 census Tea Gardens had a significantly higher proportion of people in the over 55 age group than the NSW average.

At the 2006 Census 55% of the population of Tea Gardens was aged over 55. This is more than double the NSW average of 25%. The population has continued in its ageing trend in recent years, only 46% of the population were aged over 55 at the time of the 2001 census. Sales data provided by Crighton Properties back this up. Of homes sold since 2001, only 8% of purchasers were under 40 whilst 43% were over 55. This is a strong indication that this ageing trend is increasing with Tea Gardens continuing to attract retirees.

However, there is reason to believe that recent upgrades to transport infrastructure effecting access to employment opportunities along with the development of home business precincts at Riverside may go some way to offsetting the ageing trend over time. It is also interesting to note that the principal of the Tea Gardens Public School reports growth in enrollments in recent years suggesting that infrastructure changes may already be having some effect.

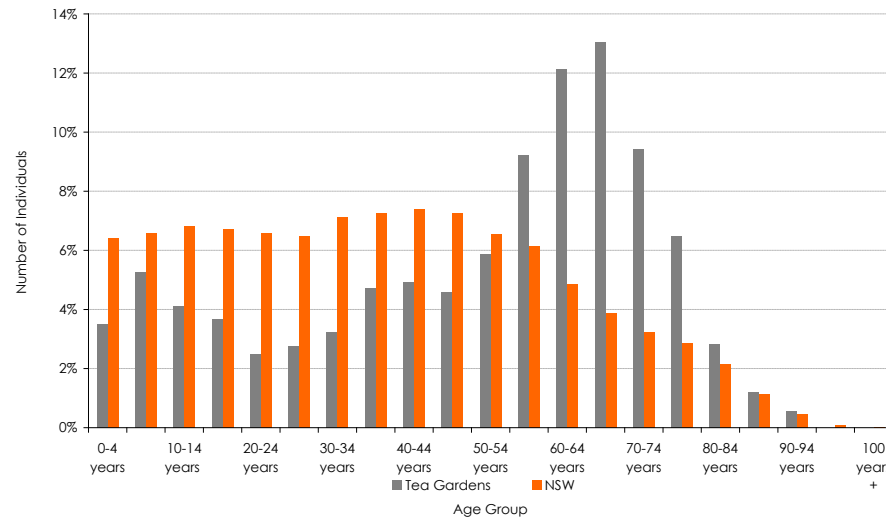
The low number of people in Tea Gardens aged between 20 and 30 is particularly striking and the representation of these age groups as a proportion of the community is likely to remain low. This is unsurprising given the nature of the community, its isolation from tertiary educational opportunities and the limited diversity of employment opportunities and housing opportunities currently afforded by the community.

Graph 2: Tea Gardens 2006 Age Structure



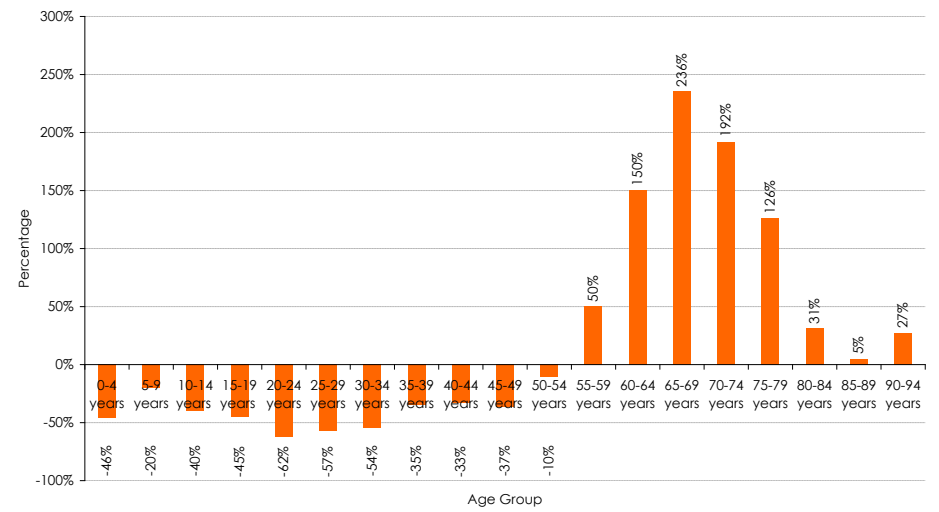
(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 3: 2006 Age Structure  
Tea Gardens vs NSW



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 4: Tea Gardens 2006 Age Structure  
Relative Variation from NSW Average

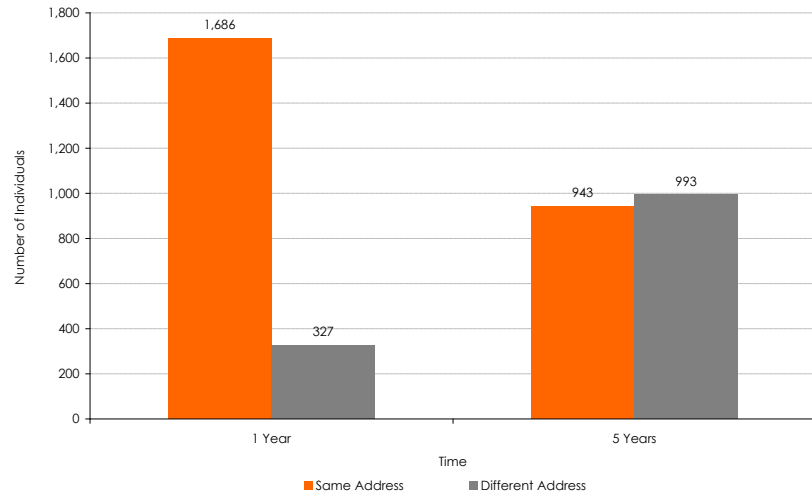


(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)



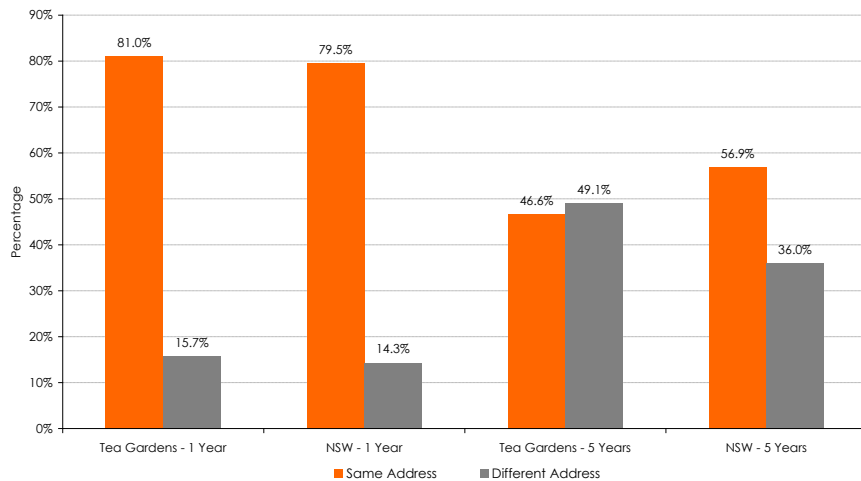
## 5.2 Population Stability

Graph 5: Tea Gardens Population Stability 2006



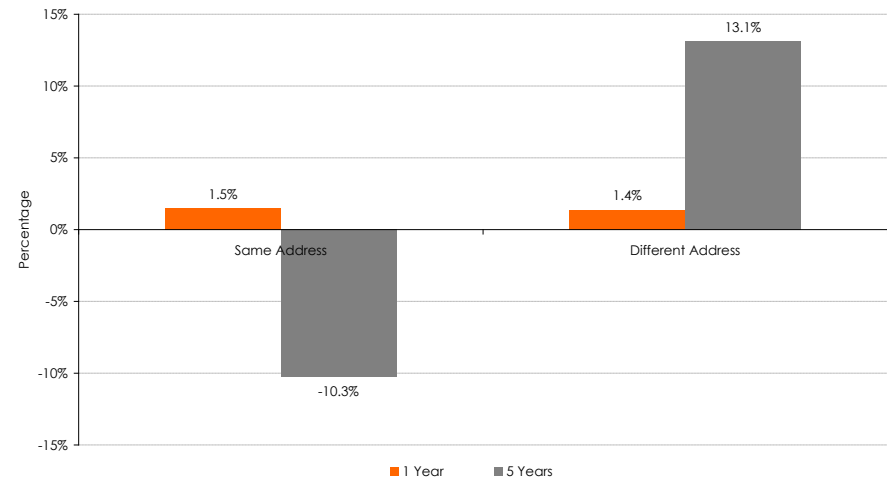
(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 6: Population Stability 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 7: Tea Gardens Population Stability 2006  
Real Variation from NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

It is clear from Graphs 5 to 7 that Tea Gardens has a less stable population than the State average. This reflects the rapid growth of the population.

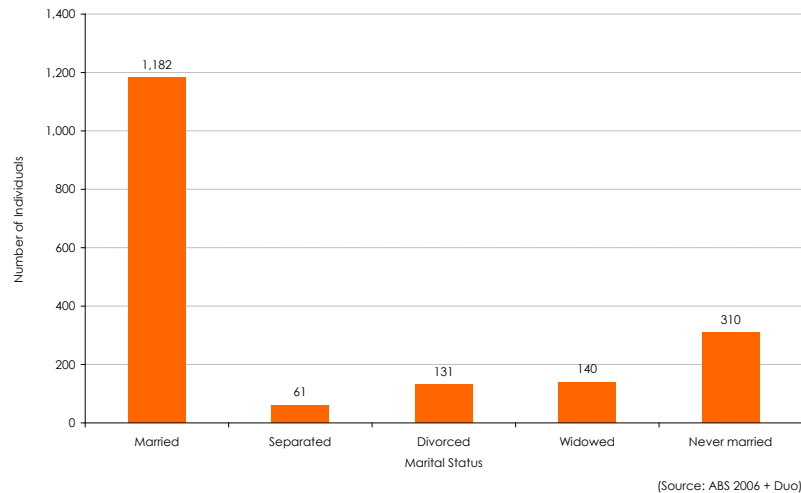
The Tea Gardens population contains a significant number of people who have moved to the area on retirement. As the community continues to attract retirees and to grow rapidly the proportion of people who have spent less than five years at their current address will be likely to remain above the State and LGA average.

However this does not imply a transient population. People who settle in Tea Gardens may happily remain in their new homes for many years. What it does tell us is that many of the community are newcomers and that measures to assist them to integrate into the community will have a high value.

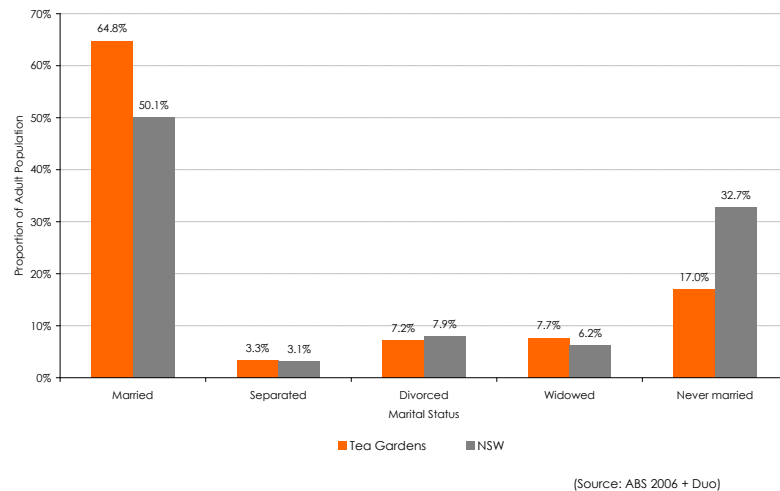
## 5.3 Family Structure

### 5.3.1 Marital Status

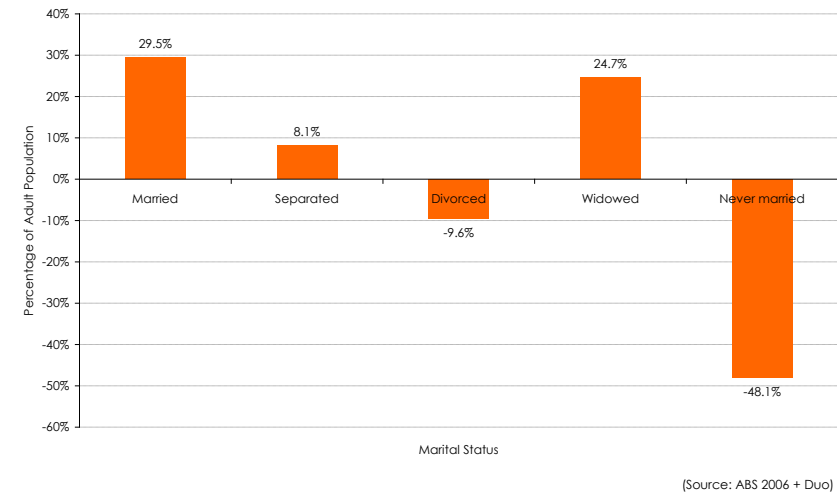
Graph 8 - Tea Garden 2006 Marital Status



Graph 9: Marital Status 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



Graph 10: Tea Gardens 2006 Marital Status  
Relative Variation from NSW Average



The population of Tea Gardens is unlikely to have never married but more likely than the State average to have been widowed.

This is perhaps unsurprising given the age profile of the community. Again it points to the importance of community building initiatives and facilities to assist singles and to ensure that, particularly the elderly, have access to social networks and support services.

Table 3 shows that there are just 72 lone parents in Tea Gardens but that there are significantly more empty nesters' in the community and lone persons.

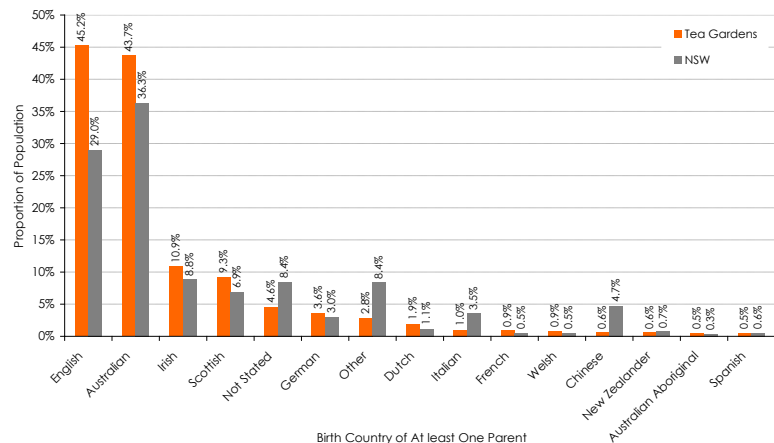
**Table 3: Household Relationship by Age**

	Age Group									Total
	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85 +	
Husband or wife in registered marriage	..	0	34	93	130	331	365	122	9	1,084
Partner in de facto marriage	..	8	28	24	21	23	9	6	3	122
Lone parent	..	3	9	29	15	5	5	3	3	72
Child under 15	248	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	248
Dependent student (Aged 15-24 years)	..	45	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	45
Non-dependent child	..	28	7	9	7	3	3	0	0	57
Other related individual	..	9	6	0	0	4	5	0	4	28
Unrelated individual living in family household	..	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Group household member	..	7	4	4	9	10	4	3	0	41
Lone person	..	7	14	21	16	32	49	47	15	201
Visitor (from within Australia)	8	0	7	7	11	10	16	0	6	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1,973</b>

## 5.4 Ethnic Diversity

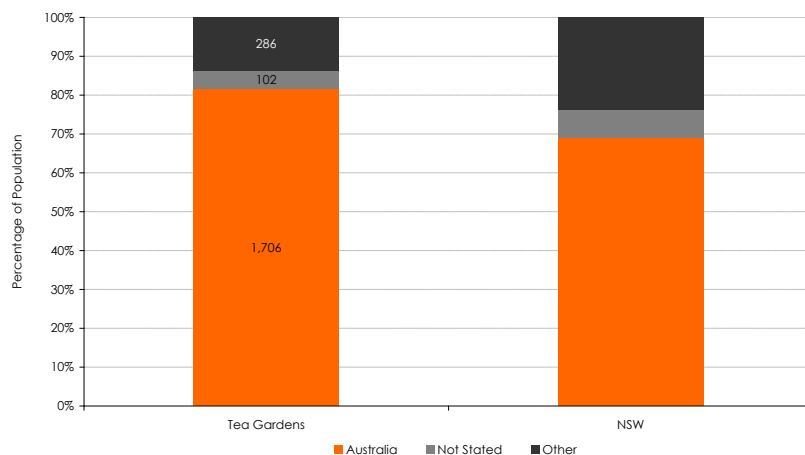
### 5.4.1 Ancestry

Graph G11: Major Ancestry Groups 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 12: Birth Country 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

**Table 4: Australian Indigenous Heritage 2006 Tea Gardens vs NSW Average**

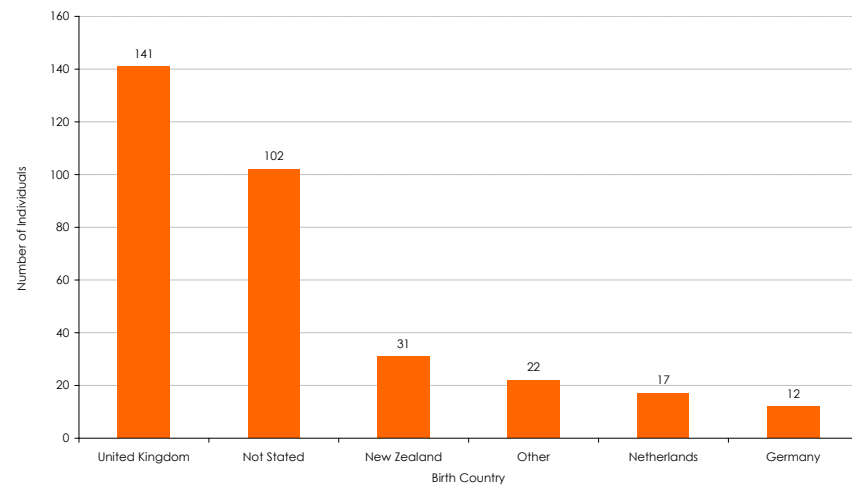
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Not Stated	Total
Tea Gardens (no.)	47	1,992	54	2,093
Tea Gardens (%)	2.2%	95.2%	2.6%	100.0%
NSW (%)	2.1%	91.9%	6.0%	100.0%
Relative Diff	6.2%	3.6%	-56.8%	0.0%

Diversity in a community provides a broad indicator of adaptiveness, vibrancy and strength. Ethnicity is only one of a variety of indicators including age, language and religion that give an idea of diversity in the community. Broadly speaking the addition of significant new population is an opportunity to add to the diversity of a community.

The population of Tea Gardens is dominated by European and Australian ancestry and is distinctly not ethnically diverse. Only 286 people in the community in 2006 were not born in Australia and the vast majority of these are European, or from New Zealand.

The population of Tea Gardens has a slightly higher than NSW average proportion of people of indigenous and Torres Strait Islander background.

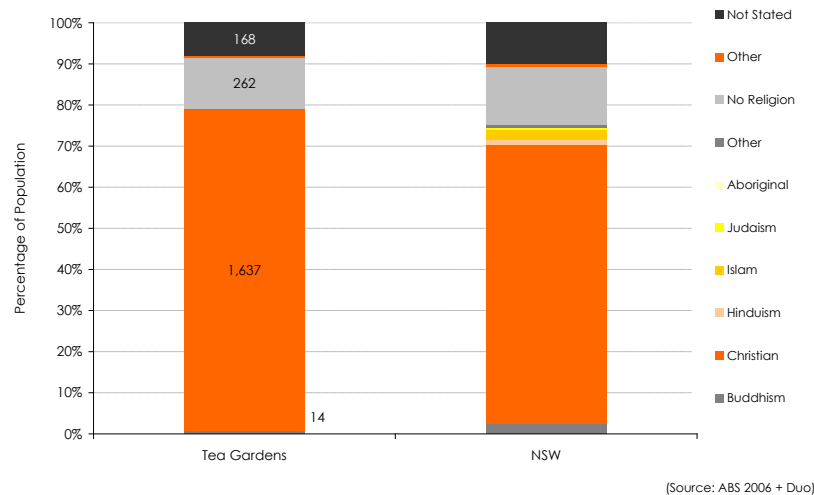
Graph 13: Tea Gardens 2006 Major Overseas Birth Country Groups



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

## 5.4.2 Religion

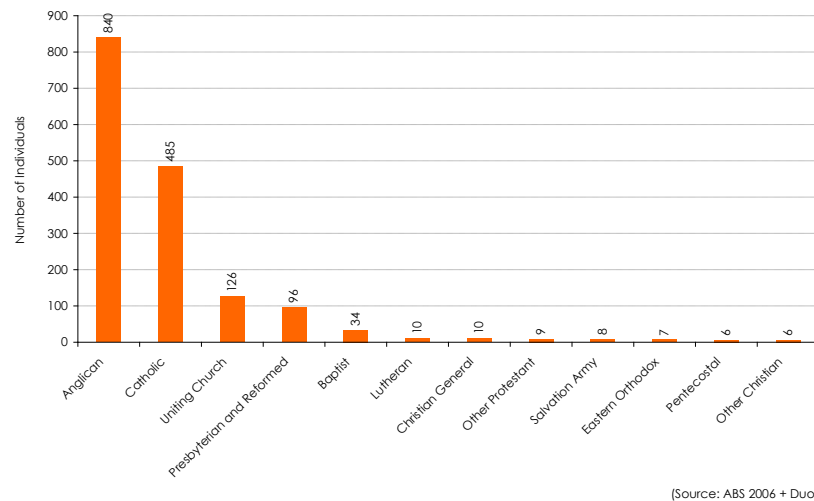
Graph 14: Religious Affiliation 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



Religious diversity, as one would expect given the ethnicity data, is limited. Over 90% of the population is either non religious or Christian. Most of the remainder simply did not answer the question. There is no indication of religious diversity in the community.

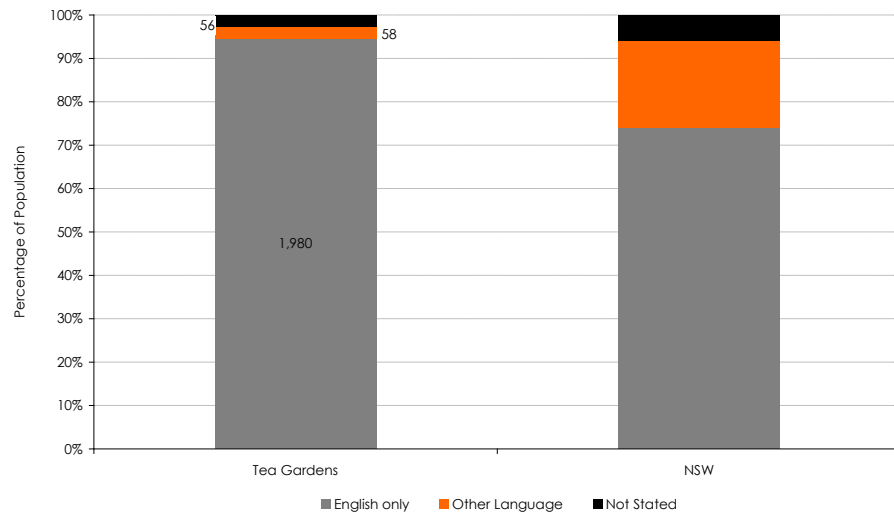
Almost 500 of the current population of Tea Gardens is Catholic. This may provide an indicator of likely school attendance raising the possibility of demand for Catholic School places, though by no means all Catholics choose to send their children to Catholic schools, and of course these schools are also attended by no Catholics. Over 1600 of the population identify themselves as of Christian religion perhaps pointing to a demand for places at the Medowie Christian School should facilities be available.

Graph 15: Tea Gardens 2006 Christian Religions



### 5.4.3 Language

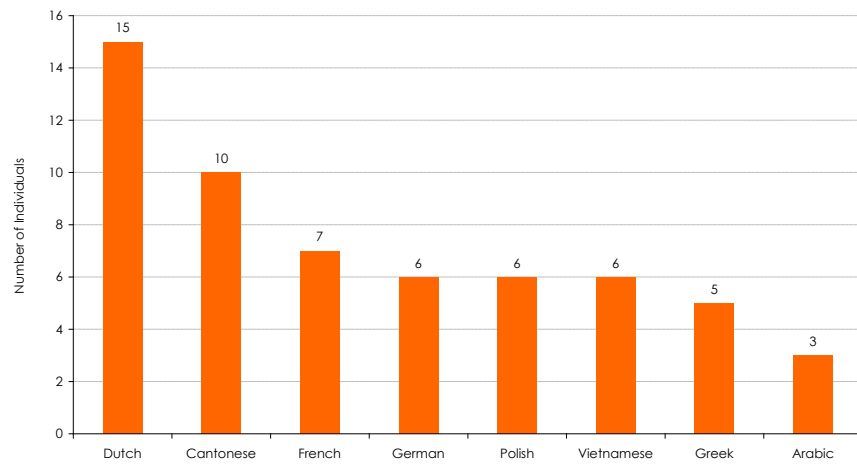
Graph 16: Tea Gardens 2006 Language Spoken at Home



The lack of foreign language speaking households in Tea Gardens relative to the NSW average reflects the lack of ethnic diversity in the community.

(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 17: Tea Gardens 2006 Language Spoken at Home other than English



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

## 5.5 Housing

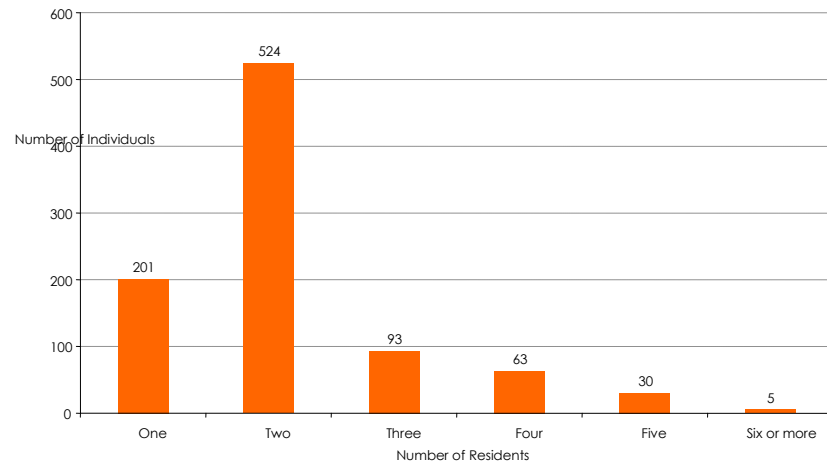
Table 5 uses 2006 census data to provide a snapshot of Tea Gardens Housing at that time. It demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of homes were separate houses (92%). Duplexes, townhouses etc formed only 5% of the total housing stock and flats and units just 2%.

TABLE 5: Dwelling Structure – 2006 Census data	Number	Proportion of all Dwellings	Number	Proportion of all Individuals
Separate house	841	92%	1833	93%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	41	5%	88	4%
One storey	29	3%	69	3%
Two or more storeys	12	1%	19	1%
Flat, unit or apartment:	18	2%	31	2%
In a one or two storey block	18	2%	31	2%
In a three storey block	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
In a four or more storey block	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Attached to a house	0	0.0%	0	0%
Other dwelling:	11	1%	29	1%
Caravan, cabin, houseboat	0	0%	5	0%
Improvised home, tent, sleepers out	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
House or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.	11	1%	24	1%
Not stated	0	0%	0	0%
Total	911	100.0%	1981	100.0%



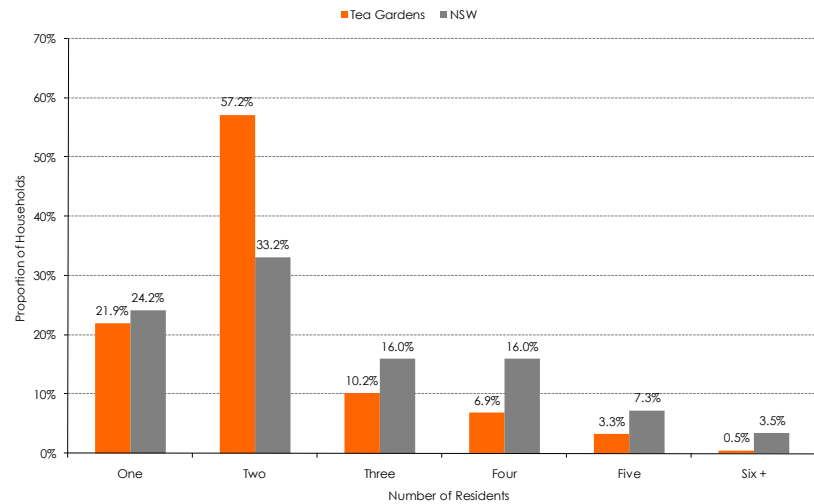
## 5.6 Household Size

Graph 18: Tea Gardens 2006 Number of Residents per Household



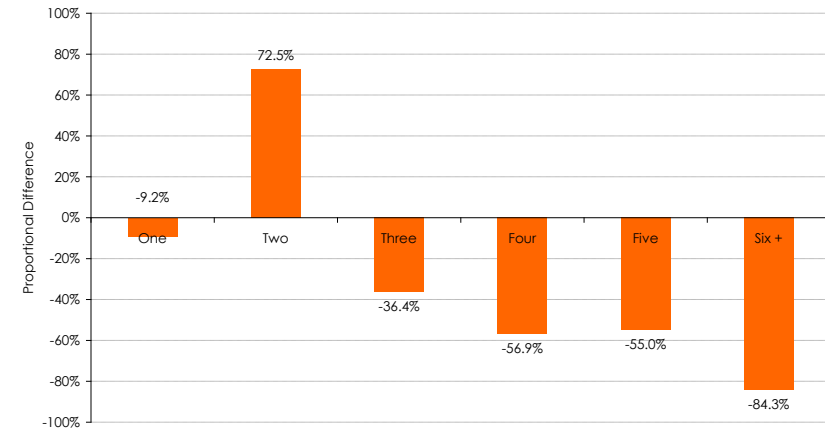
(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 19: Residents per Household 2006 Tea Gardens vs NSW



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 20: Tea Gardens 2006 Residents per Household Relative Variation from NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Household size reflects other elements of the demographic profile of the area with empty nesters, widows and retirees dominating the population.

This indicates a demand for smaller dwellings, though in many cases the retiree market demands family size homes to accommodate visits from family members and through personal preference for space.

For the purposes of this assessment average household size is assumed to be 2.2, other than for retirement units (1.8) and medium density development (1.3).

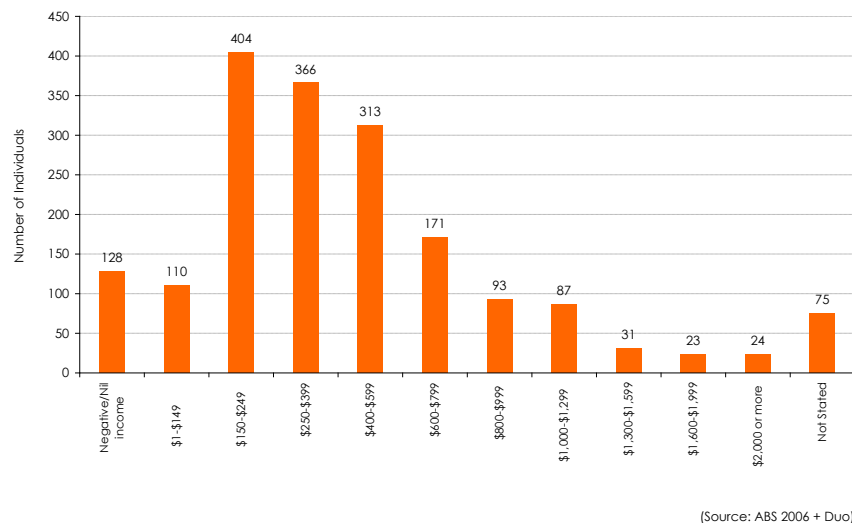
## 5.7 Incomes

At the time of the 2006 census Tea Gardens had fewer people than the State Average in high income earning groups and more than the State Average in lower income groups.

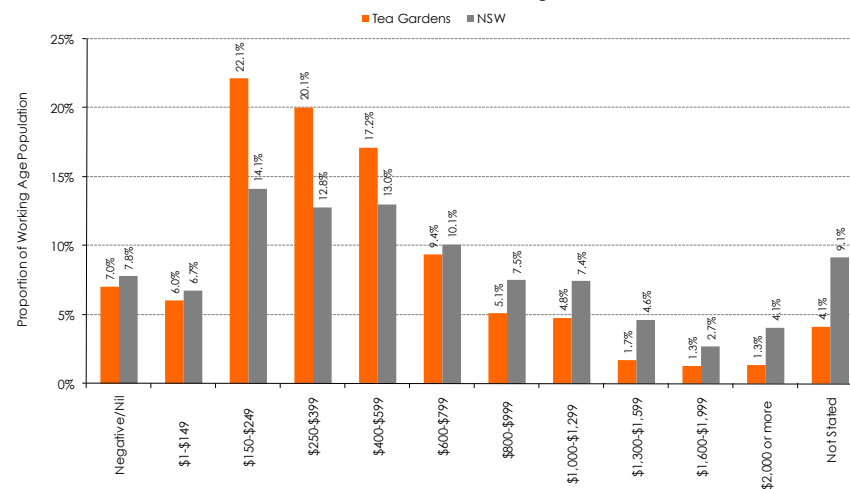
Tea Gardens had more people than the NSW Average earning between \$150 and \$600 a week and less than the average earning more and less than that figure.

Fewer people earning less than \$150 can be attributed to having less young people in the community. The number of people on low incomes may be partially attributable to the high number of retirees in the community. Retirees often live on relatively low incomes but own assets such as their homes. This does not necessarily indicate any serious social issues.

Graph 21: Tea Gardens 2006 Individual Weekly Incomes

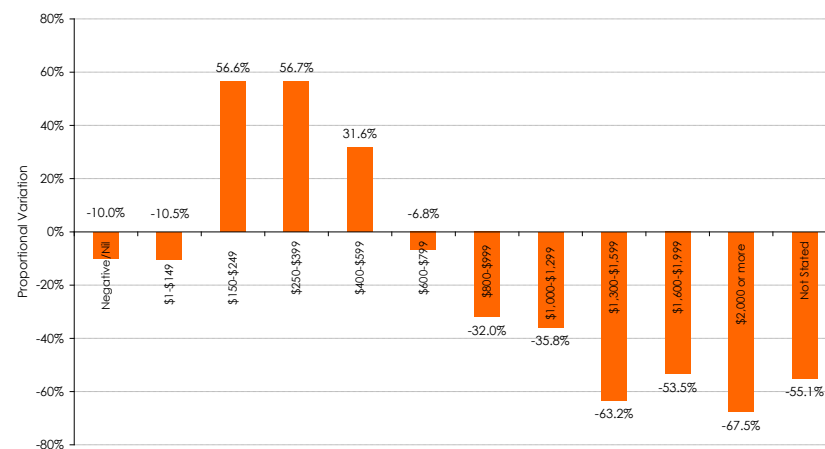


Graph 22: Individual Weekly Income 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 23: Tea Gardens Weekly Individual Income 2006  
Relative Variation from NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

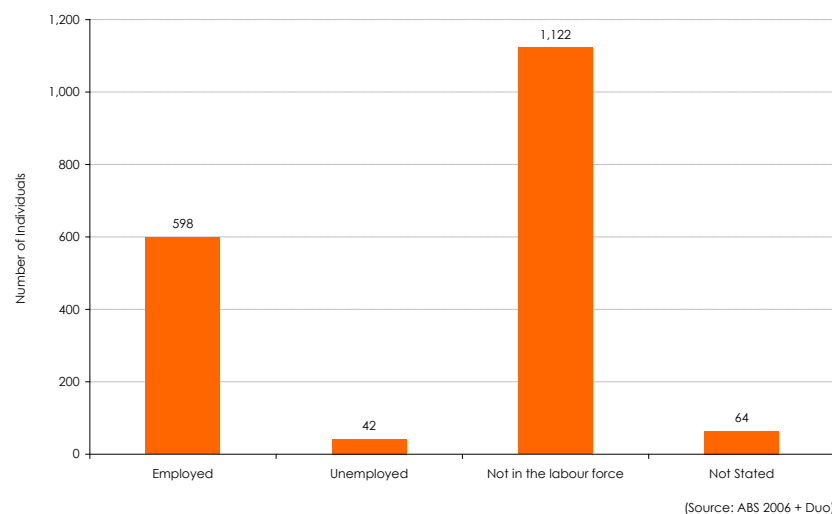
## 5.8 Employment

At the time of the 2006 Census labour force participation in Tea Gardens was very low by NSW standards with 35% participating in the workforce next to 61% not with the remainder unstated. This compares with a NSW average of 58% participation with 34% not participating.

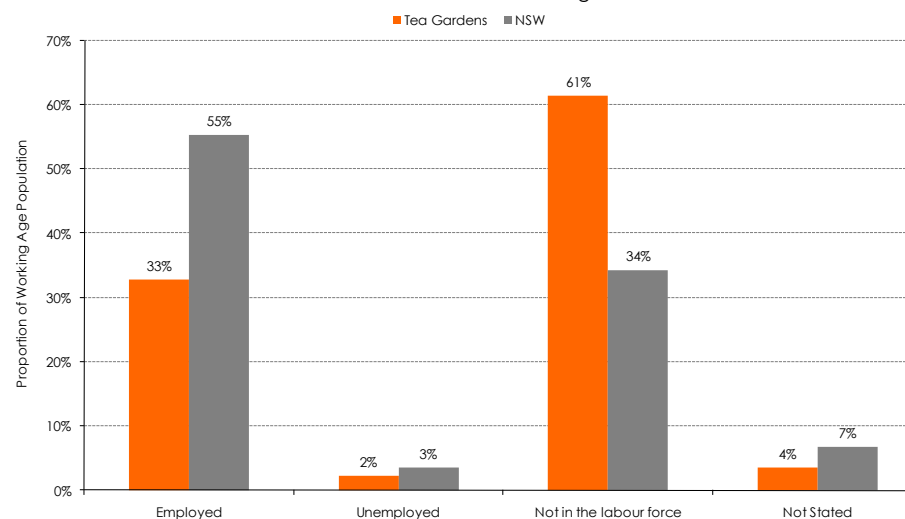
The low participation rate can be attributed to the age profile of the community and is not necessarily a major issue.

However, with just 339 people in the community in full time employment (there are a further 259 in part time employment), an objective to create more employment would be a positive step towards improving the balance of the community.

Graph 24: Tea Gardens 2006 Labour Force Status

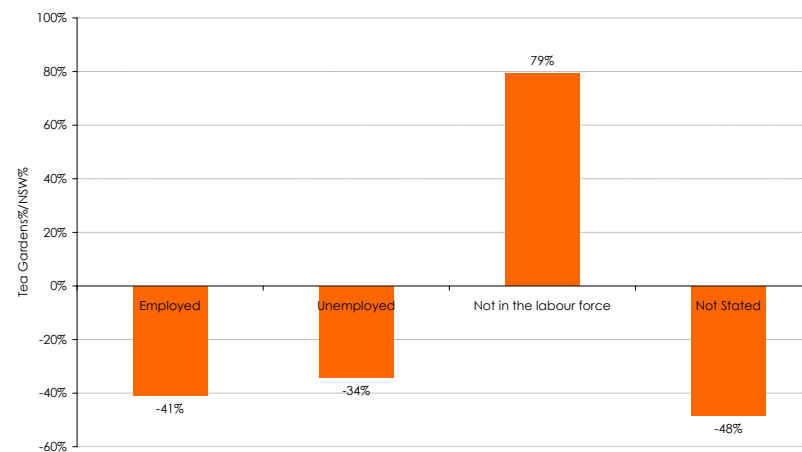


Graph 25: Labour Force Status 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 26: Tea Gardens 2006 Labour Force Status  
Relative Variation from NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

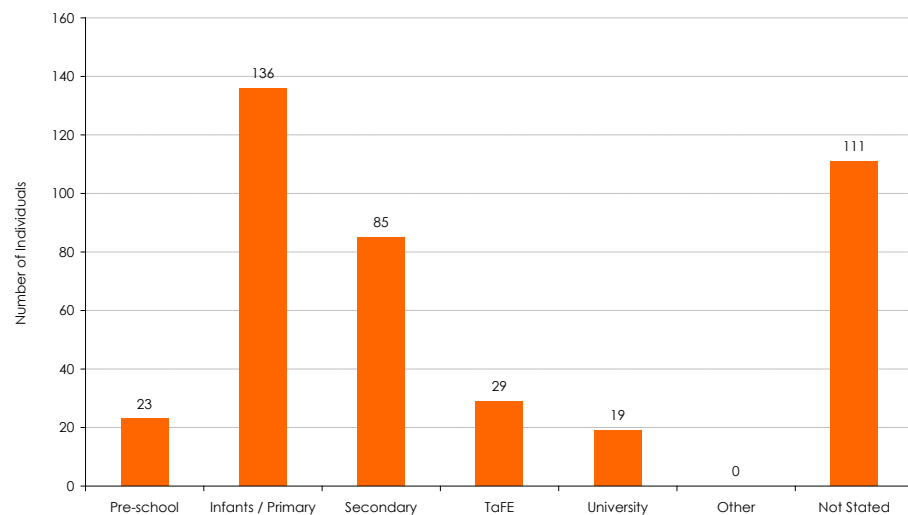
## 5.9 Educational Attendance

Educational attendance data relates directly to the age breakdown of the community.

In Tea Gardens in 2006 6.4% of the population attended primary school, 4% secondary school and 2% a tertiary institution or technical college.

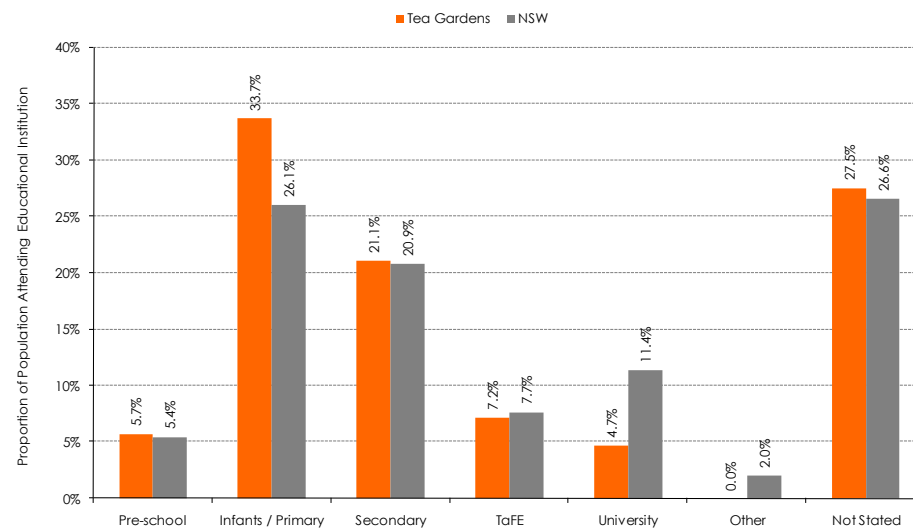
There are benefits to be gained both socially and economically from life long learning and opportunities to improve access to tertiary education through outreach and on line services may enhance participation rates.

Graph 27: Tea Garden 2006 Educational Institution Attending



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

Graph 28: Educational Institution Attending 2006  
Tea Gardens vs NSW Average



(Source: ABS 2006 + Duo)

## Part C

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### CURRENT SERVICES AND THE IMPACT OF RIVERSIDE

## 6 Scope of Potential Impacts

### 6.1 Demographic Change

Riverside at Tea Gardens will provide a dwelling mix as per Table 6 ultimately providing approximately 980 dwellings (excluding tourist accommodation) to help meet demand for housing in the Tea Gardens area.

Table 6: Riverside Population Impacts

Location	Dwellings	Rate	Persons
<b>Riverside at Tea Gardens</b>			
Residential less than 450 sqm	44	2.2	97
Residential at least 450 sqm	779	2.2	1,713
Medium density	157	1.3	204
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>980</b>		<b>2,014</b>

Based on current growth rates provided in Council's Housing Strategy for the area these dwellings will cater for around 10 years supply. If coupled with timely land release at Myall River Downs the two sites should ensure that Tea Gardens has adequate land supply over the next 25 years.

Riverside will add some 2,014 people to the population of Tea Gardens. This projection is on the high side and assumes current occupancy rates rather than a continuation of the trend to declining occupancy. It also assumes that homes

at Riverside will all be occupied full time. However, it is appropriate to estimate on the high side to ensure that full potential impact on services is being provided for.

The age distribution is estimated based on 2006 census data. The age distribution of these residents is projected as follows:

Table 7: Projected age distribution

	% population	No. with 490 dwellings	No. with 980 dwellings
Under 5	3.5%	35	70
5 to 14	9.4%	95	189
15 to 19	3.7%	37	75
19 to 24	2.5%	25	50
25 to 54	26.1%	263	526
55 to 64	21.3%	214	429
65+	33.5%	337	675

Assuming that land at Myall River Downs is released to the market 2 years after Riverside becomes available it is estimated that it will take seven years from approval for Riverside to reach 490 dwellings and a further eight years to reach full capacity.

## 6.2 Accessibility & Mobility

### 6.2.1 Public Transport

There are two bus routes that serve Tea Gardens. These routes, operated by Busways, provide services to Raymond Terrace and Newcastle three times daily on weekdays and daily at weekends. For more local trips to Hawks Nest there are also three daily buses in either direction. Two buses on weekdays and one on weekends serve Bulahdelah, Forster Tuncurry and Taree.

There are also services in either direction which do not come into the township but pass by on the Pacific Highway stopping at the nearby Red Rock Service Station. These are discounted for the purpose of this analysis because a private vehicle would be needed to reach Tea Gardens from this stop.

In addition to these services a school bus service is provided to a number of schools detailed in section 6.9.

The development of Riverside and Myall River Downs will more than treble the population of Tea Gardens enhancing the viability of public transport services and making it more likely that increased service frequencies will be offered.

Riverside is currently served by buses on Myall Road. It is recommended that, as the development progresses, roads are built to accommodate buses such that a loop through Riverside is possible bringing public transport access to within walking distance of each dwelling and allowing buses to serve the site without doubling back on themselves.

Trevor Jennings, Manager of Planning and Infrastructure at Busways was consulted in the development of this SIA. He confirmed that there are no current plans to expand services to Tea Gardens but conceded that in the long term significant population changes may lead to a review of service levels. However, there is considerable spare capacity in current services so growth will be likely to simply take up this capacity for some time.



There are no current plans to increase services to potential employment nodes such as Williamtown, however, as demand increases the potential for future services will be assessed.

Mr Jennings also requested that a suitable 'collector' road layout be provided within the subdivision that permits school buses to service the area without those roads being on the periphery of the development, and designed such that school buses can enter and depart the site from/to Myall Way near either end of the development, so that the buses don't have to enter and depart from the same point.

Tea Gardens is also connected to Nelson Bay and Karuah by daily private ferry services costing \$20 and \$25 per person. Given the high prices this service is considered to be more suited to tourism than to accessing services.

### WEEKDAYS

Route Number	XPT Train (departs Central)	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)	Raymond TCE (Colonial Motor Inn)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Bulahdelah (Mobile Service Station)	Forster (Coach Terminal)	Taree (Railway Station)
150	07:15	09:45	10:30	11:20	11:50	12:50	13:30
150	11:35	14:30	15:15	16:05	16:35	17:40	18:25

### WEEKDAYS

Route Number	Taree (Railway Station)	Forster (Coach Terminal)	Bulahdelah (Shell Service Station)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Raymond TCE (Opp. Colonial Motor Inn)	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)	XPT Train arrives (Central Station)
150	09:55	10:40	11:45	12:25	13:05	13:55	16:38
150	15:05	15:45	16:45	17:20	18:05	18:55	21:54

### WEEKENDS

Route Number	Taree (Railway Station)	Forster (Coach Terminal)	Bulahdelah (Shell Service Station)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Raymond TCE (Opp. Colonial Motor Inn)	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)	XPT Train arrives (Central Station)
150	09:55	10:40	11:45	12:25	13:05	13:55	16:38

### WEEKENDS



Route Number	XPT Train (departs Central)	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)	Raymond TCE (Colonial Motor Inn)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Bulahdelah (Mobile Service Station)	Forster (Coach Terminal)	Taree (Railway Station)
150	11:35	14:30	15:15	16:05	16:35	17:40	18:25

**MON - FRI EXCEPT PUBLIC HOLIDAY  
AFTERNOONS**

**Opposite Direction**

Route Number	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)	Raymond TCE (Colonial Motor Inn)	Karuah (Opp. Karuah Motor Inn)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Hawks Nest (Community Centre)
152	15:30	16:00	16:30	16:55	17:00

**MON - FRI EXCEPT PUBLIC HOLIDAY  
MORNINGS**

**Opposite Direction**

Route Number	Hawks Nest (Community Centre)	Tea Gardens (Lone Pine C'van Park)	Karuah (Karuah Motor Inn)	Raymond TCE (Marketplace)	Newcastle (Bus Interchange)
152	06:35	06:50	07:15	07:45	08:35

## 6.2.2 Pedestrian & Bicycle

Tea Gardens is an almost entirely flat community and as such is perfect for cycling and walking as alternatives to motorised transport.

The potential for cycling and walking in Tea Gardens is recognised by Great Lakes Council who have a costed program to provide a network of separated at grade cycle paths in the town (opposite).

In 2004 Great Lakes Council received a grant of \$70,000 from the NSW Government to create a cycle path linking Tea Gardens with Hawks Nest. This will allow more mobile members of the community to access services and amenities in Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens without using private cars.

At the Planning Forum for Riverside the importance of cycling and walking facilities was recognised with community suggestions that cycle facilities might be build to accommodate buggies and other powered vehicles allowing the mobility impaired to enjoy enhanced mobility.

It is recommended that attention be paid to the provision of a comprehensive network of cycle ways through the Riverside site as part of the development. This network should connect all community facilities and places of interest. This network should particularly provide ease of access to the commercial centre and should connect directly to the Council planned cycle way network so as to augment community mobility.

**H.N / T.G - CYCLEWAY / WALKWAY PRIORITY PROGRAMME 2006**  
Updated January 2006

Priority Number	Street	Location	Off Road	Rough Order of Cost
1	Marine Drive (F/shore)	Public Wharf - Existing Path	Yes	\$30,000
2	Marine Dr (Sth West)	Hough St to Ogden St	Yes	\$16,000
3	Coupland Ave (Nth)	Budgerie St to Port Stephens St	Yes	\$15,000
4	Ogden St (School)	Witt St to Marine Dve	Yes	\$24,000
5	Witt St (School)	Maxwell St to Ogden St	Yes	\$34,000
6	Maxwell St (School)	Witt St to Number 203 Myall St	Yes	\$12,000
7	Tulua Ave (West)	Binda Ave - Kingfisher Ave	Yes	\$29,000
8	Kingfisher Ave (Nth)	Ibis Ave to Tulua Ave	Yes	\$50,000
9	Myall St (Sth West)	Number 117 to Penn Dve	Yes	\$25,000
10	Myall St (Sth West)	Number 53 to Settlers Way	Yes	\$32,000
11	Moirs Pde	Yamba St to Mirreen St	Yes	\$39,000
12	Tulua Ave (West)	Moola St to Number 50	Yes	\$6,000
13	Ibis Ave	Kingfisher Ave to Albatross Ave	Yes	\$34,000
14	Langi St	Moirs Pde to Booner St	Yes	\$6,000
15	Tulua Ave (East)	Mirreen St to Coorilla St	Yes	\$33,000
16	Tulua Ave (East)	Booner St to Mirreen St	Yes	\$30,000
17	Mungo Brush Rd (W)	Kingfisher Ave to Albatross Ave	Yes	\$34,000
18	Yamba St (Nth)	Booner St to Tulua Ave	Yes	\$45,000
19	Marine Drive (West)	Maxwell St - Charles St	Yes	\$15,000
20	Marine Drive (West)	Number 133 - Charles St	Yes	\$19,000
21	Charles St (Both)	Myall St to Marine Dr	Yes	\$21,000
22	Coorilla St	Bowral St to Bennett St	Yes	\$18,000
23	Bennett St	Coorilla St to Mirreen St	Yes	\$14,000
24	Walkway	Walkway to Mirreen St (parallel West Cl)	Yes	\$9,000
25	Beach Rd	Mirreen St to Booner St	Yes	\$5,000
26	Coupland Ave (Nth)	Myall St to Budgerie St	Yes	\$58,000
27	Tulua Ave (Sth side)	Coorilla St - The Anchorage	Yes	\$95,000
28	Myall St (Nth East)	Marine Dr to Maxwell St	Yes	\$75,000
29	Myall St (Nth East)	Maxwell St to Hough St	Yes	\$50,000
30	Albatross Ave	Koonawarra to Mungo Brush Rd	Yes	\$134,000
31	Kingfisher Ave (Sth)	Bridge to Tulua Ave	Yes	\$76,000
32	Yamba St	Number 2B to Booner St	Yes	\$6,000
33	Booner St (Sth West)	Yamba St to Langi St	Yes	\$11,000
34	Booner St (Sth)	Langi St to Tulua Ave missing links	Yes	\$12,000
35	Myall St (Nth East)	Hough St to North St	Yes	\$66,000
36	Myall St (Nth East)	North St - Coupland St	Yes	\$56,000
37	Myall St (Nth East)	Coupland Ave to Number 2 Myall St	Yes	\$112,000
38	Elouera Cl	Bowral St to Walkway	Yes	\$8,000
39	The Anchorage	Winda Woppa Reserve to The Boulevard	Yes	\$102,000
40	Ibis Ave	Mermala Ave to Kingfisher Ave	Yes	\$22,000
41	Mermala Ave	Moirs Pde to Tulua Ave	Yes	\$60,000
42	Yamba St	Booner St to Caravan Park	Yes	\$40,000
43	Marine Dr (F/shore)	Coupland Ave to Maxwell St (full length)	Yes	\$145,000
44	Budgerie St	Boston St to Coupland Ave	Yes	\$46,000
45	Hough St	Marine Dr to Myall St	Yes	\$7,000
46	Yalimbah St (Nth)	Myall St to Walkway	Yes	\$12,000
47	Walkway	Yalimbah St to Houlbert Cl	Yes	\$21,000
48	Walkway	Billaibong Ave to Myall St	Yes	\$8,000

### 6.3 Retirement Living and Aged Care

The increase in ageing population expected to result from the new residents of Riverside will increase demand for aged care accommodation of all types.

Tea Gardens currently has 190 self care units and approval for a 80 bed hostel at Tea Gardens Grange (though only 30 beds currently have Government funding). A further 281 self care units are approved for the Hermitage site adjoining Myall River Downs. There are also 10 low care retirement units at the Myall Lodge Aged Care Facility in Hawks Nest with plans to develop a further 20 units, though the planned extension has been delayed by bushfire concerns.

However, the design of Riverside is suited to ageing in place, effectively providing a retirement option that is not segregated from the mainstream population.

A number of features of Riverside lend themselves to this view including:

- The provision of small and duplex lots
- The community infrastructure including precinct based facilities
- The flat nature of the site
- The proximity of the commercial facilities and shops including the medical centre
- The design and layout aiming to ensure that eyes on the street maximise security.
- Emphasis on home business allowing economic activity and partial retirement.

Commonwealth benchmarks suggest the need for 1 aged care bed for each 10 residents aged over 70. At the 2006 Census Tea Gardens had 429 residents aged over 70. On this basis it is estimated that existing demand is for 43 beds. Much of this demand will be provided for by the 30 beds available or to be constructed at Myall Lodge.

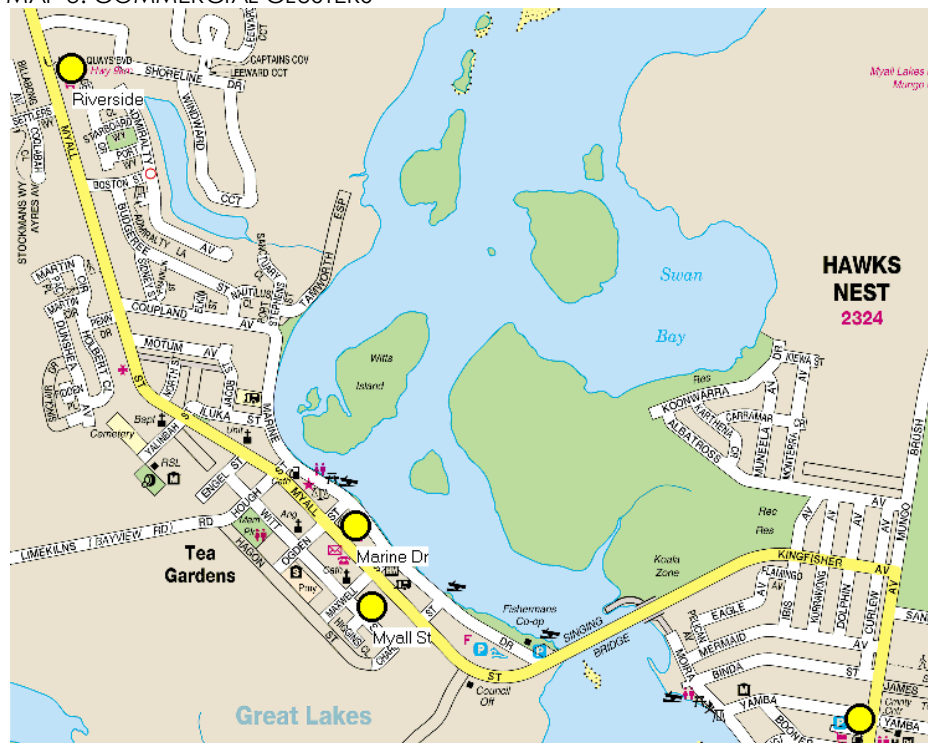
It is estimated that Riverside will lead to demand for approximately 30 additional aged care places when fully developed. These will be provided by currently funded beds at Tea Gardens Grange. Myall River Downs will subsequently require a further 50 beds when fully developed. These can be provided by the Tea Gardens Grange Facility.

Ultimately, it is estimated that Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest will grow to 12,558 residents with (assuming 2006 census age distributions) 8% of population aged over 70 or 1,005 people. This will mean demand for 101 aged care beds. 80 of these will be provided with the funding of the additional beds at the Tea Gardens Grange facility and a further 30 beds will be available at Myall Lodge. These will be enough to service growth anticipated in the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest area.

## 6.4 Commercial

Tea Gardens has three distinct commercial areas. An area on Myall Street offers stores such as convenience goods and a newsagency, Marine Drive which has a number of cafes, a real estate agent and tourism related stores, and

MAP 3: COMMERCIAL CLUSTERS



Riverside's own commercial precinct which boasts a 2000sqm supermarket and a number of specialty stores. The Riverside Commercial precinct is also home to a

medical centre, pharmacy and approval is in place for a child care centre and a service station. This centre is well established as an emerging community hub and has room to grow considerably beyond the 3000sqm retail cap currently imposed.

It is typically accepted that 2sqm per resident is an appropriate allocation of retail floor space. In 2000 there was 1,556sqm<sup>3</sup> of retail space in Hawks Nest and 1,980sqm in Tea Gardens. There are currently around 3500 sqm in the Riverside Commercial precinct with DA approval for a child care centre and service station and potential for expansion. This provides service for up to 3,518 people which provides for the current population of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest. Given the high number of holiday rental properties, particularly in Hawks Nest, some additional floor space is needed to cater for tourism. As Riverside reaches full development and Myall River Downs begins to fill, there will be demand for significant additional retail space. The potential for this growth exists within the commercial precinct but is constrained by a clause of the LEP. It is recommended that this be amended to allow significant additional retail floor space to be provided in the commercial precinct.

A study carried out by IBECON in 2000 looking into the demand for retail floor space in Tea Gardens found that at that time (prior to the provision of 3,500sqm in Myall Quays Commercial Centre) there was a deficiency of retail space in the Tea Gardens Sub Catchment of some 6000sqm of net selling area or 8000sqm of gross land area. The report projected that this deficiency would rise to 12,000sqm of retail floor space by 2016 or 15,000 sqm of gross land area. Given that 3,500 sqm has already been provided this implies the need for a further 8,500sqm of retail floor space in the next decade. This broadly aligns with current expectations based on projected population growth.

Concern that the Riverside commercial precinct may reduce the viability of other more traditional commercial areas seem to have little basis in the medium to long term, though there may be transitional impacts and some businesses may need to relocate to areas more suited to their markets in the newly emerging retail hierarchy. However, the Marine Drive Precinct is unlikely to be adversely affected due to its tourism market. The shops in Hawks Nest fulfil their own neighbourhood and tourism functions. The shops on Myall Street are most vulnerable to competition from the Riverside commercial precinct in the medium to long term. However, they may still be able to serve a strong neighbourhood function in the context of an expanding medium density zone the older areas of Tea Gardens.

<sup>3</sup> IBECON 2000, Tea Gardens Retail Study

The Riverside Commercial precinct with the supermarket offers a service not previously available in the area providing an alternative to out of town supermarket trips. It should also be noted that the new Riverside Commercial precinct is already well established and that the Concept Plan has no

influence on the uses already located on the site. The Commercial Precinct provides sufficient expansion opportunities to cater for the ultimate growth in population in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest.

Figure 1: Riverside Commercial Masterplan





## 6.5 Recreation

A number of facilities are currently available in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest. Council considers (2006 Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest S94 Plan) that there is currently sufficient space in reserves (see below) to expand facilities and that additional land would not need to be acquired for formal open space until the combined population of Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens reaches 4123, a threshold likely to be some years away.

Notwithstanding this, an opportunity exists to consolidate and augment certain Council facilities, including sporting facilities, on to one site as part of the Myall River Downs Development. This would represent a significant upgrade of current facilities and should be investigated by Council as a strategy to ensure that the long term needs of the community are met.

The Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2006) sets out a range of facilities that it would like to see developed in Tea Gardens (Appendix 5). It is recommended that these provide a guide to discussions with Council about what contribution to a new consolidated facility might be provided. However, it is important to note that it would not be appropriate or equitable for Riverside and its residents to be expected to meet the cost of the full list of desired facilities. The list may, nonetheless, provide a useful guide.

### 6.5.1 Sporting and outdoor facilities

Myall Parks Sports Reserve is located in Yamba Street Hawks Nest, adjacent to Hawks Nest Caravan Park.

Myall Park Tennis Club which has two courts and Hawks Nest Croquet Club are also situated at this site and are individually managed by their own committees.

This complex is 4ha in area and has a large multi use field primarily used for rugby league. The field is floodlit and toilet and canteen facilities are provided. There are also swings and a park on the site.

Figure 1: Myall Park Sports Reserve



Memorial Park Sports Field is located in Witt Street Tea Gardens. This complex is 1.2 ha in area and is utilised for soccer and cricket and has toilet and canteen facilities. Floodlighting is not available at this complex.

Figure 2: Memorial Park Sports Field



Tea Gardens swimming pool is located in Myall Street Tea Gardens. The complex has a main pool as well as a toddler's pool. The dimensions of the main pool are 25m x 17m with a depth ranging from 1m to 1.5m. The dimensions of the toddlers pool is 6m x 4m.

The pool is opened 6am to 7pm daily typically from the September school holidays to the Easter school holidays. The pool is supervised from 9am to 7pm during school holidays, weekends and public holidays, and from 3pm to 7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Figure 3: Tea Gardens Swimming Pool



## 6.5.2 Beaches

Hawks Nest Beach, also known as Bennetts Beach, runs a distance of 14.3 km from Seal Rocks to the north and Hawks Nest to the south.

Great Lakes Council controls an area of 3.7 km from Hawks Nest Caravan Park Reserve in the north to Providence Bay Reserve to the south. Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens Surf Life Saving Club is located adjacent to the Hawks Nest Caravan Park and provides public toilets and car parking facilities.

Jimmy's beach offers access to the Port Stephens Waterway with abundant water sports opportunities.

## 6.6 Community Infrastructure

### 6.6.1 Community Halls

Currently the main community gathering place is the Hawks Nest Community Hall. The facilities for this hall include seating for 200 people, supper room, kitchen facilities, car parking, disabled parking and bus access.

Figure 4: Hawks Nest Community Hall



Although Department of Community Services guidelines recommend one community centre per 7,000 – 10,000 population and Riverside will not see that threshold reached for Tea Gardens, there are clear benefits from the provision of a community centre in Tea Gardens. A dedicated community centre for multipurpose community uses would represent a highly desirable part of the Tea Gardens community infrastructure and such a facility will be required for the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Community over the next 20 years.

It is recognised that Riverside residents will have access to a number of neighbourhood facilities providing community functions and that this will reduce pressure from Riverside residents on more widely available community facilities. However, the social cohesiveness of the overall Tea Gardens Community remains important and shared community facilities will contribute to ensuring that Tea Gardens grows into one community rather than disparate enclaves.

It is recommended that, as part of discussion regarding developer contributions, consideration be given to the provision of a multipurpose community function / meeting facility in line with Council's Section 94 plan for the area. This should be located within walking distance (400m) of the Riverside commercial precinct.

### 6.6.2 Library

The library is located in a demountable style building adjacent to the swimming pool complex in Tea Gardens.

Council's S94 Strategy talks about closing the old library in Hawks Nest to develop a consolidated community facility and library in Tea Gardens. Standards dictate a branch library for 5000 persons. It is unlikely that the current population of Hawks Nest Tea Gardens will rise beyond this mark with the development of Riverside but, given the cumulative impacts of other developments expected to take place in the community, it is recommended that Crighton Properties give consideration to a contribution to the upgrade of library facilities either on site or as part of the provision of a multi use community facility in line with Council's Section 94 plan.



### 6.6.3 Preschool

Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens Pre School is located in Hawks Nest and is currently open 3 days a week accommodating 20 children on each day. There is potential to open on more days subject to Government funding being granted.

The Tea Gardens Childcare Centre is open 5 days a week offering long day care and preschool. There are approximately 20 places at this facility with some spare capacity on a number of days.

The S94 Report states that the current preschool facilities are sufficient to accommodate anticipated growth in the area. However, the currently approved child care facility at the Riverside Commercial Centre will augment that service offering as an alternative.

An accepted standard is the provision of 1 long day care place per 11 children aged 0-4. Thus, it is anticipated that Riverside will ultimately lead to demand for an additional 7 places at long day care. This can be readily accommodated by current services combined with the new child care facility being constructed at the Myall Quays commercial centre.

### 6.6.4 Tea Gardens Grange Facilities

Tea Gardens Grange has on site facilities for residents including a swimming pool, a library, a croquet lawn, a billiard table, a large lounge and covered deck plus a meeting hall/and dance floor/indoor bowling area.

### 6.6.5 Rural Fire Service Station

The Rural Fire Service has a 2 berth \$135,000 facility in the industrial area of Tea Gardens. This facility was formally opened in February 2007 though it has been operating for some time.

### 6.6.6 Places of Worship

Tea Gardens is home to St Andrews Anglican Church, St Stephens Catholic Church, the Tea Gardens Uniting Church and The Tea Gardens Baptist Church.

### 6.6.7 Post Office

There is a Post Office at 166a Myall Road and another in Hawks Nest.

### 6.6.8 Veterinary Services

There is a vet on Myall Street Tea Gardens.

## 6.7 Employment

The data presented in Section 5.8 of this report clearly demonstrates the need to attract more jobs and working people to the Tea Gardens area in order to achieve some balance of economic activity in the area. In part, Riverside itself will contribute to achieving a better balance through commercial and home business precincts and through benefits to the community from construction. In addition to these factors, recent road infrastructure upgrades mean that Tea Gardens is now easily accessible to some major regional employment nodes.

Tea Gardens is located approximately 75km or one hour's drive North of Newcastle on the Pacific Highway. It is an hour and a half journey or 110km from Forster-Tuncurry and can access Raymond Terrace and Williamtown Airport in around 40 minutes.

Forster has been identified as an area with very rapidly increasing employment:

*"Heading this list is the New South Wales coastal town of Forster in Great Lakes Shire. The workforce in this pretty seachange community jumped by 1,768 or 16.9 per cent in the year to June 2005, well ahead of a 1.6 per cent increase in population in the same year. Accordingly, the rate of unemployment in Great Lakes dropped from 11.2 per cent to 7.7 per cent. Great Lakes Shire and the town of Forster is being thrust forward on a tide of economic confidence."*

From: Bernard Salt Hot towns signal general shift Newcastle Herald 27 July 2006

Newcastle is the Regional Centre of the Lower Hunter and has major employment nodes around its port and CBD and Williamtown Airport is home to a burgeoning aerospace sector employing several thousand people as well as a RAAF base and one of the most rapidly growing regional airports in the country.

*"...with Jetstar, Boeing and BAE all setting up facilities at Williamtown, creating some 3500 jobs"*  
Premier Morris lemma from Newcastle Herald 2 March 2007

In Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest there is an existing industrial precinct on Myall Way

An economic impact study for Riverside carried out by Parsons Brinkerhoff using national accounts data found that the development of Riverside would have the following economic impacts:

- The construction component of the project will, by conservative estimates, mean \$243 million will flow directly to the local community. This translates to a local benefit of \$243 million supporting 1,479 local jobs across all sectors, spread across the anticipated 10 year life of the project.
- The Retail / Commercial component of the proposed development, via the construction of 15,500 square metres of commercial and retail space will support 645 jobs and, therefore an estimated \$21.7 million in associated wages and salaries. The spend benefits associated with this level of activity are estimated at \$8.7 million per annum for the local economy with a median multiplied output effect of \$15.2 million.
- Residential Consumption Activities will directly contribute \$17.9 million per annum to the local economy based on the increase in population. Normal consumer spending patterns would indicate that this level of spending will consequently support 107 jobs in the district upon completion of the project.
- Associated Activities - There will be an associated range of benefits which come from the infrastructure that the development will create, such as jobs associated with the day-to-day operation of the site and on-going capital maintenance. The industry estimate of these annual outgoings is in the range of 1-2% of the capital value of the development.\* For Riverside at Tea Gardens this would be \$2,115,000 to \$4,230,000. This would represent an additional 10 full-time direct jobs and an overall jobs (direct and indirect) of 53 (based on construction industry multipliers).

The provision of two home business precincts is likely to have a significant impact on local employment levels and offer some strong social benefits in terms of allowing people to avoid long commutes to work and preventing the sort of social dislocation that is often associated with long distance commuting patterns.

It is likely that the business focus of these homes will also encourage extended economic activity for some residents who might otherwise retire, allowing them to enjoy the lifestyle of the area whilst maintaining employment, at least on a part time basis. This will be likely to be an important strategic goal for NSW in the future.

## 6.8 Health

Riverside boasts its own medical centre which hosts three GPs, 2 dentists, pathology, radiology and pharmacy services. A range of specialists visit the centre including a Ophthalmic Surgeon, Gastro Intestinal Surgeon, Gynaecologist, Cardiologist and Audiologist.

There are two other GPs in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest located at Booner St and Myall Street. There is also a second pharmacy in Hawks Nest. Tea Gardens also has its own ambulance station.

The Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens Community Health Centre in Hawks Nest also offers a range of community based health services to all members of the community. Clinical staff working within the community provide the following services on a clinic basis:

- Aged Care
- Child & Family Counselling /
- Continence
- Diabetes
- Dietetics
- Early Childhood Nursing
- Genetic Counselling
- Generalist Care
- Mental Health
- Paediatric Occupational Therapy
- Paediatric Physiotherapy
- Paediatric Speech Therapy
- Palliative Care and
- Women's Health

More acute medical facilities are provided in Newcastle where the John Hunter Hospital and Mater Hospital provide a full range of specialist services and have a total over 800 beds.

A clinic bus service operates between GP surgeries on Thursdays and Manning Valley Transport operate health and domestic related transport services on Wednesday and Thursdays.

The Department of Health and Ageing advises that the national average for hospital bed provision of 2.43 per 1000 population. It is therefore envisaged that the population of Riverside will lead to an additional requirement for 5 beds when the site is fully developed.

This needs to be seen in the context of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, which assumes population growth of 160,000 people over the next 25 years, and the Draft Mid North Coast Regional Strategy which sees growth of 90,000 people over the same time period. Hunter New England Health will plan their service provision to accommodate this growth of which Riverside is a part. Either way this impact, over a period of 15 years, is considered to be negligible and will be provided for by the hospital system.

For General Practitioners a ratio of one to 1500 population is generally used. With 3 GPs and room for a fourth, there is sufficient capacity within the Myall Quays medical centre to allow for the addition of Riverside and Myall River Downs to the population of Tea Gardens. The combination of these services and the other 2 GPs in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest means the population is very well served and can accommodate the envisaged expansion of the communities for the foreseeable future. Whilst Tea Gardens has the GP services to cater for its ultimate foreseeable growth there may be a requirement for additional services in Hawks Nest when the North Hawks Nest Development is completed.

A discussion with Chris Williams of the Hunter New England Health Service Population Health Unit revealed no serious issues. However, it is recommended that the Concept Plan be submitted to the Population Health Unit who will provide detailed recommendations on measures to optimise preventative health.

## 6.9 Education

School bus routes link the community of Tea Gardens to a range of primary and secondary schools (table 6). There are currently four high schools served by direct bus routes offering secondary education as well as five primary schools. Tea Gardens also has its own public school for primary education.

Table 6: School Bus Routes

School Name	Time of morning bus	Direct / Indirect
Alesco Learning Centre	0650	Indirect
All Saints / St Peters	0650	Indirect
Bulahdelah Central School	0800	Direct
Callaghan College – Jesmond and Waratah	0650	Indirect
Francis Greenway HS	0650	Indirect
Hunter Valley Grammar	0650	Indirect
Hunter Christian School	0650	Indirect
Hunter River HS	0740	Direct
Hunter School of Performing Arts	0650	Indirect
Hunter Sports HS	0650	Indirect
Irrawang HS	0740	Direct
Irrawang PS	0740	Direct
Lambton HS	0650	Indirect
Linuwell	0650	Indirect
Merewether HS	0650	Indirect
Newcastle Grammar	0650	Indirect
Newcastle HS	0650	Indirect
San Clemente HS	0650	Indirect
St Brigids PS	0740	Direct
St Francis Xavier HS	0650	Indirect
St Phillips Christian College	0650	Indirect
St Josephs PS Bulahdelah	0750	Direct
Medowie Christian School	0750	Direct

Students can also access specialist schools in Newcastle including the Hunter Sports High, the Hunter School of Performing Arts, the selective Merewether High School, and a variety of private, catholic and Christian schools.

A telephone discussion with Lesley Greenwood, A/Manager, Service Planning of the Department of Education and Training was held on 21 March 2007. The Department's general guidelines for the provision of education facilities are based on the following ratios:

- Primary Schools: 1 for each 2000 to 2500 dwellings
- Secondary Schools: 1 for every 6000 to 7500 dwellings
- TAFE: 1 for every 100,000 dwellings
- Special Needs Schools: 1 for every 20,000 dwellings.

Based on these ratios, the Riverside development - on its own - will not lead to a requirement for additional schools in Tea Gardens. However, the ultimate development anticipated in the Tea Gardens Community may lead to a requirement for additional school facilities provision, including acquisition of additional land.

Ms Greenwood also commented that we cannot necessarily assume that new developments will continue to mirror current demographic character. For example, it is only in more recent years that there have been some students from TG/HN enrolling in non-government schools (from negligible in 1991 and 1996 censuses to over 10% of primary school students in 2001; and from 4% in 1991 and 1996 to 23% of secondary students in 2001). The area has also consistently exhibited a high rate, of unoccupied dwellings. If the nature of housing was to change from weekenders/holiday houses to permanent residences, then this too would affect the composition of the population and potentially have an impact on school demand. The DET will continue to monitor urban growth and urban development proposals in the area and respond appropriately to any significant changes.

### 6.9.1 Primary Education

Duo Consulting estimates, based on the demographic analysis in section 6.1, and 2006 educational attendance rates that there will be demand for an additional 120 primary school places as a result of the Riverside development over the next 14 years with half of those arriving in the first six years. There are a number of primary school options with a direct connection to Tea Gardens.

There is clearly capacity to accommodate this growth in the existing school system. Additional demountables will probably be required at the Tea Gardens Public School whilst other schools appear to have considerable capacity as

detailed below. It is recommended that Crighton Properties directly communicate progress at Riverside with the Principal of the Tea Gardens Public School to assist with facility planning.

Although there is capacity in the existing school system to accommodate growth in pupil numbers from the development of Riverside, clearly, as Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest grow to the levels predicted in Table 1, there may be justification for an additional primary school in the towns. However, this need is many years away.

#### Tea Gardens Public School

Tea Gardens Public School is located in Witt Street some 1.6km from the Riverside site. The school site is denoted by the yellow spot on map 3 below.

Discussion with the Principal Sue Estens revealed that the school currently has 218 pupils and has the capacity to continue to grow to meet projected community growth. There has been strong expansion in recent years leading to the recent instalment of new demountables. Further demountables can be accommodated should demand rise considerably and the school has the land to accommodate this growth as it is set on a site with well over a hectare of land and has generous grounds that would allow a number of additional buildings to be added without making the playing fields unacceptably small.

After hours school care is about to commence on the site and will be available from 3pm to 6pm each day.

#### Irrawang Public School

An interview with the Principal revealed the school currently has 305 pupils but has room to accommodate an additional 130. The schools offers a pre school and a parent support facility.

Direct bus routes operate to Irrawang Public School which feeds to the Irrawang High School in Raymond Terrace.

MAP 3 – Tea Gardens PS



#### Bulahdelah Central School

A direct bus service operates to the Bulahdelah Central School which provides education from kindergarten to year 12 and incorporates the only purpose built middle school complex in NSW.

Bulahdelah Central School currently has 155 primary school places and could readily accommodate 50 more.

The school has just had a \$14 million upgrade and is one of the most modern in the state.

### St Brigids Catholic School

St Brigids is based in Raymond Terrace it is a Catholic School catering for years K to 6. It has 420 students but spare capacity for an additional 25 pupils.

A discussion with a representative of the principal David Palmer indicated that the capacity to expand beyond 445 pupils is limited.

### Medowie Christian School

Medowie Christian School has a direct bus service to the school from Tea Gardens. The school currently has 302 pupils from kindergarten to year 9 but will soon offer to year 12. The school has plans in place to expand to 800 pupils.

An interview with the school's business manager John Whittal revealed that demand is the only constraint on expansion. The school will be 800 strong within 20 years but Mr Whittal emphasised that this expansion would take place more quickly should demand increase.

### St Josephs PS

St Josephs is a Catholic school in Bulahdelah offering year K to 6. It has 38 pupils enrolled and has capacity for up to 90. A discussion with the assistant to the Principal John New revealed that the school has modern facilities including air conditioning and a new \$35,000 playground.

## 6.9.2 Secondary Education

Duo Consulting estimates, based on the demographic analysis in section 6.1, that there will be demand for an additional 104 secondary school places as a result of the Riverside development over the next 14 years with half of those arriving in the first six years. There are a number of secondary school options with a direct connection to Tea Gardens. There are also a variety of more specialist schools in Newcastle which can be accessed. Directly connected schools are discussed here.

There are sufficient places to accommodate the expected growth in secondary pupils resulting from the development of Riverside. There is further capacity in the longer term with the addition of buildings or demountables at

schools. However, it is worth noting that, whilst Bulahdelah Central School has no other major growth areas in its catchment, the other secondary schools are all located in areas experiencing rapid demographic growth. Consequently Bulahdelah Central is likely to gain a large proportion of students from a growing population in Tea Gardens.

It is therefore recommended that communications with the Principal of Bulahdelah Public school be established to assist with facility planning. As growth of the community beyond the Riverside development takes place additional building works will be required to accommodate additional pupils, though this requirement is likely to be a decade or more away due to spare capacity that currently exists in the local school system.

### Bulahdelah Central School

A direct bus service operates to the Bulahdelah Central School which provides education from kindergarten to year 12 and incorporates the only purpose built middle school complex in NSW.

Bulahdelah Central School currently has 360 secondary school places and could readily accommodate 60 to 70 more without any need for new buildings.

The school has just had a \$14 million upgrade and is one of the most modern in the state.

The Principal Robert Brenton pointed out that the school is the main secondary school for the Tea Gardens area. He expressed an interest in the pace of development to assist with school planning.

### Medowie Christian School

Medowie Christian School has a direct bus service to the school from Tea Gardens. The school currently has 302 pupils from kindergarten to year 9 but will soon offer to year 12. The school has plans in place to expand to 800 pupils.

An interview with the school's business manager John Whittal revealed that demand is the only constraint on expansion. The school will be 800 strong within 20 years but Mr Whittal emphasised that this expansion would take place more quickly should demand increase.



### Hunter River High School

The Hunter River High School in Heatherbrae has around 730 students and runs a number of specialist programs for those with learning disabilities and behavioural problems. It also has a high aboriginal population and offers specialist support to these groups.

Consultation with the Principal Chris Charters revealed that only a small number of children from Tea Gardens use the school despite the direct bus service. The main public school for Tea Gardens is Bulahdelah Central. However, the school does have the capacity to expand with room for another 100 pupils prior to additional building work being required.

### Irrawang High School

In Heatherbrae, Irrawang currently serves around 1000 pupils. The school currently houses a number of pupils in demountable units and has no capacity for further growth without the addition of more demountable units.

## 6.9.3 Tertiary and Adult Education

The University of Newcastle has a campus offering a wide variety of Under and Post Graduate studies at Callaghan, an hour drive from Tea Gardens.

There is also a TAFE Campus in Newcastle.

The University of the Third Age operates courses in Tea Gardens providing a critical life long learning function drawing on the expertise and experience of retirees in the area.

The community facilities and telecommunications being provided in the home business precincts may provide the opportunity for distance learning, in effect providing a learning hub accessible to the wider community. It is recommended that discussions take place with TAFE and the University of Newcastle on facilities that would suit these sorts of community learning facilities. These could be located in the multi use community facility or in the business precinct hub or commercial centre.



## 7 Housing

### 7.1 Community identity and housing density

Between 1 and 3 February 2006 Crighton Properties held a planning design forum for the Myall River Downs and Riverside at Tea Gardens (formerly Myall Quays) sites. This forum provided an opportunity, through facilitated sessions, for the community and various government agencies to detail their views on the future development of the Tea Gardens area.

The community (as represented at the forum) was deeply concerned that dense development, as proposed by the Draft Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest Housing Strategy (up to 40dwph), would detract from the traditional character of the town. Numerous examples of how this had occurred in the past were cited.

The community defined the traditional character of Tea Gardens in a number of ways. Images in Figure 6 summarise their views.

The community character seems equally easily defined by what it should not be. There appeared to be unanimity on this point. The image in figure 7 illustrates this point; this is one building, on the river front at Marine Drive that residents feel goes against the character of the area. Similar views were expressed about any buildings of more than two storeys.

Many of the points made about what is valued in terms of the architecture and character of the Tea Gardens community are also instructive in terms of how to design a community for the future that both protects and nurtures these values. Strong emphasis was placed on traditional neighbourhood design with walkable neighbourhoods, connectivity between areas and integration with the surrounding natural environment. Many comments related more to streetscape and to neighbourhood layout than to building design. These values have informed the development of the Riverside Concept Plan.

Strong support was demonstrated by the community for the concept of mixed density neighbourhoods. This was in direct contrast to the idea of the establishment of specific areas of lower and higher density which had been advocated in the Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest Draft Housing Strategy.

Figure 6 – Images of traditional character.



There was also support for the premise of allowing higher densities in areas of greater amenity and lower densities where little or no amenity existed. However, amenity was defined to be far more complex than mere access to a town centre. Amenities were discussed to include commercial services, open space, playing fields, pocket parks, bush outlooks, cycleways and even areas of pleasant views, such as pond or wetland frontage.

Figure 7 – A building not seen as representative of traditional character



It was commonly held that developments of levels of densities at the upper end of the scale could be managed if they were carefully controlled architecturally and not grouped together in great numbers – thus resulting in a different town character.

The community were shown and liked the existing duplexes on Leeward Circuit as an example of smaller lot housing. In summary five key points

arose from the design forum which may provide guidance on the provision of future housing in Tea Gardens.

1. The community is very attached to the low rise, coastal seaside village character of Tea Gardens and wishes to see it preserved.
2. The community does not wish to see any more 2b zoned land.
3. If higher densities are to be created it is preferable to be delivered through a mixture of house types throughout a neighbourhood and not concentrated in any specific location.
4. Attractive walkable streets linking areas of amenity are a priority.

5. Densities of up to 13 dwellings per ha would be appropriate on greenfield sites in the area if properly master planned and managed.

Riverside has been designed on principles adopted in the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Housing Strategy and which were also adopted by seminal projects including Ellenbrook in the Swan Valley (AUS), Seaside in Florida (US) and Poundbury in Dorset (UK). All of these projects have become symbols of community building within their respective countries.

For new communities, neighbourhood density must be locally calibrated to establish a character that is appropriate to the wider context and is market responsive. The draft Housing Strategy proposes a net density (including internal roads and parks) of 13 dwellings per ha for both Myall River Downs and Riverside (Myall Quays). These targets have evolved in conjunction with the design and planning process for Riverside and are suited to both the character and desired community outcome of the development as well as the wishes and concerns of the local community.

Within the existing settlement, there is an existing gradation of density from the most urban adjoining the waterways and beaches of Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens to the most rural towards Monkey Jacket. This gradation has naturally occurred as the amenity of Jimmy's Beach, Bennetts Beach and Myall River has prompted selective infill development able to capitalize upon the adjacency of these natural features.

Inland from these amenities, however, a market that is driven predominately by the retiree lifestyle sector has been slow to absorb denser building types, such as apartments. Whilst many reasons exist, the simple fact that most elderly do not like stairs and that it is cheaper to construct a small single storey cottage than a lifted apartment cannot be ignored. The task has been to establish a framework that permits self-sufficiency when a driver's license is lost. In other words, a mixed use pedestrian friendly neighbourhood.

The aim is to create an authentic character that genuinely reflects the lifestyle choice desired by its inhabitants should be established. As part of the "sea-change", the retiree lifestyle sector is moving to the north coast to retire to a coastal suburb. As the master plan prepared during the Riverside Design Forum demonstrates, a "suburb" configured according to the principles of the neighbourhood design is markedly different to a conventional "suburban estate".

The principles of the draft Housing Strategy form the fundamental framework for future growth to occur in a sustainable manner. Following this framework, the master plan for Riverside and Myall River Downs prepared at the recent Design Forum demonstrates the practical application of these principles which has both the support of the developer and community alike.

Accordingly, density targets for Myall River Downs and Riverside allow for minimum net density of 13 dw/ha across both sites.

## 7.2 Housing Affordability

Affordable housing is not provided as an end in itself but so that members of the community, especially existing residents and those providing essential services to the community, can afford to reside locally.

### 7.2.1 Home Ownership

Three bedroom houses in Tea Gardens are available from around \$300,000 with some smaller dwellings available for lower amounts. This price is affordable set next to Sydney prices and is broadly comparable to prices found in other coastal centres.

Because the vast majority of people moving to the area are retirees who tend to have relatively low incomes, but who are able to finance their homes from capital they have accumulated, a standard analysis of affordability carried out by comparing incomes with average mortgage payments has limited validity in Tea Gardens. For retirees seeking to move to the area it is safe to assume that they will only do so if they can afford to. There is no strong social imperative to encourage lower income retirees to relocate to Tea Gardens.

For essential workers and younger people the situation is different. It is important to the health and vitality of any community that young families can afford to establish and remain in the area. The need to encourage younger people to remain in the community was emphasised many times in the Riverside Planning Design Forum.

The Westpac mortgage calculator shows that at the \$55,000 income level (an income level analogous to a number of key professions such as policemen and teachers) a single income household with no children can borrow \$300,000 (enough to enter the housing market in Tea Gardens). A single income family with children can borrow up to \$230,000 and as a consequence this purchaser would find difficulty in purchasing a house anywhere in coastal New South Wales. A dual income family on the other hand with a combined income of \$55,000, can borrow \$287,000 – enough to purchase entry level housing in the Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest area.

As a consequence, for many of the critical professions necessary to service the Tea Gardens area, housing is within reach, though some financial pressure may be experienced in the early years of a mortgage. For lower income groups the purchase of housing may be beyond their reach. However, it is the norm in almost all communities to have people unable to afford a home when they first enter the workforce, typically these people access housing through the rental market.

### 7.2.2 The rental market

The rental market in the Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest area is very competitive and cheap by almost any other comparison. Many people who cannot afford to purchase a house enjoy high quality accommodation by renting. Local Real Estate Agent Rick Wraight advises that Tea Gardens Real Estate alone manages 154 permanent rental properties in Tea Gardens with an average rent of \$195 per week and with 34 homes renting for below \$155 per week.

Notwithstanding this, Crighton Properties have been exploring a number of options to trial innovative solutions to the provision of affordable rental accommodation. Modular housing with garage top units and dual key housing where areas of a dwelling can be rented out as self contained units, are both being considered in the design of the Concept Plans for the Riverside and Myall River Downs Estates.

### 7.2.3 The impact of Home Business Development

The small business sector is growing rapidly with half of Australian businesses not operating from home. The development of two purpose built home business parks within the Riverside development will encourage small business operators to locate at the site.

As well as providing advantages in terms of social cohesion with owners spending more time and money in the local community, this approach provides an affordable alternative for anyone running a small enterprise suited to a home located business.



Instead of paying rental on a business premises, owning a home and paying to travel between the two, the home business park significantly reduces these costs offering an affordable lifestyle package.

The home business park concept is also likely to play an important role for those in the transition between a full time career and retirement, allowing access to the lifestyle on offer in Tea Gardens with the potential to remain economically active.

Because this concept is new it is difficult to quantify the likely results. However, it is judged that the combining of home and workplace will play an important role in housing affordability for a significant minority of families.

#### 7.2.4 Housing Stress

Housing stress is typically defined in terms of more than 30% of gross income being spent on housing. For a \$300,000 dwelling with a 10% deposit at an interest rate of 7% a household income of \$65,000 would be required to not be considered to be in housing stress.

Average rental properties in Tea Gardens are accessible without stress to any household with a combined income of \$34,000 per annum and there is significant rental stock available for those with even lower incomes.

This means that housing is available in Tea Gardens to most groups in society without them experiencing housing stress. Notwithstanding this, many people behave aspirationally and choose to place themselves in housing stress on a temporary basis to get into the purchase housing market.

There are a number measures to ameliorate housing stress and not all relate to housing prices. Affordable lifestyles are part of the key rather than focusing solely on the housing itself. At Riverside dwellings will be in walking distance of shops and community facilities reducing car usage and possibly the need to own multiple vehicles. It is estimated that it costs in excess of \$10,000 in after tax dollars to run a car for a year. If residents of Riverside are able to cope with one less vehicle this has an immediate and substantial impact on the affordability of their lifestyle.

#### 7.2.5 Measures to enhance affordability

To provide dwelling choice is a sensible measure and a good indicator of a healthy and vibrant community. However, unlike in major metropolitan areas where land values are the dominant feature of house prices, attempts to simply drive down block sizes will not achieve the same result in terms of reduced housing costs as it does in Sydney.

The impact of reducing land size on cost reduces with size until, at the smaller lot sizes and higher densities, the price of housing actually increases. This is because the build costs for higher density forms of housing are considerably higher than for mass market project homes.

The most affordable form of housing is a small lot project duplex.

This is not to say that there is not a market for higher density dwellings, they are an important component of the Tea Gardens Market but their take up rate is considerably lower than that of more traditional larger lots.

Medium density housing actually best serves a high end market niche rather than the affordable market in this area. The laws of supply and demand will not reduce prices if a glut of this stock is provided because prices are dictated by build and land costs. The impact will be that if there is not a sufficient margin or if there is a glut of the same product on the market, additional homes will be not built.

At Riverside three approaches are proposed by the proponents to encourage the provision of affordable housing:

- The inclusion of at least 10% of dwellings on lots of less than 450 sqm to ensure that a variety of lots are provided. This will include duplex lots.
- The use of dual key dwellings to allow the creation of separate self contained dwellings within the dwelling envelope will be encouraged.
- The Riverside Concept Plan will ensure adequate supply of housing.
- The rental market will be encouraged.

In addition to these it is recommended that the supply of rental housing stock be monitored by the proponent and that consideration be given to targeted marketing to investors to ensure a strong supply of rental dwellings is available.

## 8 Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall it is clear that the development of Riverside has the potential to significantly enhance the services and community facilities in Tea Gardens. Indeed, the existing development of the commercial precinct at the site has already significantly enhanced services to residents.

Tea Gardens is well located and served with schooling and medical facilities and has access to a variety of employment nodes.

The following recommendations are designed to ensure that the community gains maximum benefit from the development and that any potential for adverse effects are carefully mitigated:

- 1 Riverside should have roads constructed to allow a bus a loop through the development bringing public transport access to within walking distance of each dwelling. This will be particularly important for school bus pickups but as the community grows will allow for the potential for convenient public transport services.
- 2 It is recommended that attention be paid to the provision of a comprehensive network of cycle ways through the Riverside site connecting all community facilities and places of interest. This network should be provided as part of the development and should, particularly, provide ease of access to the commercial centre and connect directly to the Council planned cycle way network and to the foreshore so as to augment community mobility.
- 3 It is recommended that, as part of discussion regarding developer contributions, consideration be given to the provision of a multipurpose community function / meeting facility in line with Council's Section 94 plan for the area. This should be located within walking distance (400m) of the Riverside commercial precinct.
- 4 It is recommended that Crighton Properties give consideration to a contribution to the upgrade of library facilities either on site or as part of the provision of a multi use community facility in line with Council's Section 94 plan.
- 5 It is recommended that Crighton Properties keep the Principals of both Tea Gardens Public School and Bulahdelah Central School informed of the growth of school age population at Riverside in order to assist school planning. However, it is noted that school facilities in the area are sufficient to accommodate the expected growth in population from Riverside.
- 6 The community facilities and telecommunications being provided in the home business precincts may provide the opportunity for distance learning, in effect providing a learning hub accessible to the wider community. It is recommended that Crighton Properties should hold discussions with TAFE and the University of Newcastle on facilities that would suit these sorts of community learning facilities. These could be located in the multi use community facility or in the business precinct hub or commercial centre.
- 7 The opportunity exists to consolidate certain Council facilities, including sporting facilities, on to one site as part of the Myall River Downs Development. This would represent a significant upgrade of current facilities and should be pursued by Council to provide capacity for future population growth in the Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest area.
- 8 The Great Lakes Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2006) sets out a range of facilities that it would like to see developed in Tea Gardens (Appendix 5). It is recommended that these provide a guide to discussions with Council about what facilities be provided at a new consolidated facility. However, it is important to note that it would not be appropriate or equitable for Riverside and its residents to be expected to meet the cost of the full list of desired facilities. The list may, nonetheless, provide a useful guide both for this development and for contributions from subsequent developments in the area.
- 9 The Myall Quays Commercial Centre provides commercial and retail space that is adequate for the current population. As the population of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest grows it is recommended that an additional 8,500sqm of retail space be allowed over the next 10 years and that the demand for retail space be reviewed at that point to ensure the adequacy of future retail floor space provision. The expansion of the combined retail

and commercial floor space by 15,000 sqm is considered likely to meet this need.

- 10 Whilst health services are well provided for in the area, it is recommended that the Concept Plan be submitted to the Population Health Unit of the Hunter New England Health Service who will provide detailed recommendations on measures to optimise preventative health.
- 11 It is recommended that as Riverside is developed a case be made to provide a further 50 beds in the aged care hostel facility at Tea Gardens Grange.
- 12 It is recommended that development of the two home business precincts be carefully monitored with consideration being given to the provision of similar facilities in neighbouring developments or in the town's 2b zone should the demand for these precincts outstrip supply.
- 13 It is recommended that the availability of permanent rental housing stock at Riverside and in the wider Tea Gardens community be monitored by Crighton Properties and that the developer's marketing should target investors should the supply of available rental accommodation dwindle.