The University of Sydney
Faculty of Architecture

Planning Research Centre

MEETING THE SEA CHANGE CHALLENGE:

Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia

REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL SEA CHANGE TASKFORCE

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Dr Nicole Gurran

Caroline Squires

Professor Ed Blakely

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Executive Summary

Coastal communities around Australia and around the world are struggling to plan for rapid population growth driven by internal migration from metropolitan cities and inland areas. Described as the "sea change" phenomenon by demographers Ian Burnley and Peter Murphy (2004), the implications of this movement are significant for the communities and the nation. Development pressures associated with rapid population growth offer opportunities for new in-migrants in the form of high quality open space but at the same time these opportunities pose threats to sensitive coastal processes and environments, including coastal waters, dunes, wetlands, and distinctive landscapes. Many coastal communities are surrounded by environments of national and international heritage importance, such as national parks, world heritage areas, and, increasingly, marine protected areas. These places are particularly vulnerable to inappropriate development which threatens biodiversity, cultural heritage sites, recreational and tourism values. The social implications of sea change migration are also profound. In spite of new population growth, many non metropolitan coastal communities are characterised by high levels of unemployment, lower than average household incomes, and greater levels of socio-economic disadvantage along with higher numbers of seniors than other parts of Australia. Increasing population growth and development activity in these areas is not translating to long term economic gains usually associated with population expansion. Social cleavages are occurring between existing residents and newcomers and between wealthier, usually retiree, sea changers and those lower income groups who have been pushed out of expensive metropolitan areas.

This report highlights these issues and examines how existing coastal policy and planning frameworks in Australia are responding to them. The report has been prepared for the National Sea Change Taskforce, which includes over 50 local government areas in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. The research aimed to identify the key social, economic, and environmental planning issues facing coastal sea change communities in Australia, and review current responses to these issues. It has been prepared to establish a baseline for future research. The specific research objectives were to:

- Define the sea change phenomenon and document the manifestation of sea change in peri and non metropolitan coastal communities;
- Develop a profile of the various types of sea change communities in Australia, drawing on key social, economic, and environmental indicators;
- Review policy and planning responses to sea change in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia; and,
- Identify priorities for policy intervention and further research.

The research included three main steps: (1) a review of existing research and data on coastal migration and urbanisation in Australia; (2) development of a typology of coastal communities affected by the sea change process and the major planning issues they face, using a sample of 55 local government areas involved in the interim National Sea Change Taskforce in 2004; and, (3) analysis of coastal policy and planning frameworks (including regional and local plans) in each State, to evaluate current responses to the sea change phenomenon.

The Sea Change Phenomenon in Australia

Section 2 of the report summarises existing research and data on migration and urbanisation in coastal Australia.

Migration to Non Metropolitan Coastal Areas

The movement of significant numbers of people from metropolitan areas and regional cities to non metropolitan and especially coastal areas is long term, with its origins in the late 1960s and early 1970s as retirees sought ideal seaside environments. Even earlier, there was some movement of retirees from metropolitan areas and from inland farming communities to regional coastal settlements in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria (Burnley and Murphy 2004).

Since the 1970s there have been cyclical increases and decreases in migration flows to coastal areas. Growth intensified in many coastal areas in the early 1980s, before moderating in the 1990s. Although demographers have observed an overall slowing in the rate of migration to the coast, population growth in coastal areas remains high in proportional and numerical terms (Burnley and Murphy 2004). The rate of growth in many coastal local government areas is equivalent to or higher than that of metropolitan areas (ABS 2004a).

There are strong regional and State variations in this growth. Time series data shows that non metropolitan coastal areas of New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia had particularly rapid population growth between 1991 and 1996, while local governments in South Australia and Victoria largely experienced an acceleration of growth in the later census period (1996-2001) (Figure A4.1).

Sea Changers

- Retirees contribute to the sea change phenomenon, but are no longer the major drivers of coastal population growth (ABS 2004a).
- New residents of high growth coastal regions are actually of a younger age profile than Australia as a whole and significantly younger than the existing profile of communities affected by sea change: 79% of new residents in coastal areas are younger than 50, compared with 71% of Australia overall (ABS 2004a). However, the younger age of sea changers is not likely to affect the high median age of sea change areas in the immediate future because the newcomers represent only a small proportion of the total population.
- As the baby-boomer generation is expected to start retiring later this decade, the number of retirees moving to the coast (and some inland areas offering high amenity and access to major population centres) is likely to rise again, contributing to an overall increase in the rate of population growth in these places.

Motivations of Sea Changers

- People moving to sea change localities are motivated by a range of “push” and “pull” factors, particularly housing costs, the amenity of coastal areas and employment circumstances (ABS 2004a). Additionally, a combination of personal circumstances (particularly social networks) and cultural factors (perceptions about a particular place and sense of connection to “reference groups” within it) influence decisions to migrate (Stimson and Minnery 1998).
- The high cost of housing in metropolitan centres contributes to the sea change phenomenon. More affluent sea changers realise high capital gains from city housing and “down size” in lifestyle destinations. Traditionally, some of these people have been motivated by the ideal of an alternative lifestyle in rural areas, particularly in the coastal hinterlands of northern New South Wales (Burnley and Murphy 2004). Other sea changers seek more affordable housing in peri metropolitan areas (frequently along the coast) and further afield.

- Housing affordability is the main factor affecting the decisions of lower income and income support recipients (the unemployed, single parent households, disabled and aged pensioners) to move to non metropolitan areas (Marshall et al. 2003). However, lifestyle factors such as better access to beaches and natural habitat and a more close knit community are also an important consideration and most low income movers rate their new homes as better places to live, despite poorer transportation, shopping and other services (Marshall et al. 2003).
- Improvements in transport and communication technology mean that an increasing number of workers can use the internet as well as contract outsource their services so they do not need to be permanently based in the city, although easy access for partial commuting is important (Marshall et al. 2003).

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Non Metropolitan Communities in Coastal Australia

- Residential and tourism development associated with the sea change phenomenon does not necessarily lead to sustainable economic growth or improved socio-economic outcomes for local populations. This is because growth in sea change areas is associated with new jobs in lower paid occupational sectors such as retail, restaurants, tourism, and caregiving. Moreover these jobs are frequently part time and subject to seasonal fluctuations (O'Connor 2004, Stimson et al. 2003).
- Coastal communities in non metropolitan Australia have the highest proportion of low-income households (17.3% compared to 13.9% in Australia overall) (Hugo 2004). Coastal areas also have the highest proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Eight per cent are receiving labour market benefits compared to 5.9% in Australia overall (Hugo 2004).
- Coastal regions have the highest median age (38 years compared to 35 for Australia overall), have experienced the largest increase in median age over the past census period, and have the highest "elderly dependency ratio"[1] of Australia (24.1 in the populated coastal region of non metropolitan Australia compared to 19 for Australia overall) (ABS 2004a, Hugo 2004).

Profile of Sea Change Communities

Section 3 of the report draws on population data and socio-economic indicators collected for a sample of 55 councils participating in the activities of the National Sea Change Taskforce in 2004 to develop a typology of communities affected by sea change. We identify five broad "ideal types":

- Coastal Commuters - suburbanised satellite communities in peri metropolitan locations
- Coastal Getaways - small to medium coastal towns within 3 hours drive of a capital city
- Coastal Cities - substantial urban conurbations beyond the State capitals
- Coastal Lifestyle Destinations - predominantly tourism and leisure communities
- Coastal Hamlets - small, remote coastal communities often surrounded by protected natural areas.

Coastal Commuters

- Coastal Commuters are situated at the edge of the capital cities and include Gosford and Wyong in New South Wales, Pine Rivers and Caboolture in Queensland, Onkaparinga in South Australia, Casey in Victoria and Wanneroo, Mandurah and Rockingham in Western Australia. Most of these areas experienced more than double the national rate of growth between 1996 and 2001.

[1] The elderly dependency ratio is the ratio of the elderly population to the working age population (ABS 2004a).

- Growth in these areas is closely associated with urban pressures – a "spillover effect" from increasingly unaffordable metropolitan areas to designated growth localities on the urban fringe. However, lifestyle factors – the attraction of being near the coast but still within "commuting" distance to the city for work or family – also contribute to the growth of these areas. Therefore they are partially affected by the "sea change" phenomenon as well as being within the commute shed of major job areas.
- Coastal Commuters tend to have a lower median age than Australia overall, and much lower than that of other sea change community types. For example, Casey in Victoria and Wanneroo in Western Australia had a median age of 31 in 2001, and Pine Rivers in Queensland had a median age of 32, compared to the national median of 35. Gosford and Wyong in New South Wales, with a median age of 38 and 37 respectively, are exceptions to this trend, reflecting a long term tradition of retirement to these areas.
- Unemployment in most of the Coastal Commuter communities in our sample of 55 councils was under 10% in 2001, however in most cases unemployment remained above State levels. Exceptions are Pine Rivers in Queensland (with an unemployment rate of 5.8% in 2001), Casey in Victoria (6.1%) and Kingborough in Tasmania (7.0%).
- Coastal Commuters have the highest levels of employment in manufacturing industries (the highest in the sample of Coastal Commuters being Casey (23.4%), Onkaparinga (19.3%). Employment in manufacturing declined between 1996 and 2001 in each of these communities (and the nation), while the construction, retail, accommodation and restaurant sectors grew in all communities.
- Most Coastal Commuters in the sample have a lower score on the ABS socio-economic "Index of Relative Advantage/Disadvantage"[2] than Australia overall, although their scores tend to be higher than that of other community types affected by the sea change phenomenon. Coastal Commuters with lower scores include Caboolture (925.1) and Wyong (937.4) compared to Australia (994), regional cities (985) and populated coastal areas (969). Higher scores were recorded in Pine Rivers (1025.5), Kingborough (1035.1) and Gosford (1008.8) (ABS 2004d; Haberkorn et al 2004).

Coastal Getaways

- Coastal Getaways are local government areas comprising of small to medium towns within approximately three hours drive of a capital city. This proximity means they are attractive locations for domestic tourism, including day trips and weekend "escapes". Historically, many of these communities were once low-key family holiday destinations or small fishing villages.
- Examples of Coastal Getaways include Bunbury and Busselton in Western Australia, towns on the Bass and Surf Coast in Victoria, and Victor Harbor in South Australia. Rates of growth in these destinations have been significantly higher than national and State averages in recent years. For instance, Victor Harbor had an annual rate of growth of 3% between 2002 and 2003 compared with 0.6% for South Australia overall. The Bass and Surf Coasts in Victoria grew at more than double the State rate between 1996 and 2001 and during 2002 and 2003.
- Getaways attract the growing number of "telecommuters" and people whose work does not require them to be permanently based in the city. The accessibility of these communities also allows retirees to retain links to family remaining in the city. A high proportion of property owners in these locations are absentee landlords, who own holiday houses or weekenders.

[2] The ABS Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage/Disadvantage provides a comprehensive measure of socio-economic outcomes within particular areas. The index value is used to order or rank areas in terms of advantage/disadvantage. The average index value for areas across Australia is 994. Hence an index value exceeding 994 indicates that an area is more advantaged than the Australian average, while a value of less than 994 indicates that an area is more disadvantaged than the Australian average (ABS 2004d). The value for populated coastal areas is 969 (Haberkorn et al 2004).

- Getaways tend to have a much higher median age than Australia overall and are aging at a much faster rate. The highest median ages are recorded in Victor Harbor (49 years, a change of 4 years between 1996 and 2001); Yorke Peninsula (45) and Bass Coast (43).
- Unemployment in Victorian, South Australian and Western Australian Coastal Getaways is below national and State averages. Unemployment is more significant in New South Wales and Queensland Getaways. All Queensland Getaway communities in the sample had unemployment rates greater than 10% in 2001.
- Most Getaways have lower median household incomes than Australia overall, with the lowest incomes recorded in the Bass Coast, Victor Harbor and Yorke Peninsula ($400-$499 per week compared to $700-$799 for Australia).
- Socio-economic indexes are lower than the national figure (of 994) for all Coastal Getaways in the sample, with the exception of Kiama (1044.9) and Surf Coast (1034.4).

Coastal Cities

- In this typology we identify Coastal Cities as substantial, predominantly contiguous urban conurbations with populations greater than 100,000. Coastal Cities include Newcastle in New South Wales, Cairns, Gold Coast and Maroochy in Queensland and Greater Geelong in Victoria. The rate of growth in these areas, while numerically substantial, is closer to State averages.
- Coastal Cities in the sample have a higher median age than Australia overall. The exception is Cairns, which in 2001 had a median age of 34 (compared to 35 for Australia). However, this median increased at twice the national rate.
- Retail is the largest single employer in the Coastal Cities of the sample, followed by manufacturing, health and community services and construction.
- Unemployment in all Coastal Cities was higher than the national average of 7.5%. In 2001, Maroochy (11.2%) and Newcastle (11.1%) had the highest rates of unemployment.
- Coastal Cities have lower median household incomes than Australia overall, with the exception of Cairns, where the median is $700-$799 (equivalent to the national median). Coastal Cities tended to have a slightly lower socio-economic index than Australia overall.

Coastal Lifestyle Destinations

- Coastal Lifestyle Destinations are local government areas located more than three hours drive from capital cities but otherwise have a similar settlement pattern to Coastal Getaways. They attract new residents and visitors for their lifestyle, leisure, and tourism appeal. Examples include Coffs Harbour, Byron, and Hastings Shires in New South Wales, Whitsunday in Queensland, and Moyne in Victoria.
- Most of these Lifestyle communities are experiencing more rapid population growth than national and State figures but in general this growth is lower than that of Coastal Getaways and Coastal Commuters.
- Coastal Lifestyle Destinations have significantly higher median ages than Australia overall. The highest median ages recorded in 2001 were Eurobodalla (44 years), Nambucca and Hastings (43 years). Exceptions are Thuringowa (30) and Warrnambool (34).
- Unemployment tends to be higher than in other types of sea change community, and many in the sample had employment rates above 10%. The northern New South Wales communities of Nambucca (18.3%), Kempsey (16.5%) and Byron (14.4%) had the highest rates of unemployment in 2001.
- Socio-economic indexes in all Coastal Lifestyle Destinations are lower than Australia overall. The lowest indexes are in Kempsey (886.9) and Nambucca (888.9), corresponding with high rates of unemployment in these communities.

Coastal Hamlets

- We use the term "Coastal Hamlet" to describe remote local government areas with small settlements and groupings of settlements[3] located more than three hours from a capital city. Robe, and Grant in South Australia are examples, as are Augusta-Margaret River in Western Australia, Douglas in Queensland, and Bellingen in northern New South Wales.
- The relative isolation of Coastal Hamlets has meant that these places have escaped major development pressures to date. Many are also surrounded by conservation areas which act as a growth boundary. However, Coastal Hamlets are likely to be increasingly attractive to sea changers and tourists seeking alternatives to more populated and developed locations.
- Some Coastal Hamlets, especially Augusta-Margaret River and Douglas are already experiencing rapid growth (Augusta-Margaret River grew at an estimated 4.7% between 2002 and 2003 compared to 1.4% for Western Australia overall). As impacts on biodiversity, habitat, and landscape values are most significant during the early stages of development within an area, it is particularly important to manage processes of growth in these areas.
- Unemployment is lower in Coastal Hamlets than other types of sea change communities and all Hamlets in the sample had unemployment significantly below State rates, except the northern New South Wales community of Bellingen (14.6%).
- Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors remains important for these communities (34.6% of people are employment in this industry in Robe and 25% in Grant). However, employment in these industries generally declined between 1996-2001, particularly in Bellingen (-3.3%) and Robe (-2.5%). Exceptions are Augusta-Margaret River, where the sector increased by 1.2%, perhaps due to a growth in viticulture, and Grant (up 0.9%).

Policy and Planning Framework

This information (contained in Section 4 of the report) is drawn from an analysis of Commonwealth and State policies, strategies and legislation relating to the planning and management of Australia's coastal areas, and a sample of six local planning instruments.

- Commonwealth, State and local policy and planning instruments addressing the sea change phenomenon focus on biophysical aspects, particularly environmental protection, and to a lesser degree, settlement structure and urban design. Social issues, such as building community cohesion, catering to the needs of aging populations, or housing affordability, are not well addressed within the scope of current policy or planning instruments.

- Similarly, although some planning instruments aim to preserve agricultural land or to provide for tourism development, economic goals are not well articulated or integrated within coastal policy and planning frameworks (though some of the local plans examined do contain economic objectives and strategies).

- This failure to integrate social and economic objectives and strategies within coastal policies and the land use plans applying to coastal areas reflects broader difficulties associated with achieving the spectrum of sustainability goals. Given the evidence of social and economic disadvantage in sea change localities, and the likelihood that such disadvantage will continue without effective interventions, broadening coastal policy and planning processes to properly include social and economic dimensions is a priority.

[3] Some "coastal hamlets" may be located within more populated lifestyle destination areas (for example, towns like Yallingup in Margaret River and Laurieton in Hastings, but these are not analysed separately in this research).

- Effective regional planning is widely regarded by representatives of sea change communities to be critical to the management of growth and change in these areas. Many sea change communities report that existing regional plans lack weight, are not consistently applied, or are out of date.

Priorities for Policy Intervention and Research

The final section of the report (Section 5) summarises the priority planning issues affecting sea change communities.

Environment and Heritage

- Coastal environments are under major pressure. Environmental problems include habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development and tourism, loss and degradation of coastal wetlands, change in hydrological systems and marine habitats, the introduction of exotic species, and erosion. Global climate change, particularly sea level rise is likely to impact coastal environments in the near future. Thus it is important for some form of monitoring effort to be incorporated in the planning process to provide updated information on ecological changes.
- There is a need to effectively protect the attributes of terrestrial and marine conservation areas and manage the impact of activities and development in surrounding lands on conservation values. This is of particular relevance to the many sea change communities defined by major protected landscapes.
- The distinctive rural character of coastal hinterlands is threatened by pressure for residential and rural residential subdivisions, particularly in Coastal Getaways and Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, but many councils lack strong statutory planning support to manage these processes. State governments should assist local councils in developing more effective approaches and recognise those that do a good job by both monetary and public awards programs.
- More research on existing and potential planning approaches to managing environmental pressures within coastal locations is needed, for instance, the viability of permanent urban growth boundaries, the potential application of tradable development rights, planning incentives for conservation, and voluntary conservation schemes.
- Local character or "sense of place" in smaller coastal communities is being overwhelmed by the scale and or pace of new residential and tourism developments (De Jong 2002; Green 2000). There is a lack of effective planning methodologies and tools to preserve and enhance the attributes of place (including cultural heritage sites, places for local recreation, contemplation and encounter) that are important to local residents. A good planning guide or handbook needs to be developed to assist communities in this sensitive planning process that does not merely miniaturise urban approaches but creates a fundamentally different framework for coastal community planning. Here the Coastal Design Guidelines for New South Wales provide a good starting point although the emphasis is limited to urban design and the physical planning of settlements.

Community Wellbeing

- As indicated earlier, many sea change communities are characterised by relatively high levels of socio economic disadvantage. There is a risk of significant social polarisation within sea change communities and at the regional scale as the gap widens between "cashed up" newcomers from the city and existing residents.
- A process of gentrification is apparent within some sea change communities; particularly Coastal Getaways and some Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, where demand for new housing and holiday accommodation reduces affordable housing opportunities or creates seasonal shortage. More research on housing market dynamics in coastal locations, the process of gentrification and displacement of lower income groups, and potential response mechanisms, is needed to understand and address this issue. A Sea Change Housing Indicator report might be implemented in each state, perhaps in collaboration with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI).

- The increasing transience of sea change communities, (shorter term stays, absentee landlords, loss of repeat visitors) is affecting Coastal Getaways and Coastal Lifestyle Destinations. Many of these areas are reporting loss of a sense of community. There are tensions between existing residents and newcomers, particularly within smaller Coastal Getaways, Coastal Lifestyle Destinations and Coastal Hamlets (National Sea Change Taskforce, August 2004).
- Residents of sea change areas cherish the unique lifestyle and amenity of living on the coast. Certain coastal communities, especially Getaways, Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, and Coastal Hamlets, are particularly valued for offering a low key semi rural lifestyle with traditionally strong social networks. Residents of these places currently fear that these qualities are threatened by rapid population increases or very high numbers of tourists.

Economy / Tourism

- Population growth has correlated with increased development activity and reduced levels of unemployment in most of the sea change communities included in the sample. However, national unemployment rates have also fallen. It is clear that the short term development activities associated with population growth will not lead to a self sustaining economy over time. As a result, new local economic development strategies must be designed to build on local natural resources while establishing links to the international economy.
- In particular, Coastal Getaway communities experience distortion of their local economies due to ongoing connections with metropolitan areas, principally from commuters, retirees, and second home buyers (O'Connor 2004). These connections include higher land values as local residents compete in the housing market with "cashed up" newcomers from the city; city dwellers who are able to purchase a weekender while remaining based in the city; and partial commuters or telecommuters whose income flows from the city. Thus it is important for communities to devise "affordable housing" and related schemes that help maintain socio-economic balance. Communities should be assisted by the States to establish and resource non profit housing organisations in regional areas for this purpose.
- Many sea change communities (particularly Coastal Lifestyle Destinations and Coastal Hamlets) are experiencing a decline in traditional resourced based industries, like agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Specific strategies are needed to assist councils manage this process of transition and its impact on the environmental quality and character of their communities. This may include the development of strategies to retain and enhance productive industries in agriculture, fisheries and sustainable forestry, while establishing new conservation, knowledge, culture, tourism, and service based opportunities catering to national and international markets.
- There is pressure within tourism based communities to continue to renew and upgrade tourism infrastructure to remain competitive tourism destinations. At the same time, there is tension between tourists and local residents who regard high and seasonal visitor populations as a threat to community cohesion and the amenity values of the locality. New tourism strategies need to be examined to ensure that tourism activities produce real economic returns for communities.

Infrastructure

- All councils report infrastructure shortfalls and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources (grants, rates, and developer contributions). There is a clear need and substantial pressure from new residents for services and infrastructure comparable to that of metropolitan areas.
- Actual infrastructure gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population and visitor needs (roads, sewer, water services, and public transport). Smaller population centres experience a shortage of social, professional and health services, and a lack of education and training opportunities. They also express a need for new technological and communications infrastructure. Long term infrastructure plans – covering a 15-25 year time span need to be crafted for each of these communities, with State government assistance and a subsequent commitment of up front funding to implement these plans. Such plans should be closely linked to regional settlement and environmental planning processes.

- Infrastructure provision in areas with high seasonal visitation must be adequate for periods of peak demand although many local government areas lack the sufficient rate base or developer contributions framework to finance this level of service. Again, a long term plan needs to be developed to meet both peak and regular demands.

Governance

- Sea change localities are subject to complicated, cross jurisdictional planning and management processes relating to coastal management and protection, natural resource management and heritage conservation (in addition to core land use planning and development responsibilities). Therefore mechanisms to combine planning, natural resource management and conservation systems need to be devised by each State – perhaps through consolidated legislation and planning policy administered by State governments but implemented by appropriately resourced local councils.
- This approach is consistent with a place based form of governance for coastal communities. A place based approach is likely to be most responsive to the multiple environmental, social, cultural and economic issues faced by coastal councils, however, is very difficult to achieve within current administrative arrangements. Thus we suggest a more coordinated process rather than a new layer of government.
- A cooperative approach between councils at regional and sub regional levels is needed to pursue effective settlement strategies in high growth coastal destinations. Yet few councils report established processes for regional collaboration. Although there are provisions for regional planning in most State coastal policies (see below), few States actually have completed regional plans in place.
- Smaller councils lack sufficient numbers of professional staff to manage the multi-dimensional nature of rapid change in coastal areas. Many coastal councils that have escaped rapid growth pressures report that they do not have adequate planning controls in place to manage recent upsurges in population. These councils need State government assistance to strengthen their planning frameworks and establish supportive processes with other local government areas in the region.

Priorities to Enhance Local and Regional Planning in Sea Change Communities of Coastal Australia

The research presented here points to a number of immediate priorities to enhance local and regional planning in sea change communities of coastal Australia.

- There is a need for a national framework to lead coastal policy, establish strategic responses to population growth in coastal regions, and to support and resource regional and local coastal planning initiatives. Suitable models for emulation exist in the United Kingdom, United States and European Union.
- There are plenty of State level objectives and guidelines for managing growth in coastal areas – however, it is not clear that these are being implemented. There is a need to evaluate the implementation of this policy framework and expand it to address the full spectrum of issues affecting the diversity of sea change communities in Australia.
- There is an urgent need to support local governments in:-
    - further developing appropriate skills and expertise to address the complex challenges associated with coastal growth;
    - establishing and resourcing appropriate strategies for necessary infrastructure provision linked to desired settlement patterns and future character;
    - connecting economic and social strategies with physical planning processes and decisions; and,
    - establishing effective processes for regional or sub regional cooperation.
- Many local governments have developed innovative ways to address aspects of the sea change phenomenon but this work has occurred in isolation. There is a need to audit, build on, and share this work with other sea change communities.

Priorities for Further Research

Additional research is also needed to fully address the challenges associated with demographic change in Australia's coastal regions.

- Research on national and international models of best practice in planning for and managing growth in sensitive environmental settings is required. This research should emphasise opportunities for application in the spectrum of sea change communities in Australia. (This will form stage two of the National Sea Change Taskforce research project).

- Further research on current planning practice and opportunities for enhancement, particularly with respect to policy guidance and regulatory controls; integration of coastal management urban planning and biodiversity conservation processes; information sources and decision support tools, structures for community participation and collaborative relationships is needed. This research should focus on the potential for a "place building" methodology to assist coastal communities respond to rapid change while preserving and enhancing local character, social capital and environmental integrity.

- Further research on social conditions in sea change communities, particularly socio-economic polarisation, is a priority. Little is known about the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings and research should focus on how to design environmentally sensitive growth management strategies that do not result in the displacement of lower income residents.

- Research on forms of local economic development suitable for non metropolitan communities subject to high environmental conservation constraints is also important. This research should identify strategies to manage economic transition from resource based industries to conservation, knowledge, culture, tourism, and service based opportunities, and economic opportunities that depend on, and thus seek to preserve, the unique attributes of place as a basis for economic competitiveness.

1. Introduction

"Sea change" has entered the Australian lexicon. It describes a process that has been underway for more than 30 years – migration away from metropolitan areas and larger regional cities to attractive, high amenity localities, frequently on the coast (Burnley and Murphy 2004). "Sea change" describes a metaphorical change of life, rather than a literal movement to the sea, although to date much of the migration away from metropolitan centres has been focused on the coast. The popular ABC television series "SeaChange" depicted a common fantasy of making a profound change in our lives – moving to a beautiful, semi rural environment with a small and connected community, perhaps more time to spend with children or our partners. A growing number of people are attempting to realise this dream by leaving metropolitan or inland regional centres for a new life in a coastal town or city. Yet the sustained and rapid population growth associated with this process is causing profound socio-economic and environmental changes impacting on the character, governance and sustainability of coastal communities throughout Australia.

The Move to the Coast

The move to the coast is not a recent phenomenon with significant population flows to non metropolitan coastal communities beginning in the late 1960s (Burnley and Murphy 2004). Over 85% of Australians lived within 50 kilometres of the coastline in 2001 (ABS 2004c), and about 20% of Australians now live in coastal towns and cities other than capital cities (ABS 2004a). Much of the population growth along the coast has been within a three kilometre strip, particularly in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia (Australian State of the Environment Committee 2001). In non metropolitan coastal locations, high levels of growth have rivaled that of metropolitan urban release areas in recent years, particularly in South East Queensland, south of Perth in Western Australia, and the Bass and Surf Coasts in Victoria. The movement of people to non metropolitan coastal settlements in Australia has been described by the demographer Bernard Salt as constituting a "third culture" distinct from the city and the bush (Salt 2003).

Yet coastal urbanisation is not unique to Australia. It is estimated that more than half of the world's population lives within 60km of coastal areas and this is likely to increase to two thirds by 2020 (UNCED 1992, Harvey and Caton 2003). Thus coastal communities of Australia are not the only environmentally sensitive communities undergoing rapid population transformations. Similar communities in many other parts of the world are struggling to accommodate influxes of residents and visitors within their sensitive environments. This raises issues such as: How should such growth be planned for and managed? How can local governments, who have the main responsibility for land use and development planning and the provision of infrastructure and services, protect and enhance the national and international values inherent in coastal regions, while still catering to the needs of their rapidly growing local populations?

The National Sea Change Taskforce

Local councils throughout Australia have begun to ask such questions. In February 2004, 27 CEOs from rapidly growing local government areas met to consider the challenge of growth in sea change communities of coastal Australia. This subsequently led to the formation of the National Sea Change Taskforce in November 2004. This movement has since grown to include over 50 local government authorities in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia (see Appendix 2). One of the key objectives of this organisation is to develop innovative and best practice strategic planning at regional and local levels, to preserve local character and sense of place, integrate coastal management and conservation objectives with economic development, build social capital, and ensure community ownership and participation in key growth decisions.

The research presented in this report will contribute to this objective. It is part of a broader study being conducted by the University of Sydney in partnership with Australian coastal communities represented by the National Sea Change Taskforce. Stage one of the study (the findings of which are presented in this report) analyses the sea change phenomenon in coastal Australia and reviews current planning and governance responses. It is intended to provide a baseline for future research. Stage two will identify international and national best practice in local and regional planning for sea change communities. Stage three will be a longer term study to develop new responses to assist local councils in protecting the character, social capital, and ecological integrity of their communities.

Although many of the issues affecting sea change localities also affect other fast growing or socially disadvantaged communities in somewhat similar ways, we identify several factors that make sea change communities unique:

- Unlike many inland communities in non metropolitan areas of Australia, population growth is not always a positive phenomenon in coastal localities. While many inland areas are also characterised by special environmental and landscape values, the focus of coastal development on the narrow and particularly fragile coastal strip means that environmental impacts in these settings are very significant.
- Coastal areas are subject to more complex policy and legislative requirements than most inland settlements. These range from international treaties and conventions to State coastal policies, terrestrial and marine protected area designations. Local councils are responsible for supporting or implementing many of these requirements through their own plan making and development assessment activities. It can be extremely difficult to reconcile these higher level objectives with the reality of continued pressure for residential and tourism development.
- There is frequently a need to upgrade infrastructure in coastal areas to cater to higher levels of growth. In addition to the financial implications of additional infrastructure, there are also significant environmental impacts. In comparison, many inland areas have been experiencing a decline in population, so often have some capacity to accommodate additional newcomers.
- The need to provide infrastructure for rapidly growing populations is intensified by the need to also provide sufficient infrastructure to cater to peak visitation periods. Yet unlike designated metropolitan growth areas, State assistance with infrastructure provision is minimal for most of the sea change communities represented in this study.
- The seasonal nature of tourism visitation to coastal areas also has flow on implications for housing and employment. In tourist destinations there are likely to be seasonal shortages in affordable rental housing. At the same time, employment opportunities will increase during periods of peak visitation and decline during low seasons.

1.1 Aims and Research Questions

Within this context, this stage of the project aimed to identify the key social, economic, and environmental planning issues facing coastal sea change communities in Australia, and review current responses to these issues. Flowing from this overall aim, the research had four key objectives:

- To define the sea change phenomenon in Australia and document the manifestation of Sea Change in peri and non metropolitan coastal communities;
- To develop a profile of the various types of sea change communities in Australia, drawing on key social, economic, and environmental indicators;
- To review policy and planning responses to sea change in the six Australian States (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia); and
- To identify priorities for policy intervention and further research.

To achieve the overall aim and four key research objectives, the project team sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the key socio economic and environmental characteristics of sea change areas in coastal Australia?
- What are the key planning issues they face?
- How are these issues currently being addressed nationally and through policy and planning initiatives in each State?
- What needs to be done to enhance local and regional planning approaches to sea change areas in Australia?

1.2 Research Methods

A number of sources were used in this project. First, recent data on demographic change in non metropolitan coastal Australia, and research on the governance of coastal areas, is used to develop an overview of the sea change phenomenon. The focus here is on Australian research although the second stage of this project will consider the international context by identifying models of best practice in responding to sudden population growth within environmentally sensitive localities, both in Australia and internationally.

Sea change has affected coastal communities across Australia in different ways. Therefore a key component of the methodology for this study was to capture this variation by identifying a broad typology of the different types of sea change communities in coastal Australia. This typology supports more detailed analysis of the issues affecting particular sea change communities and the sorts of policy responses they require. A sample of 55 local government areas was drawn on as the basis for the typology[4]. The typology was developed by classifying each local government area in the sample according to distance from capital cities and population size. These criteria were chosen because distance from metropolitan centres is a key factor affecting the scale and pace of growth in non-metropolitan areas (O'Connor 2001), and because population size relates to the fundamental character of a community. Our classifications are broadly consistent with the locational framework developed by O'Connor (2001); the hierarchy identified by Haberkorn et al. (2004) who identifies "regional cities" as statistical local areas with populations greater than 100,000; and the description of different sea change localities by Burnley and Murphy (2004). Further information about the typology is contained in Section 3 and Appendix 3.

Broad socio-economic indicators (population trends, age, unemployment, socio economic index of advantage/disadvantage, development activity) and locational data (area, location in relation to capital cities, settlement size) were then analysed in relation to each local government area in the sample and in relation to the broad typology. Australian Bureau of Statistics census and population estimates were principle sources of data for this component of the research.

In order to develop better responses to the issues affecting sea change areas it is necessary to understand the way in which they are currently managed. Another component of this study involved a comparative analysis of relevant Commonwealth and State policies, strategies and legislation relating to planning and management in coastal areas. A sample of local plans was also included in the analysis. The analysis focused on:

- National policy and planning responses to coastal urbanisation;
- State coastal policy directions, legislation, and advisory structures;
- The relationship between State coastal policies and regional and local planning;
- Planning for infrastructure; and,
- Implementation of coastal policy and conservation objectives in local plans.

Priorities for policy intervention in sea change areas (relating to environment and heritage, community wellbeing, economy / tourism, and governance) were then identified. Additional sources of information for this part of the analysis included two workshops with coastal councils (a national Sea Change workshop held in Melbourne on 26/27 May 2004; and a Western Australian workshop held in Rockingham on 1 October 2004), a postal survey of 19 sea change councils (administered by Charles Johnson[5], as part of the Sea Change Summit in May 2004) and reports commissioned by the Sea Change Taskforce and member councils.

[4] We use local government areas as the main unit of analysis in this research as they correspond to the administrative structure of sea change communities involved in the National Sea Change Taskforce.

[5] CEO of the City of Wanneroo Council and member of the interim Executive of the National Sea Change Taskforce.

Finally, we selected five case study local government areas to represent each of the settlements identified in the typology (Wanneroo – Coastal Commuter; Port Stephens – Coastal Getaway; Gold Coast – Coastal City; Hastings – Lifestyle Destination and Robe – Coastal Hamlet) and undertook a more detailed analysis of the social and environmental characteristics of these places and the way in which population growth associated with sea change has impacted these local government areas. As part of the case study process, we undertook interviews with planning and community service staff. The case studies informed our overall analysis and our identification of the matrix of planning issues in Section 5 of this report. The full case study profiles are contained in Appendix 1.

1.3 Structure of the Report

Following this introduction, Section 2 of this report reviews the recent research on demographic change and governance in coastal Australia. Section 3 presents the typology of sea change communities, and outlines their key socio-economic characteristics. Section 4 analyses current policy and planning responses to coastal growth. In conclusion, priorities for policy intervention and further research are identified (Section 5). Data tables and graphs are contained in the appendices.

2. The Sea Change Phenomenon in Coastal Australia

The movement from metropolitan areas and regional cities to non metropolitan and especially coastal areas has been a long term trend, with its origins in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even prior to the 1960s, there had been some retirement from metropolitan areas and from inland farming communities to regional coastal settlements in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria (Burnley and Murphy 2004). Burnley and Murphy (2004) note that between World War I and World War II, holiday homes began to be established in small coastal towns near the major cities, especially Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Historical analyses of migration show that population movements frequently occur in surges or cycles, responding to broader demographic and socio-economic trends (Stimson and Minnery 1998). Such periodic surges are apparent in relation to patterns of non metropolitan coastal migration in Australia over the past four decades. Following early migration to coastal areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a real intensification of growth in the early 1980s. However, this moderated somewhat in the 1990s (Burnley and Murphy 2004). Although demographers have observed a slowing in the rate of migration to some parts of coastal Australia since this time, the rate of population growth in coastal areas remains high in proportional and numerical terms. In many coastal local government areas the rate of growth is equivalent to or higher than that of metropolitan areas (ABS 2004a).

Government responses to coastal urbanisation in non metropolitan areas have been mixed. There have been numerous national and State investigations into coastal management issues over the past 40 years although the most recent comprehensive inquiry was completed by the Resource Assessment Commission (RAC) more than a decade ago in 1993. The inquiry found that several social and economic factors were contributing to population growth in outer and non metropolitan Coastal Cities and towns, including: changing social values; desire for a "healthy" environment; recreation and leisure opportunities; an aging population, tending to retire earlier and relocate to a "lifestyle" destination, often in coastal regions; and structural economic changes, particularly a decline in labour intensive manufacturing and agricultural industries, coinciding with new investment in tourism and real estate and a growth in service industries (RAC 1993). As highlighted in this report, these factors continue to influence population growth in coastal areas.

2.1 Defining the Coast

The "coast", or "coastal zone", can be difficult to define. The Commonwealth and Australian States and Territories all use different legal and policy definitions of the coast, depending on context and management intent. The Resource Assessment Commission Coastal Zone Inquiry held in 1993 used two definitions of the coast, one based on local government boundaries, and the other, on drainage basins or catchments (RAC 1993). The Commission's view was that the coastal zone should be defined according to the nature of the problem being examined and the objectives of management. Consistent with this approach, in this report we define coastal Australia using local administrative boundaries while recognising that certain issues must be addressed on a catchment basis.

2.2 Values of the Coast

Australia's coast represents special values that make it particularly vulnerable to rapid demographic change and urban development. The coast supports a diverse natural environment – beaches and dunes, wetlands, estuaries, hills, mountains and coastal plains, reefs and islands. There are complex interactions between the many species of flora and fauna that depend on the terrestrial and marine ecosystems within the coastal zones. Some of this rich biodiversity is protected in Commonwealth or State / Territory reserves: in 1993 about 10% of the coastal zone (defined according to administrative boundaries), was protected, although 57% was in private ownership (RAC 1993).

There are also many social, cultural, and economic values of the coast for indigenous and non indigenous Australians. The scenic natural beauty and recreational opportunities also make the coastline particularly valuable for residential and tourism development. Other commercial values associated with coastal areas include fisheries and agriculture, certain manufacturing, and mineral and petroleum development (Harvey and Caton 2003, RAC 1993). The Resource Assessment Commission described the coast as an important part of the Australian "ethos" (RAC 2003, 2.6. Holidaying in a coastal resort has been an annual tradition for many generations of Australians; ultimately, many aspire to leave the city for a coastal lifestyle.

2.3 Who are the Sea Changers?

Recent research by the ABS shows that, although retirees contribute to the sea change phenomenon, they are no longer the major drivers of coastal population growth (ABS 2004a). New residents of high growth coastal regions are actually of a younger age profile than Australia as a whole and significantly younger than the existing profile of communities affected by sea change: 79% of new residents in coastal areas are younger than 50, compared with 71% of Australia overall (ABS 2004a). Young adults in their 20s account for 22% of new residents in high growth coastal communities, followed by those in their 30s (17%). Many new residents are families with children: 15% of newcomers are under ten years and 13% under 15 years (ABS 2004a).

However, the younger age of sea changers is not likely to affect the generally higher median age profile of sea change areas in the immediate future because the newcomers represent only a small proportion of the total population. Furthermore, as baby-boomers retire later this decade, the number of retirees moving to the coast (and some inland areas offering high amenity and access to major population centres) is likely to rise again contributing to an overall increase in the rate of population growth in these places.

The majority of new residents moving to sea change areas come from large regional population centres (ABS 2004c). Slightly fewer new coastal residents moved from capital cities and this group was largely comprised of people in the pre-retirement and retirement age groups (55-64 years, 65 years and over) (ABS 2004c).

What Motivates Sea Changers?

Motivations of "sea changers" are often described as a combination of "push" and "pull" factors (ABS 2004c, Stimson and Minnery 1998). "Push" factors are those that encourage people to leave their place of origin, while "pull" factors attract people to a particular destination. Typical "push/pull" factors are employment circumstances, housing costs, and perceived amenity.

The high cost of housing in metropolitan centres is a key "push" factor contributing to the sea change phenomenon (RAC 1993, Marshall et al. 2003). Housing affordability is a major factor affecting the decisions of lower income and income support recipients (the unemployed, single parent households, disabled and aged pensioners) to move to non metropolitan areas (Marshall et al. 2003). However, lifestyle is also an important consideration and most low income movers rate their new homes as better places to live, despite poorer transportation, shopping and other services (Marshall et. al. 2003).

More affluent sea changers realise high capital gains from city housing and "down size" in lifestyle destinations, where property prices are lower. Other sea changers seek more affordable housing in peri metropolitan areas (frequently along the coast) and further a field. Traditionally, some of these people have been motivated by the ideal of an alternative lifestyle in rural areas, particularly in coastal hinterlands of northern New South Wales (Burnley and Murphy 2004). This has been described as part of a broader trend to "downshift" by voluntarily reducing income and consumption levels (Hamilton and Mail 2003).

The increasing numbers of younger sea changers suggests that some are attracted by the new job opportunities in coastal destinations experiencing high population or tourism growth. Furthermore, improvements in transport and communication technology mean that an increasing number of workers do not need to be permanently based in the city, although easy access for partial commuting is important (Marshall et al. 2003).

Research on the motivations of movers to the Gold Coast shows that the "push/pull" model does not fully explain the migration phenomenon (Stimson and Minnery 1998). In addition, a combination of personal circumstances (particularly social networks), and cultural factors (perceptions about a particular place and sense of connection to "reference groups" within it) influence decisions to migrate. The researchers found that many people were influenced to migrate to the Gold Coast to be closer to friends or family who had already moved, suggesting a "chain migration" phenomenon. Previous experience – having visited the Gold Coast before on holiday, also appeared to factor in decisions to migrate there. For longer distance migrants, such as those from Victoria, climate was a key consideration, especially when combined with the poor health of a family member. Employment and business prospects were also important. Interestingly, nearly 20% of retirees responding to a survey conducted by the researchers had either rejoined, or were seeking to rejoin the workforce. This suggests that after taking retirement packages at their place of origin, many retirees re-enter the workforce in their new location (Stimson and Minnery 1998, p. 208).

Nearly 30% of respondents to the Gold Coast survey were likely to undertake another long distance move, or return to their place of origin. More recent research on migration to non metropolitan areas amongst welfare recipients found that up to 12% of low income workers were very likely or somewhat likely to move back to their metropolitan place of origin (Marshall et al. 2003, p203). This was particularly so for those people unable to find employment in their new home.

In summary, a combination of social, economic, and technological changes are encouraging a significant movement of people from metropolitan and inland areas to coastal localities, particularly those localities with good access to capital cities. While the movement is not likely to reverse population growth in Australia's capital cities, a growing proportion of the population will continue to be attracted to sea change destinations.

2.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Non Metropolitan Communities in Coastal Australia

Recent research on the socio-economic characteristics of non metropolitan coastal areas of Australia shows:

- Coastal regions have the highest median age (38 years compared to 35 for Australia overall), have experienced the largest increase in median age over the past census period, and have the highest "elderly dependency ratio"[6] of Australia (24.1 in the populated coastal region of non metropolitan Australia compared to 19 for Australia overall) (ABS 2004a, Hugo 2004).
- There is a lower level of cultural diversity in high growth coastal destinations than in the Australian population overall (ABS 2004c). About 15% of the populations of high growth coastal regions were born outside of Australia, compared to a national figure of 23%.
- Coastal communities in non metropolitan Australia have the highest proportion of low-income households (17.3% compared to 13.9% in Australia overall) (Haberkorn 2004, Hugo 2004). Non metropolitan coastal areas also have the highest proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Eight per cent are receiving labour market benefits compared to 5.9% in Australia overall (Hugo 2004).
- Non metropolitan coastal areas of Australia have the lowest level of people over the age of 15 with a university degree, but a slightly higher number of people with vocational qualifications (Haberkorn et al 2004).

Recent research on spatial concentrations of disadvantage in New South Wales and Victoria found particularly high concentrations of disadvantage on the North Coast of New South Wales and in some coastal areas of Victoria (East Gippsland and Glenelg) (Vinson 2004). The research used a combination of indicators relating to health, education, crime, and income levels. Such findings are consistent with national research on regional growth and socio-economic outcomes (Baum 2002, O'Connor 2004, Stimson et al. 2003). An analysis of 1996 and 2001 census data found that high growth coastal areas of Australia, such as the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, the Fleurieu region in South Australia and Tweed Heads in New South Wales also had high levels of unemployment in 2001 (Baum 2002). (This contrasts with population "hot spots" in metropolitan areas, which generally had low and very low levels of unemployment).

[6] The elderly dependency ratio is the ratio of the elderly population to the working age population (ABS 2004a).

This high unemployment does not appear to be a result of high numbers of welfare recipients migrating to non metropolitan coastal areas but rather fundamental problems within their economic structure (O'Connor 2004). While population and tourism growth does contribute to increased jobs, these jobs are in "consumption based" industries (restaurants, retail, leisure), rather than in productive sectors (Baum 2002). They are also associated with lower incomes, part time and casual work, and seasonal peaks and troughs.

2.5 Local Implications of Coastal Growth

Research on regional and local impacts of demographic change in coastal communities is rather limited. One of the most comprehensive accounts of issues associated with population change in non metropolitan areas is contained in Burnley and Murphy's demographic analysis of the sea change phenomenon in Australia (Burnley and Murphy 2004). They argue that the implications of growth are essentially the same within non metropolitan localities as in cities, emphasising that the key issue is "the technical, professional and political capacities of those charged with managing it" (p. 219). However, they do acknowledge some special challenges associated with growth management in coastal areas. These include the traditionally dispersed and ad hoc pattern of coastal settlement, incremental growth without proper forward planning, the availability of inappropriately zoned urban land, and the difficulties associated with attempting to "downzone". They also note that attempts to restrict growth in popular coastal destinations on environmental grounds can lead to land price inflation and housing affordability problems for lower income residents.

Loss of local character and sense of place are commonly associated with rapid urban development along the coast. Two recent studies have documented the inability of traditional planning instruments and processes to manage change while retaining important elements of local character within small communities (De Jong 2002, Green 2000). Research on tourism impacts within smaller, "low profile" holiday resorts in the south coast of Western Australia highlights similar issues. The pressure to upgrade infrastructure to support increasing tourism demand and property investment by city residents, inevitably leads to the physical and social transformation of small towns (Selwood et al 1995, Sanders 2000). Even when the scale of change is not as extreme as well known examples like Queensland's Gold Coast, impacts on local community structure and social relations are likely to be profound.

Tensions between migrants and existing residents, particularly a mismatch between their values, needs, and expectations were explored in a recent study of the social impacts of population growth in the peri-urban Adelaide region (Ford 2001). The study found that new residents from metropolitan centres often retained close links to the city, and their continued proximity meant they failed to identify with the local community. The origin of migrants – ie. whether they were from metropolitan or rural areas, influenced the extent of conflict with prevailing community values.

Distance from metropolitan centres is a key factor affecting the scale and pace of growth in non metropolitan areas with peri metropolitan areas and areas within an easy three hours drive likely to experience most intense population growth (Burnley and Murphy 2004, O'Connor 2001). This growth is directly related to the metropolitan centre: the "spillover" effect as the city grows beyond existing urban boundaries; the attraction for retirees, "downshifters", and part time or telecommuters of relatively accessible lifestyle regions; and city dwellers investing in "weekenders". Settlement size is another important determinant in population growth because once a certain critical mass is reached new employment opportunities are generated to service the population, attracting more residents to an area. However, tourism and lifestyle destinations can actually outgrow their original appeal, and thus begin a cycle of decline (Selwood et al 1995).

2.6 Coastal Policy, Management and Planning

Research on coastal policy, planning and management in Australia essentially seeks to identify an optimum governance framework to manage the intense development and use pressures (residential, industry and tourism) and protect the significant natural and cultural heritage values associated with the coast. This research is summarised here.

There have been many government studies on the efficacy of management arrangements in the coastal zone over the past 30 years. Major government inquiries have included the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and Arts' 1991 report, "The Injured Coastline" (HORSCERA 1991) and the subsequent Resource Assessment Commission's 1993 Coastal Zone Inquiry (RAC 1993). Two recent texts address coastal governance in Australia (Harvey and Caton 2003, Kay and Alder 1999), as do a number of research articles (eg. Kay et al. 1997, Morcom and Harvey 2002, Thom and Harvey 2000, Thom 2004, Westcott 2004). The focus of this work has been on policy and legislation addressing the management and conservation of environmental processes at the land / sea interface and within coastal catchments rather than the social and economic issues of coastal urbanisation.

Most studies emphasise the need for "Integrated Coastal Management" (ICM) (Kay and Alder 1999, Thom and Harvey 2000). The concept responds to the complex, frequently overlapping, policy and administrative processes that tend to characterise the management of coastal areas (Allmendinger et al. 2002). Integrated management of coastal areas was a key theme at the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED) summit in 1992 and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 focuses specifically on oceans, seas, and coastal areas, emphasising a holistic and precautionary approach to their protection (Harvey and Caton 2003, UNCED 1992).

ICM[7] reflects a broader environmental policy and planning shift away from sectoral management of issues. In line with the principles of environmentally sustainable development, ICM should occur across and between sectors, agencies, and levels of government, between science and management, across the land / sea interface, and inclusive of the needs of all stakeholder groups (Allmendinger et al. 2002, p. 176). It aims to address two problems common to coastal management, particularly in rapidly developing areas: fragmented management arrangements focusing on specific issues – eg. water quality, threatened species; and the cumulative impact of small decisions that in isolation do not represent a significant impact but combine to effect a major change (Commonwealth of Australia 1995).

Consistent with the concept of Integrated Coastal Management, "place based" approaches to urban and environmental planning have been gaining currency amongst land use and social planners. The concept of "place based" planning has many connotations in Australia (Gillen 2004). Broadly speaking, a "place based" approach uses a naturally or socially defined territory or "place" as the unit for planning, so is able to address the spectrum of environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors in a holistic way. Related concepts include "place management" which describes a form of governance that is based on place rather than function, and thus supports integrated policy making, planning, and service provision (Mant 2000). "Place making", refers to the practice of building, or rebuilding, place identity, by focusing on distinctive local features such as topography, landmarks, architecture, cultural traditions and events, sacred sites, and endogenous forms of economic activity.

A place management approach is potentially more comprehensive than ICM, which is concerned specifically with environmental policy and decisions. In addition to addressing environmental issues in a holistic way, place management can extend to the demographic, social, economic, cultural issues within a specific area (such as a local government area or a water catchment). There is increasing interest in the potential application of place based approaches to the multifaceted issues affecting coastal communities. For instance, in 1999, a place manager was introduced to Lake Macquarie in New South Wales, to integrate the work of two local councils and a number of State agencies (Thom and Harvey 2000).

The concept of place management can extend to the design of regulatory urban planning instruments, which use place based controls rather than generic zones, and integrate all of the requirements for a defined locality within the one plan. "Place management" is also used to describe new forms of collaborative, locally driven planning, whereby political communities of place collaboratively address matters of shared concern (Gillen 2004, Healey 1997). Such participatory approaches are likely to be particularly important within a context of rapid change.

[7] ICM is also referred to as "Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)".

2.7 Summary

- Research on demographic change in coastal Australia shows that the movement to non metropolitan coastal areas is a long term process, but has occurred in cycles over the past three decades. Overall population growth in coastal areas remains high, but there are strong regional and State variations.

- Currently, sea changers have a younger age profile than Australians overall and are motivated by a range of "push" and "pull" factors, particularly housing costs, the amenity of coastal areas and employment circumstances. These factors are likely to continue into the foreseeable future however there is also likely to be a new wave of older migrants to lifestyle destinations as baby boomers retire.

- Coastal areas in non metropolitan Australia have the highest proportion of low income households and high levels of unemployment, largely due to fundamental problems within their economic structure, which is predominantly based on consumption driven industries like retail and tourism.

- Research on the impacts of demographic change on existing coastal communities is limited but highlights the potential for tensions between existing and new residents, and the importance of protecting local character and sense of place. There is also a lack of research showing how the broad demographic changes are affecting the range of different community settings affected by the sea change process.

- Research on governance in coastal areas predominantly addresses the management and protection of coastal resources, rather than the broader social and economic issues affecting communities in sea change areas. There has been very little research on the extent to which higher level coastal policy objectives are implemented through local and regional land use planning in Australia.

In this report we begin to address these research gaps, by investigating how the sea change phenomenon affects specific types of sea change communities (in Section 3 following), and by examining the way in which State policy responses to coastal urbanisation in Australia intersect with local and regional planning (Section 4).

3. Profile of Sea Change Communities

In this chapter we present a typology of coastal communities affected by the sea change phenomenon. The first part of the chapter outlines the development of the typology and describes each of the ideal types. The chapter then presents data on population change, socio-economic characteristics, and development activity, to highlight the different issues and challenges affecting sea change communities in Australia.

3.1 Typology of Coastal Communities

In developing the typology, we used distance from metropolitan centre and population size as the primary factors to classify coastal communities affected by the sea change phenomenon. As noted above (Section 1.2), distance from metropolitan centres is a significant determinant of growth (Burnley and Murphy 2004, O'Connor 2001); while population size influences the character of a settlement and can also affect economic diversity and opportunities. Firstly, we classified each of the 55 local government areas in the sample according to distance from State capital cities and size. The population/distance categories used to construct the typology and the local government area data sets used in this analysis are contained in Appendix 3 and 4.

We then combined these categories to arrive at five broad "ideal types":

- Coastal Commuters - suburbanised satellite communities in peri metropolitan locations
- Coastal Getaways, - small to medium coastal towns within 3 hours drive of a capital city
- Coastal Cities, - substantial urban conurbations beyond the State capitals
- Coastal Lifestyle Destinations - predominantly tourism and leisure communities
- Coastal Hamlets - small, remote coastal communities often surrounded by protected natural areas.

Some of these communities represent the whole of a local government area, while others represent particular settlement types within a larger local government area. Many will experience a transition from one type to another over the next two decades – for example, from Coastal Hamlet to Coastal Lifestyle Destination or from Coastal Getaway to Coastal City.

These classifications were then used as a basis for more detailed analysis of population change and socio economic indicators:

- population change between the previous two census periods (1991-1996 and 1996-2001)
- recent population change based on ABS's estimated resident population (ERP) (2002-2003)
- age
- unemployment rates
- industries of employment
- weekly household income, and income growth (1996-2001)
- development activity (BA values and percentage change 2000-2002)
- socio-economic index of disadvantage (2001)

Before presenting the results of this analysis, we turn first to the description of each ideal type.

Coastal Commuters

Coastal Commuters are suburbanised satellite communities in peri or exurban metropolitan locations. Examples include Gosford and Wyong in New South Wales, Pine Rivers and Caboolture in Queensland, Onkaparinga in South Australia, Casey in Victoria and Wanneroo, Mandurah and Rockingham in Western Australia. Most of these areas experienced more than double the national rate of growth between 1996 and 2001. This growth is closely associated with urban pressures – a "spillover effect" from increasingly unaffordable metropolitan areas to designated growth localities on the urban fringe. However, lifestyle factors – the attraction of being near the coast but still within "commuting" distance to the city for work or family – also contribute to the growth of these areas. Therefore they are partially affected by the "sea change" phenomenon.

Typical settlement patterns of Coastal Commuter local government areas are predominantly linear coastline development extending virtually from the outer boundaries of the capital city (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Typical "Coastal Commuter" Settlement Pattern

Caboolture
Casey
Gosford
Kingborough
Mandurah
Onkaparinga
Pine Rivers
Rockingham
Wanneroo
Wyong

Source: The authors

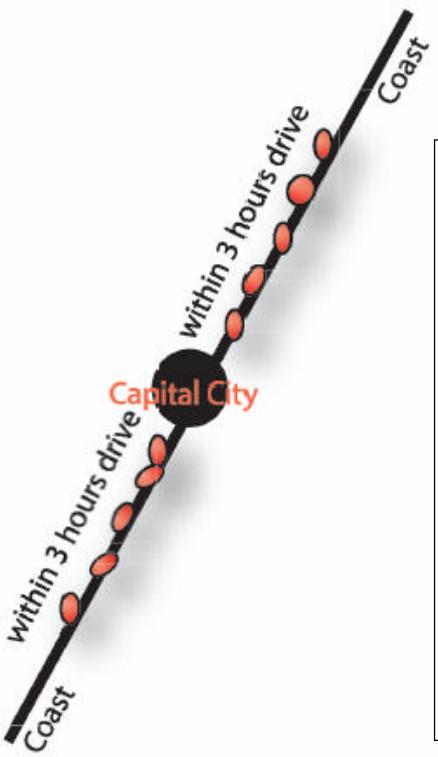
Many of these growth areas are developing around small existing settlements that were once traditional holiday or day trip destinations. There are significant planning implications associated with this fundamental change in character – these range from traditional metropolitan planning considerations associated with transportation, infrastructure, services and employment through to preserving elements of local character and place, protecting sensitive coastlines, and retaining visitor appeal. This is particularly difficult as boundaries between Coastal Commuter areas and adjoining capital cities are increasingly blurred. In a sense these communities are part of the coastal metropolitan strip.

Coastal Getaways

We define Coastal Getaways as local government areas comprising small to medium towns and settlements within approximately three hours drive of a capital city. This proximity means they are attractive locations for domestic tourism, including day trips and weekend "escapes". Examples of Coastal Getaways include Kiama and Port Stephens in New South Wales, Noosa in Queensland, Victor Harbor in South Australia, towns within the Bass and Surf Coast in Victoria, Bunbury and Busselton in Western Australia. Growth in these destinations has been significantly higher than the national and State rates in recent years. For instance, Victor Harbor had an annual rate of growth of 3% between 2002 and 2003 compared with 0.6% for South Australia overall. The Bass and Surf Coasts in Victoria grew at more than double the State rate between 1996 and 2001 and during 2002 and 2003.

Historically, many of these communities were once low key family holiday destinations. Their settlement patterns are typically a small or medium sized centre and or a cluster of smaller towns and villages along the coastline and in surrounding hinterland areas (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Typical "Coastal Getaway" Settlement Pattern



Alexandrina
Bass Coast
Bunbury
Busselton
Caloundra
Colac-Otway
Cooloola
Kiama
Mornington Peninsula
Noosa
Port Stephens
Shoalhaven
South Gippsland
Surf Coast
Victor Harbor
Yorke Peninsula

Source: The authors

Getaways attract the growing number of "telecommuters" and those whose work does not require them to be permanently based in the city. Their accessibility also allows retirees to retain links to family remaining in the city. A high proportion of property owners in these locations are absentee landlords, who own holiday houses or weekenders. The accessibility of Coastal Getaway local government areas explain their current levels of growth which is expected to continue in the longer term.

Coastal Cities

Coastal Cities are substantial urban conurbations with populations greater than 100,000 (after the Australian settlement hierarchy identified by Haberkorn et. al. 2004). They include Newcastle in New South Wales, Cairns, Gold Coast and Maroochy in Queensland, and Greater Geelong in Victoria. Their typical settlement pattern is that of a defined urban core or hierarchy predominantly contiguous of urban centres surrounded by suburban development, which stretches along the coastline (Figure 3.3). Often an area of rural hinterland is included within the local government area boundaries.

Figure 3.3: Typical "Coastal City" Settlement Pattern

Cairns
Gold Coast
Greater Geelong
Maroochy
Newcastle

Source: The authors

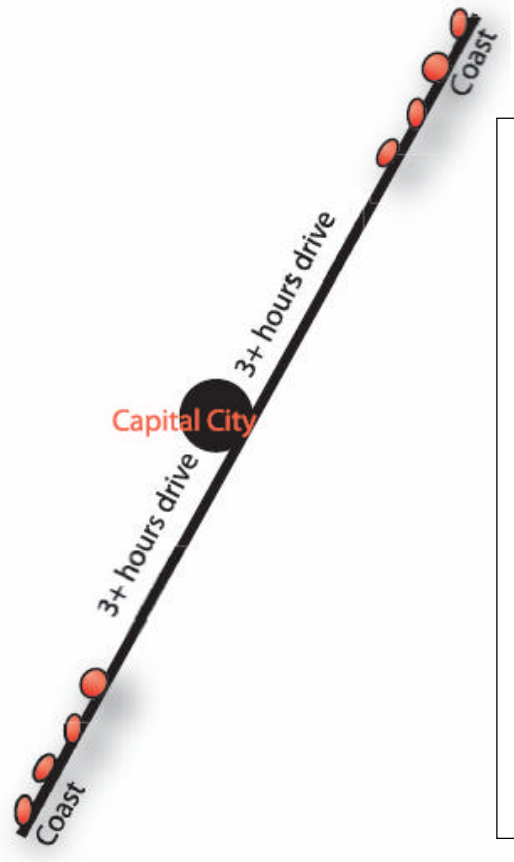
Based on recent ABS population data, the rate of growth in these areas, while numerically substantial, was closer to State averages between 1991-2001, and based on latest population estimates remains marginally above State averages.

Coastal Lifestyle Destinations

Coastal Lifestyle Destinations in this typology are located more than three hours drive from capital cities but otherwise have a similar settlement pattern to Coastal Getaways. Coastal Lifestyle Destinations attract new residents and visitors for their lifestyle, leisure, and tourism appeal. Examples include Coffs Harbour, Byron, and Hastings Shires in New South Wales, Whitsunday in Queensland, and Moyne in Victoria.

Like the Coastal Getaway local government areas, settlement patterns in "lifestyle" areas are characterised by a small or medium sized centre and or a cluster of smaller towns and villages along the coastline and in surrounding rural hinterlands (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Typical "Coastal Lifestyle Destination" Settlement Pattern



Ballina
Bega Valley
Byron
Calliope
Coffs Harbour
Eurobodalla
Glenelg
Greater Taree
Hastings
Kempsey
Livingstone
Mackay
Maryborough
Moyne
Nambucca
Richmond Valley
Thuringowa
Warrnambool
Whitsunday

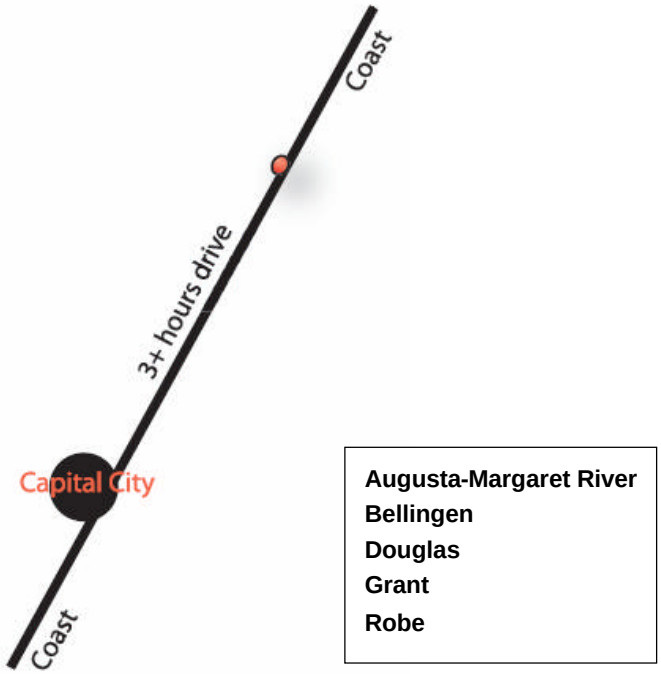
Source: The authors

Population growth between 2002 and 2003 was above State rates of growth in most of the Coastal Lifestyle Destinations in the sample (12 of the 18 Coastal Lifestyle Destinations grew more rapidly than their State), but in general this growth is lower than that of Coastal Getaways and Coastal Commuters.

Coastal Hamlets

We classify Coastal Hamlets as remote local government areas (more than three hours from a capital city) with overall populations of less than 15,000. Robe, and Grant in South Australia are examples, as are Douglas in Queensland, Augusta-Margaret River in Western Australia and Bellingen in northern New South Wales. The typical settlement pattern of these local government areas is that of a small town or grouping of small coastal villages.

Figure 3.5: Typical "Coastal Hamlet" Settlement Pattern



Source: The authors

The relative isolation of Coastal Hamlets has meant that these places have escaped major development pressures to date. Many are also surrounded by conservation areas which act as a growth boundary. However, Coastal Hamlets are likely to be increasingly attractive to sea changers and tourists seeking alternatives to more populated and developed locations. As impacts on biodiversity, habitat, and landscape values are most extensive during the early stages of development within an area, it is particularly important to manage processes of growth in these areas.

3.2 Population Change

Most of the 55 sea change communities included in the sample have experienced population growth above State averages for the past decade. Not all sea change communities have been growing at the same time, however. Rates of growth declined in the period 1996-2001 for some localities, while others experienced an acceleration of growth over the same period.

In general, areas in close proximity to the State capitals are growing at faster rates than those which are more than three hours drive away. The Western Australian local government areas of Mandurah and Wanneroo ('Coastal Commuters') have the fastest estimated population growth of all sea change local government areas between 2002 and 2003. These local government areas were estimated to grow at roughly five times the rate for Western Australia.

Casey ('Coastal Commuter') in Victoria also had one of the highest rates of population growth compared to other sea change local government areas. Casey's estimated rate of population growth was just under five times the rate of population growth for the State of Victoria in 2002-03.

Although Victor Harbor and Alexandrina ('Coastal Getaways') had slower rates of population growth in 2002-03, these local government areas had high growth rates in comparison to total population growth in South Australia (5 and 4.5 times the rate of South Australia's population growth).

Table 3.1 shows the sea change local government areas which have the fastest population growth rates as compared to all other local government areas in the State (ie, a "State Rank" of 1 means that the local government area had the fastest growth rate in the State in the year to June 2003, a "State Rank" of 23 means the local government area has the 23rd fastest growth rate in the State etc). As shown in this table (and discussed previously), the faster growing sea change local government areas are generally local government areas which are located in close proximity to State capital cities. The Coastal Hamlets of Grant and Augusta-Margaret River are also growing at a comparatively rapid rate.

Table 3.1: Fastest Growing Sea Change Local Government Areas (2002-03) - as ranked against all local government areas in the State

Local Government Area	State	Typology	Distance from State Capital	Population Growth Rate (2002-03)	State Rank (2002-03)
Caloundra	QLD	Coastal Getaway	< 3 hours	5.1%	1
Mandurah	WA	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	7.1%	2
Victor Harbor	SA	Coastal Getaway	< 3 hours	3.0%	2
Wanneroo	WA	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	6.3%	3
Pine Rivers	QLD	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	4.9%	3
Alexandrina	SA	Coastal Getaway	< 3 hours	2.7%	3
Kingborough	TAS	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	2.1%	3
Casey	VIC	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	5.7%	4
Grant	SA	Coastal Hamlet	> 3 hours	2.3%	5
Augusta-Margaret Rivers	WA	Coastal Hamlet	> 3 hours	4.7%	6
Maroochy	QLD	Coastal City	< 3 hours	3.7%	6
Gold Coast	QLD	Coastal City	< 3 hours	3.7%	7
Bass Coast	VIC	Coastal Getaway	< 3 hours	3.6%	7
Rockingham	WA	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	3.3%	9
Caboolture	QLD	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	3.3%	10
Surf Coast	VIC	Coastal Getaway	< 3 hours	2.5%	10

Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

< 3 hours drive from State capital city

> 3 hours drive from State capital city

The slower growing sea change local government areas tend to be more remote Coastal Lifestyle Destinations. As shown in Table 3.2 below the majority of which are located in New South Wales. Some of these communities, such as Byron, Ballina, and Cooloola experienced relatively high rates of growth between 1991 and 1996, suggesting that they are currently experiencing a slowing of the growth cycle. Other local government areas that have previously experienced high levels of growth include Noosa, Whitsunday, Byron and Coffs Harbour. These areas experienced high rates of growth between 1991 and 1996, which has since moderated.

Table 3.2: Slowest Growing Sea Change Local Government Areas (2002-03) - as ranked against all local government areas in the State

Local Government Area	State	Typology	Distance from State Capital	Population Growth Rate (2002-03)	State Rank (2002-03)
Richmond Valley	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	-0.6%	129
Nambucca	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	-0.4%	117
Bellingen	NSW	Coastal Hamlet	> 3 hours	0.2%	80
Gosford	NSW	Coastal Commuter	< 3 hours	0.3%	71
Glenelg	VIC	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	-0.6%	67
Robe	SA	Coastal Hamlet	< 3hours	-1.5%	64
Maryborough	QLD	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	0.8%	61
Bunbury	WA	Coastal Getaway	< 3hours	0.5%	56
Kiama	NSW	Coastal Getaway	< 3hours	0.7%	51
Moyne	VIC	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	0.2%	49
Mackay	QLD	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	1.3%	43
Kempsey	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	0.9%	41
Ballina	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours*	1.1%	39
Bega Valley	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours	1.2%	34
Cooloola	QLD	Coastal Getaway	< 3hours	1.9%	29
Byron	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	> 3 hours*	1.4%	28
Shoalhaven	NSW	Coastal Getaway	< 3hours	1.5%	26

Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

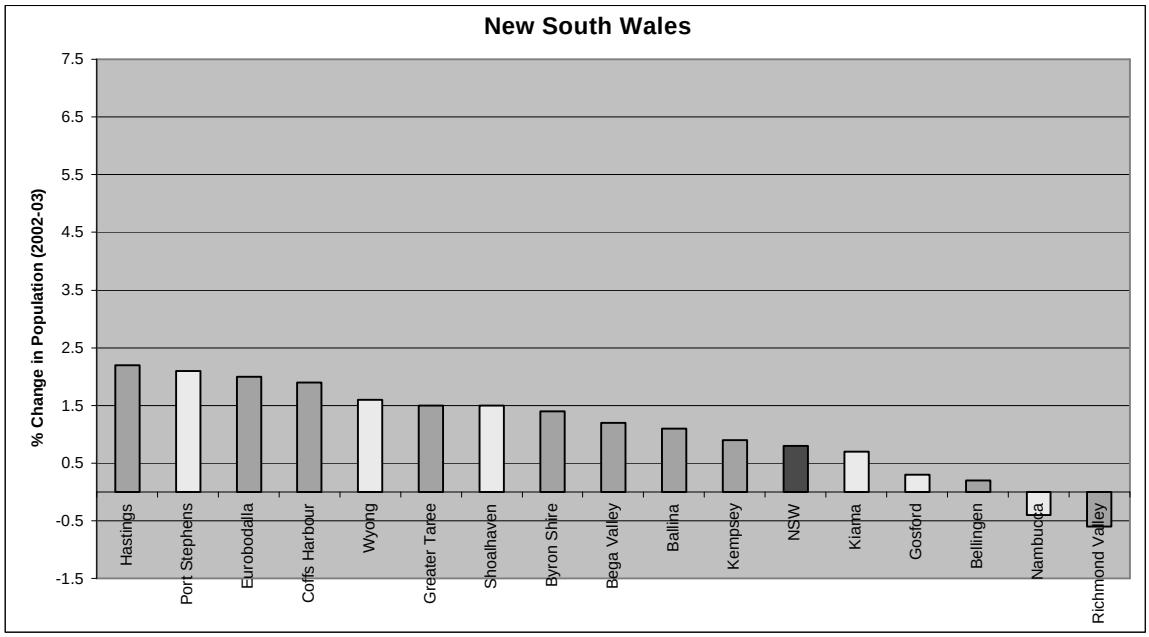
< 3 hours drive from State capital city

> 3 hours drive from State capital city

For a more detailed picture of recent population change, the population growth rates experienced by all sea change local government areas during 2002 and 2003 are shown in the figures below, grouped by State. In these graphs the local government areas are benchmarked against the rate of total State population growth (highlighted in black). In order to compare the rate of growth between States, the scale of the y-axis is the same in each figure.

* The recent upgrading of the Pacific Highway means that these areas are now less than a three hour drive from Brisbane. However, they are remote from the NSW State Capital of Sydney.

Figure 3.6: Change in Estimated Resident Population (2002-03), New South Wales Sea Change Local Government Areas

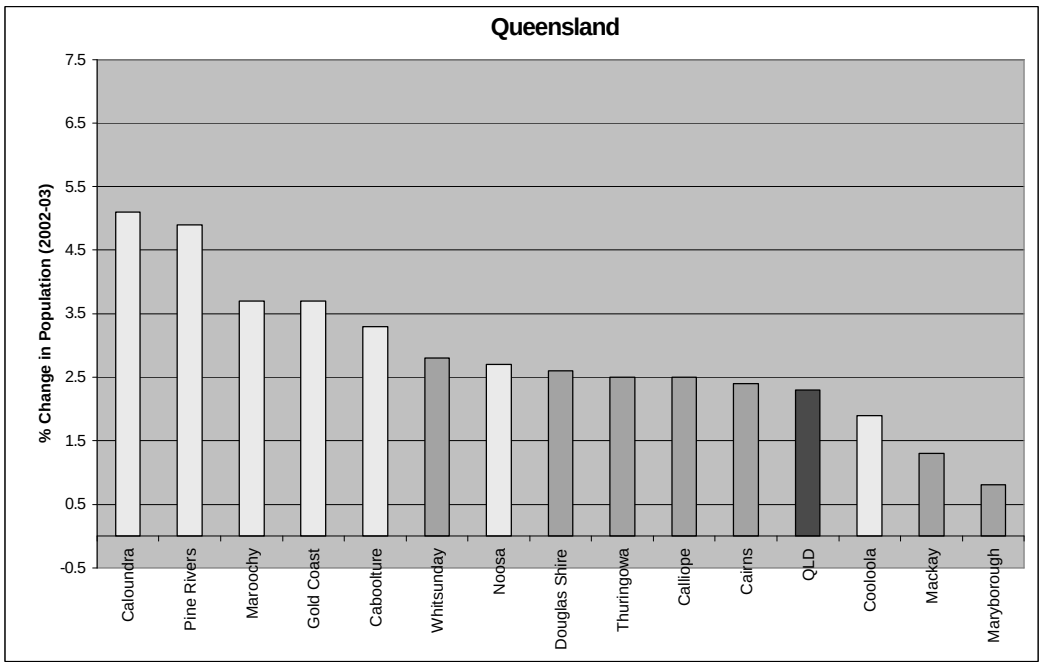


Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

< 3 hours drive from Sydney

> 3 hours drive from Sydney

Figure 3.7: Change in Estimated Resident Population (2002-03), Queensland Sea Change Local Government Areas

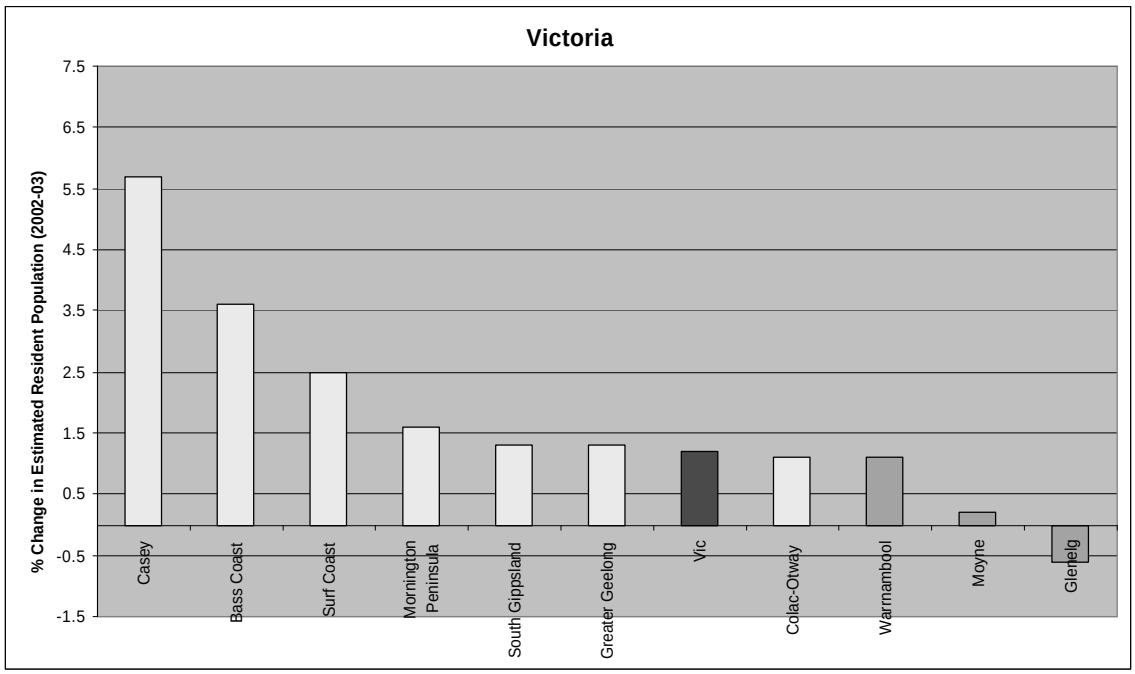


Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

< 3 hours drive from Brisbane

> 3 hours drive from Brisbane

Figure 3.8: Change in Estimated Resident Population (2002-03), Victorian Sea Change Local Government Areas

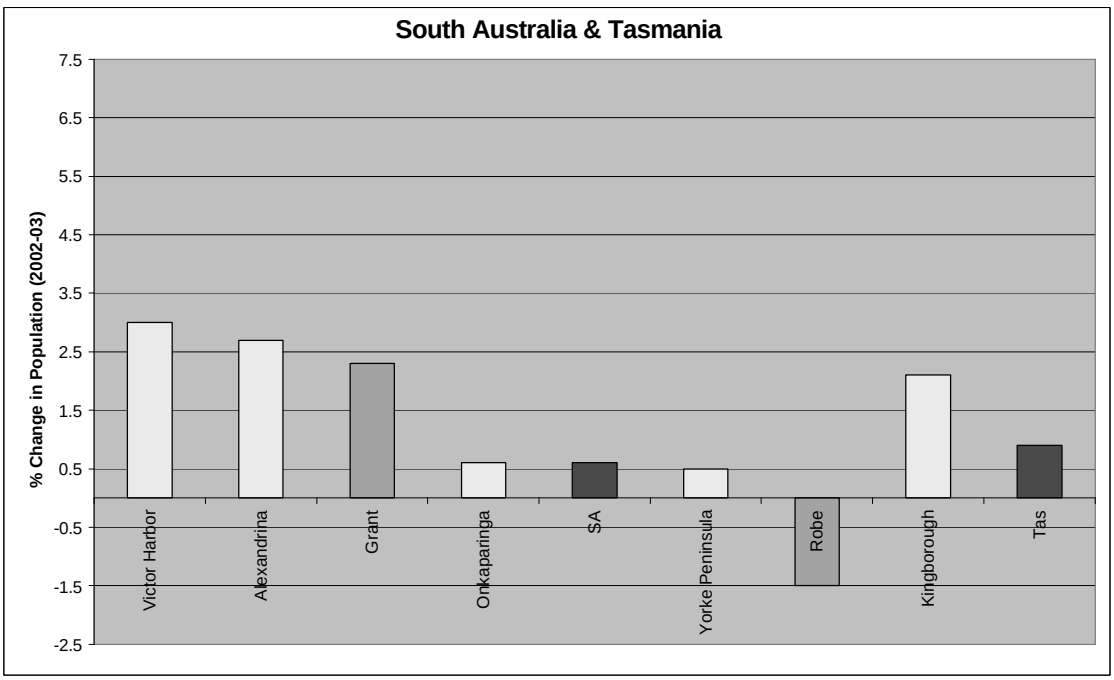


Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

< 3 hours drive from Melbourne

> 3 hours drive from Melbourne

Figure 3.9: Change in Estimated Resident Population (2002-03), South Australian and Tasmanian Sea Change Local Government Areas

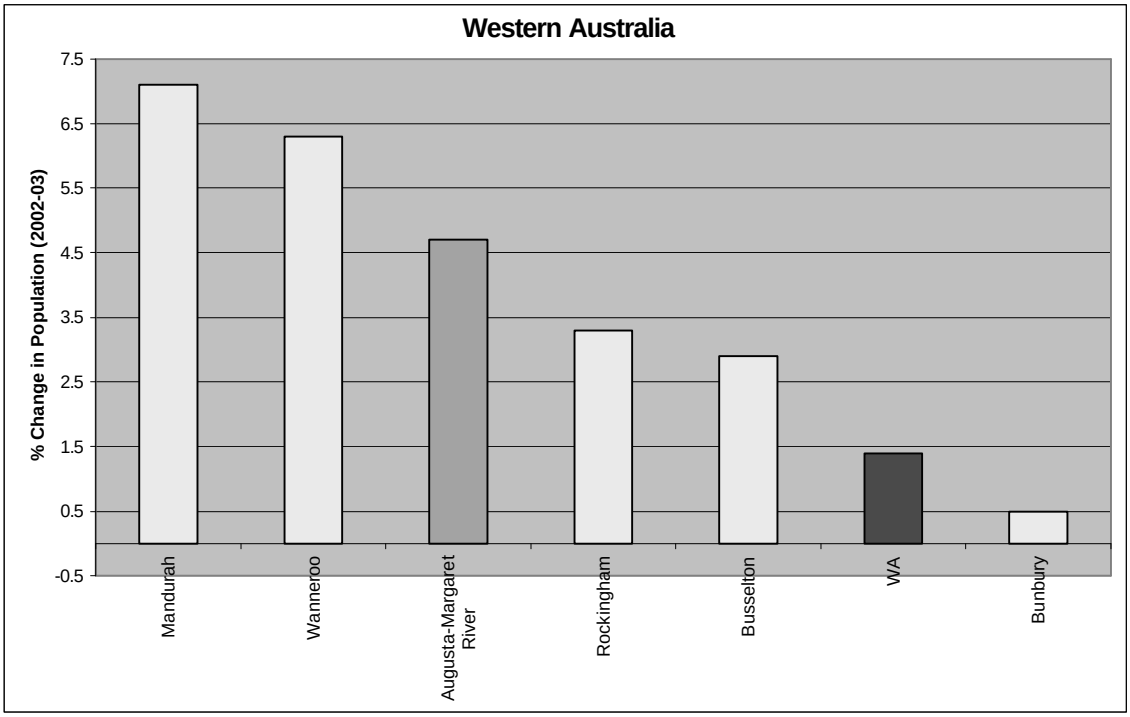


Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

< 3 hours drive from Adelaide/Hobart

> 3 hours drive from Adelaide/Hobart

Figure 3.10: Change in Estimated Resident Population (2002-03), Western Australian Sea Change Local Government Areas



Source: Derived from ABS (2004b), Regional Population Growth 2002-03, Australia and New Zealand (Cat. No. 3218.0).

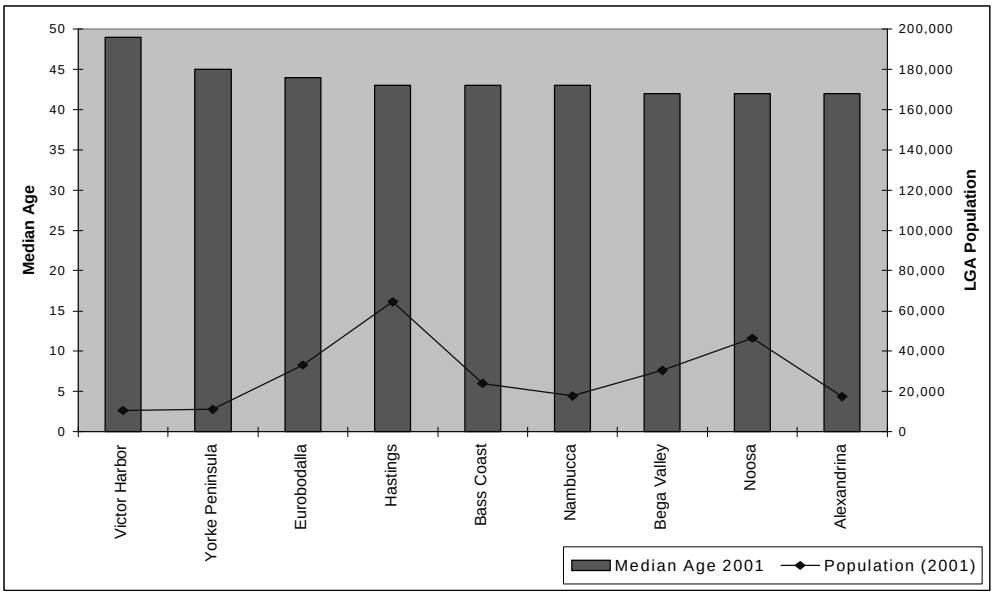
3.3 Age

Most sea change communities have a higher median age and are ageing at a more rapid rate than the total population in each State. This trend is most pronounced in New South Wales where sea change local government areas have a median age ranging from 37 to 43 years, compared to the overall median age of 35 years for New South Wales in total. The median age in the majority of New South Wales sea change communities increased by between two and four years between 1996 and 2001, compared to the median age for New South Wales overall, which increased by only one year during the same period.

The oldest local government areas are Coastal Getaway or Coastal Lifestyle Destinations. They also tend to be smaller areas with a lower population base than those local government areas which are characterised by a younger population. This suggests that older people are choosing smaller and more remote places to retire. However, it means that they are moving to communities with lower levels of services - a problem that intensifies as they age or if a partner dies.

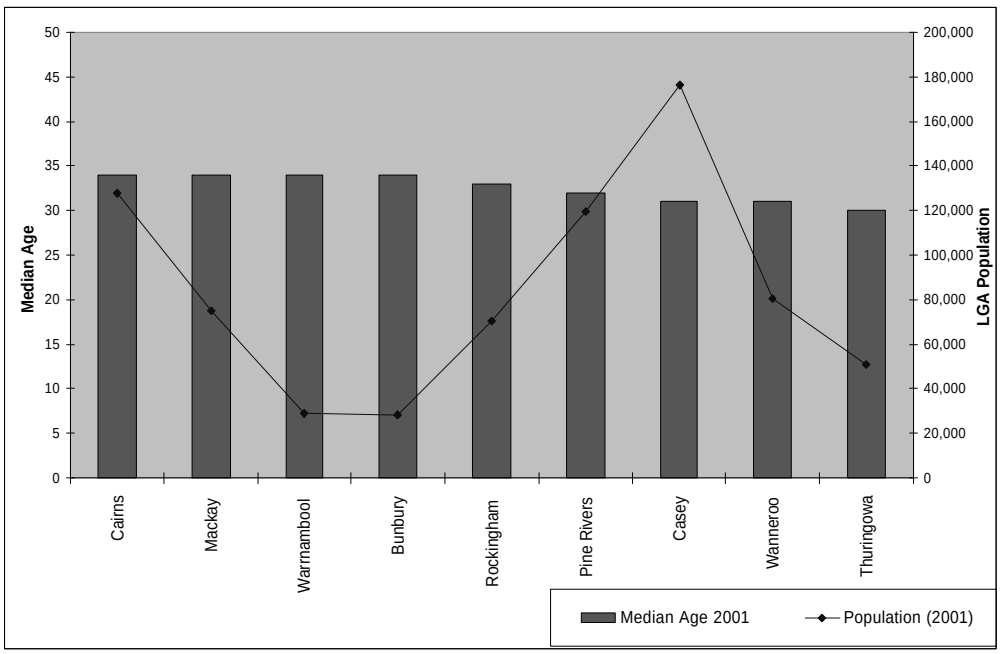
The column graphs below show the sea change communities with the highest and lowest median age. The line graphs indicate the population of each local government area. The majority of the youngest local government areas are Coastal Commuters - located within 1.5 hours of the nearest capital city. These local government areas tend to have larger population bases and higher population densities. A number of the youngest sea change local government areas are growing at extremely rapid rates – eg, Wanneroo, Casey and Pine Rivers.

Figure 3.11: 'Oldest' Sea Change Local Government Areas by Population (2001)



Source: Derived from ABS (2002) Census Basic Community Profiles (Cat. No. 2001.0)

Figure 3.12: 'Youngest' Sea Change Local Government Areas by Population (2001)



Source: Derived from ABS (2002) Census Basic Community Profiles (Cat. No. 2001.0)

Despite the overall higher median age in sea change communities, dependent children aged less than 15 years make up the greatest proportion of the population in most sea change communities. People aged between 15 and 44 years also contribute to a large proportion of the population of these local government areas. However there was little growth in the number of people in these age groups. This is consistent with population growth in these areas being driven by migration rather than natural increases through birth rates.

The younger age groups are most dominant in fast growing Coastal Commuters – such as Wanneroo, Casey, Pine Rivers, and Rockingham. Some Coastal Lifestyle Destinations also had a significant proportion of younger people aged 25-34 years - eg, Thuringowa, Whitsunday and Mackay, suggesting that younger people of working age are moving to these areas in search of employment opportunities. Overall, however, the numbers of people aged 25-34 years is declining in most Coastal Getaway and Coastal Lifestyle Destinations (particularly Victor Harbor, Nambucca, Yorke Peninsula, Hastings, Bega Valley and Greater Taree), suggesting a lack of employment and educational opportunities for younger people. In many cases the failure to retain working aged groups leads to employers not electing to move into the communities because of the worker exodus, and thus creating a syndrome of people leaving because they can't find jobs.

The 45-54 year age group was the fastest growing age group in most sea change communities between 1996 and 2001, particularly in Coastal Lifestyle Destinations and Coastal Getaways. Byron (growth of 4.2%) and Surf Coast (growth of 3.2%) had the highest growth in this age group between 1996 and 2001. The Coastal Hamlets of Robe and Douglas were the only coastal local government areas to experience a decline in people of this age. There was also significant growth in people aged 55- 64 years in the majority of sea change local government areas. All sea change areas in our sample experienced positive growth in this age group. The Coastal Commuters of Pine Rivers and Onkaparinga as well as Victor Harbor (Coastal Getaway) experienced the most rapid growth of 55-64 year olds with growth rates of between 1.9% and 2.4% in the period 1996-2001. Coastal Getaways tend to have the largest proportions of people aged 55-64 years (particularly Yorke Peninsula, Victor Harbor, Alexandrina and Bass Coast where between 13% and 15% of their populations were aged 55-64 years in 2001).

Of all the communities in our sample, Victor Harbor has by far the greatest proportion of people aged 65-74 years (15% in 2001). This age-group is also most dominant in other Getaway communities such as Yorke Peninsula and Bass Coast. Currently, people aged 75 years and over are not a dominant group within sea change local government areas (making up less than 10% of the population in most local government areas) - Victor Harbor is an exception where people aged 75 years and over made up 14% of the total population in 2001. However, the number of people aged 75 years and over increased at a comparatively rapid rate in most sea change local government areas between 1996 and 2001 with all communities experiencing positive growth in this age group. Robe, Nambucca and Ballina experienced the most rapid growth in people older than 75 years. This trend will continue as the 55-64 year cohort grows older. An increase in all of the older age cohorts is likely as the baby boomer generations begin to retire and age in sea change localities.

3.4 Unemployment[8]

Unemployment in most sea change local government areas included in the sample is much higher than State and national unemployment rates. The majority of sea change communities have a higher unemployment rate than non-metropolitan Australia (8.4%) and populated inland regions (7%) (Haberkorn et al. 2004). Unemployment rates tend to be highest in Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, although all typologies in the sample include communities with both high and low unemployment. Twenty-one of the 55 local government areas in the sample had unemployment rates greater than 10% in 2001. Nambucca and Kempsey in northern New South Wales had the highest rates (18.3% and 16.5% respectively). Unemployment is generally lower in Coastal Hamlets than other types of sea change communities.

Consistent with national trends, unemployment in most sea change local government areas decreased between the 1996 and 2001 censuses. However, in 15 of the local government areas in the sample, unemployment fell more slowly than State unemployment rates (Table 3.4 following). Many of these local government areas are located more than 3 hours from State capital cities.

[8] Recent unemployment data was provided by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR 2004) and is contained in Table A4.1 (Appendix 4). These figures are calculated at statistical local area (SLA), not local government area (LGA) level and are therefore not directly comparable to the remainder of the data. Despite this difference in spatial classification, the more recent unemployment rates indicate similar trends in unemployment as those during the period 1996-2001.

Table 3.3: Sea Change Local Government Areas with an Unemployment Rate Greater Than 10% in 2001

Local Government Area	Typology	Unemployment Rate (2001)	Change in Unemployment (1996-2001)
Nambucca	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	18.3%	-1.0%
Kempsey	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	16.5%	-3.1%
Bellingen	Coastal Hamlet	14.6%	-4.0%
Byron	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	14.4%	-4.8%
Coffs Harbour	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	13.1%	-3.7%
Eurobodalla	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	13.0%	-3.3%
Mandurah	Coastal Commuter	12.6%	-1.5%
Richmond Valley	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	12.5%	-1.6%
Greater Taree	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	12.2%	-2.1%
Maryborough	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	11.6%	-1.7%
Caloundra	Coastal Getaway	11.4%	-4.1%
Maroochy	Coastal City	11.2%	-3.0%
Noosa	Coastal Getaway	11.1%	-3.9%
Cooloola	Coastal Getaway	11.1%	-2.9%
Shoalhaven	Coastal Getaway	11.1%	-3.3%
Newcastle	Coastal City	11.1%	-1.3%
Hastings	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	10.9%	-5.2%
Caboolture	Coastal Commuter	10.9%	-1.4%
Rockingham	Coastal Commuter	10.2%	-0.3%
Ballina	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	10.1%	-2.5%
Wyong	Coastal Commuter	10.0%	-2.5%

Source: Derived from ABS (2003) Time Series Profiles (Cat. No. 2003.0)

Table 3.4: Sea Change Local Government Areas with an Unemployment Rate which is falling more slowly than State Unemployment (1996-2001)

Local Government Area	Typology	Unemployment Rate (2001)	Change in Unemployment (1996-2001)
Gosford	Coastal Commuter	7.4%	-1.4%
Newcastle	Coastal City	11.1%	-1.3%
Nambucca	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	18.3%	-1.0%
NSW	TOTAL	7.2%	-1.6%
Whitsunday	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	6.6%	-1.3%
Calliope	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	7.7%	-1.1%
Pine Rivers	Coastal Commuter	5.8%	-0.7%
Thuringowa	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	8.0%	-0.7%
Cairns	Coastal City	7.8%	-0.4%
Mackay	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	8.5%	-0.1%
QLD	TOTAL	8.2%	-1.4%
Grant	Coastal Hamlet	5.3%	-2.0%
SA	TOTAL	7.6%	-2.8%
Colac-Otway	Coastal Getaway	5.5%	-2.4%
Moyne	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	4.8%	-2.4%
Glenelg	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	7.9%	-2.3%
South Gippsland	Coastal Getaway	6.0%	-1.9%
Casey	Coastal Commuter	6.1%	-1.5%
VIC	TOTAL	6.8%	-2.6%

Source: Derived from ABS (2003) Time Series Profiles (Cat. No. 2003.0)

3.5 Employment by Industry

Employment in consumption based industries such as retail, and to a lesser degree, cafes, restaurants and accommodation sectors increased in most local government areas in the sample consistent with recent economic analyses of Australia's non metropolitan coastal regions (O'Connor 2004, Stimson et al. 2003, Taylor and Birrell 2003). Employment in construction, property and business sectors also increased, largely at the expense of productive industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing. While some Coastal Commuters, Coastal Cities and Lifestyle Destinations such as Onkaparinga, Greater Geelong, Casey and Glenelg continue to have a strong manufacturing base, employment in this industry appears to be declining in these communities.

Employment in tourism related industries such as accommodation, cafes and restaurants is rarely the highest single sector in sea change localities, however. In 2001, the highest rate of employment in this industry (21.6%) was in the Coastal Hamlet of Douglas. This was followed by Robe (19.5%), although employment in agriculture, forestry and fisheries exceeds tourism in Robe (34.6%) (Table A4.1, Appendix 4).

Agriculture, forestry and fishing are major sectors of employment for the Coastal Hamlets, as well as some of the smaller and more remote Victorian and South Australian Coastal Lifestyle Destinations (eg, South Gippsland, Moyne, Yorke Peninsula). However, in the majority of these cases, employment in this industry declined between 1996 and 2001. Exceptions include Augusta-Margaret River, where this sector grew by 1.2% between 1996 and 2001, perhaps due to the developing viticulture industry.

3.6 Income

As noted above, regional coastal Australia has lower income levels than the Australian population overall. This situation is reflected in the sample of local government areas included in this study. Of particular concern is that the situation is not improving for the poorest local government areas, where there was little to no income growth over the past census period (Table 3.5). In the local government areas with the highest median weekly income, income is growing at a greater rate.

The "poorest" local government areas tend to have smaller populations. The majority of these local government areas are in New South Wales and are situated beyond three hours drive from Sydney. The "richest" Sea change local government areas are most commonly larger Coastal Commuters or Coastal Cities. Note that in this case "rich" is relative to other coastal localities – few of the "richer" local government areas identified on this table exceeded the national median household income of $700-$799.

Table 3.5: 'Poorest' Sea Change Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	State	Distance from State Capital	Population (2003)	Median Weekly Household Income 2001	Difference 1996-2001
Victor Harbor	SA	1.5-3hours	0-15k	$400-$499	$0
Kempsey	NSW	3-6hours	25-50k	$400-$499	$0
Yorke Peninsula	SA	1.5-3hours	0-15k	$400-$499	$100
Bass Coast	VIC	1.5-3hours	25-50k	$400-$499	$100
Bellingen	NSW	6+hours	0-15k	$400-$499	$100
Nambucca	NSW	6+hours	15-25k	$400-$499	$100
Alexandrina	SA	0-1.5hours	15-25k	$500-$599	$100
Mandurah	WA	0-1.5hours	50-100k	$500-$599	$100
Shoalhaven	NSW	1.5-3hours	50-100k	$500-$599	$100
Cooloola	QLD	1.5-3hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Caloundra	QLD	1.5-3hours	50-100k	$500-$599	$100
Greater Taree	NSW	3-6hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Eurobodalla	NSW	3-6hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Bega Valley	NSW	3-6hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Hastings	NSW	3-6hours	50-100k	$500-$599	$100
Maryborough	QLD	3-6hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Richmond Valley	NSW	6+hours	15-25k	$500-$599	$100
Ballina	NSW	6+hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Byron	NSW	6+hours	25-50k	$500-$599	$100
Coffs Harbour	NSW	6+hours	50-100k	$500-$599	$100

Source: Derived from ABS (2003) Time Series Profiles (Cat. No. 2003.0)

Table 3.6: 'Richest' Sea Change Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	State	Distance from State Capital	Population (2003)	Median Weekly Household Income 2001	Difference 1996-2001
Kiama	NSW	1.5-3hours	15-25k	$800-$899	$200
Grant	SA	3-6hours	0-15k	$800-$899	$200
Casey	VIC	0-1.5hours	100k+	$800-$899	$100
Thuringowa	QLD	6+hours	50-100k	$800-$899	$100
Pine Rivers	QLD	0-1.5hours	100k+	$800-$899	$0
Gosford	NSW	0-1.5hours	100k+	$700-$799	$200
Surf Coast	VIC	0-1.5hours	15-25k	$700-$799	$200
Rockingham	WA	0-1.5hours	50-100k	$700-$799	$200
Onkaparinga	SA	0-1.5hours	100k+	$700-$799	$100
Kingborough	TAS	0-1.5hours	25-50k	$700-$799	$100
Wanneroo	WA	0-1.5hours	50-100k	$700-$799	$100
Douglas	QLD	6+hours	0-15k	$700-$799	$100
Whitsunday	QLD	6+hours	15-25k	$700-$799	$100
Mackay	QLD	6+hours	50-100k	$700-$799	$100
Cairns	QLD	6+hours	100k+	$700-$799	$0

Source: Derived from ABS (2003) Time Series Profiles (Cat. No. 2003.0)

3.7 Development Activity

Almost all sea change communities experienced an increase in development activity between 2000 and 2002. As expected, there is a direct correlation between population size, value of building approvals and the change in value of building approvals in the areas examined[9]. Generally, sea change communities with larger populations had building approvals of greatest value, and also the greatest percentage increase in value in 2002. This is often the case with Coastal Commuters. In these contexts development activity is an expected component of metropolitan expansion. Some Coastal Getaways also had significant development activity (particularly Shoalhaven and Port Stephens).

The tables below show those sea change communities with the greatest change in the value of building approvals and those local areas which experienced the least change in the value of building approvals. As shown in the tables, although a number of sea change communities in the sample recorded increases in building approval value above 100%, the greatest decrease in value recorded was only -19.9% for Moyne in Victoria.

Table 3.7: Greatest Increase in Development Activity – Sea Change Local Government Areas with Greater Than 100% Increase in the Value of Building Approvals (BAs)

Statistical Local Area	Total value of BAs - 2002 ($million)	% Change in BAs 2000-02
Calliope	44.25	217.9%
Caboolture	193.93	201.9%
Kingborough	48.49	153.7%
Grant	13.54	143.5%
Gosford	611.74	133.1%
Mandurah	230.13	125.8%
Greater Geelong	649.07	121.7%
Caloundra	373.12	119.9%
Rockingham	203.13	119.1%
Pine Rivers	311.28	103.2%

Source: Derived from ABS (2000-02) Building Approvals (Cat. No. 8731.1-6)

Table 3.8: Least Change in Development Activity – Sea Change Local Government Areas with Less Than 10% Change in the Value of Building Approvals (BAs)

Statistical Local Area	Total value of BAs - 2002 ($million)	% Change in BAs 2000-02
Richmond Valley	7.5	7.9%
Bellingen	13.33	4.8%
Thuringowa	85.99	2.8%
Whitsunday	62.28	-2.1%
Robe	3.79	-8.7%
Busselton	88.72	-11.3%
Nambucca	15.51	-12.2%
Moyne	22.39	-19.9%

Source: Derived from ABS (2000-02) Building Approvals (Cat. No. 8731.1-6)

[9] Building approvals data is published by the ABS and provides the total value of private dwelling units approved (including the value of new houses and residential buildings, as well as alterations and additions to houses and residential buildings). The data is available at statistical local area level. It is noted that statistical local areas are not always directly comparable to local government areas. However, despite the difference in spatial classification, building approvals data provides a useful contrast in the amount of development activity between sea change communities in the sample.

3.8 Relative Socio-Economic Advantage/Disadvantage

The ABS index of relative socio-economic advantage/disadvantage provides a comprehensive measure of socio-economic outcomes within particular areas. This index is derived from the 2001 Census data and measures aspects of social and economic conditions within each local government area. Indicators used are income, educational attainment, unemployment, and skilled occupations. The index value is used to rank local government areas in terms of advantage/disadvantage. The average index value across Australia is 994. An index value greater than 994 therefore indicates that an area is more advantaged than the Australian average, and a value below 994 indicates that an area is more disadvantaged than the Australian average (ABS 2004d).

The majority of the sea change local government areas are relatively disadvantaged in comparison to the Australian average index value (Table A4.1, Appendix 4). Only 7 of the 55 local government areas in the sample (Kiama, Gosford, Pine Rivers, Douglas, Surf Coast, Mornington Peninsula and Kingborough) are considered to be more advantaged than the Australian average. Even in these cases the rate of comparative advantage is generally not significant. All other local government areas are experiencing relative socio-economic disadvantage. As shown in Table 3.9, Richmond Valley, Kempsey and Nambucca in northern New South Wales are experiencing the most severe socio-economic disadvantage relative to the Australian average and in comparison to the value for populated coastal areas (969) and regional cities (985) (ABS 2004d; Haberkorn et al 2004).

Table 3.9: Ten Most 'Disadvantaged' Sea Change Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	State	Typology	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage/Disadvantage
Richmond Valley	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	884.8
Kempsey	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	886.9
Nambucca	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	888.9
Cooloola	QLD	Coastal Getaway	902.2
Yorke Peninsula	SA	Coastal Getaway	904.2
Maryborough	QLD	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	910.9
Greater Taree	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	912.7
Caboolture	QLD	Coastal Commuter	925.1
Eurobodalla	NSW	Coastal Lifestyle Destination	928.1
Bellingen	NSW	Coastal Hamlet	928.5
Populated Coastal Areas			969.0
Regional Cities			985.0
Australian Average			994.0

Source: ABS (2004d) Regional Profiles (Cat. No. 1379.0.55.001); Haberkorn et al. 2004.

3.9 Summary

- We have identified five main types of community affected by the sea change phenomenon in Australia: Coastal Commuters, Coastal Getaways, Coastal Cities, Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, and Coastal Hamlets. Coastal Commuters and Coastal Getaways, particularly in Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia, experienced the most rapid population growth in the period 2002-03. There is an apparent slowing of growth rates in most New South Wales and Queensland sea change communities (compared to 1991-1996), although the majority continue to grow at a faster pace than State averages.

- Most sea change localities have ageing populations and are ageing at a more rapid rate than the total population of each State. This is expected to continue as baby boomers begin to retire and move to coastal regions. However, the largest numerical groups in the majority of sea change communities are dependents and working-age cohorts, particularly in coastal commuting areas.

- Unemployment in most sea change areas is higher than State averages and 21 local government areas in the sample had unemployment rates above 10% in 2001. Employment in the consumption based industries of retail, restaurants and accommodation is increasing at the expense of manufacturing, agriculture, fishing and forestry. There are lower incomes than State levels in most of the communities in the sample, particularly in smaller population centres, and greater overall levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

- Key findings in relation to specific sea change community types include:

    - Growth in Coastal Commuter areas was generally double the national rate of growth between 1996 and 2001. Coastal Commuters tend to have a substantially lower median age than Australia overall and much lower age profiles than that of other sea change community types. For example, Casey in Victoria and Wanneroo in Western Australia had a median age of 31 in 2001, and Pine Rivers in Queensland had a median age of 32, compared to the national median of 35. Gosford and Wyong in New South Wales are exceptions to this trend with a median age of 38 and 37 respectively, reflecting a long term tradition of retirement to these areas.
    - Growth in Coastal Getaway destinations has been significantly higher than the national and State rates in recent years. For instance, Victor Harbor had an annual rate of growth of 3% between 2002 and 2003 compared with 0.6 for South Australia overall. The Bass and Surf Coasts in Victoria grew at more than double the State rate between 1996 and 2001 and during 2002 and 2003.
    - Coastal Getaways tend to have a much higher median age than Australia overall and are aging at a much faster rate. The highest median ages are recorded in Victor Harbor (49 years, a change of 4 years between 1996 and 2001); Yorke Peninsula (45) and Bass Coast (43). Most Getaways have lower median household incomes than Australia overall, with the lowest incomes recorded in the Bass Coast and Victor Harbor ($400-$499 per week compared to $700-$799 for Australia). Unemployment is more significant in New South Wales and Queensland Getaways.
    - The rate of growth in Coastal Cities, while numerically substantial, is closer to State averages. Coastal Cities have lower median household incomes than Australia overall, with the exception of Cairns, where the median is $700-799 (equivalent to the national median).
    - Coastal Lifestyle Destinations have significantly higher median ages than Australia overall. The highest median ages recorded in 2001 were Eurobodalla (44 years), Nambucca and Hastings (43 years). Exceptions are Thuringowa (30) and Warrnambool (34). All Coastal Lifestyle Destinations have lower socio-economic indexes than Australia overall (994). The lowest indexes are in the northern New South Wales communities of Kempsey (886.9) and Nambucca (888.9), corresponding with very high rates of unemployment in these communities in 2001 (Nambucca, 18.3% and Kempsey, 16.5%)

- Agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors remain important for Coastal Hamlets (34.6% employment in this industry in Robe and 25% in Grant) but declined markedly in Robe between 1996 and 2001. Tourism is also an important industry in these communities (particularly in Augusta Margaret River (10.9%) Robe (14.2%) and Douglas (21.6) compared to the national rate of employment in these sectors (4.9%). Coastal Hamlets also have higher median ages yet their small population base and remote locality mean that servicing the needs of an aging population is likely to become increasingly difficult.

4. Policy and Planning Framework

In this section we review existing policy and planning responses to the issues affecting coastal communities in Australia. The information presented here is drawn from a review of national and State policy and planning instruments conducted by the researchers, a sample of local plans, and a postal survey of 19 sea change councils (administered by Charles Johnson[10] as part of the Sea Change Summit in May 2004). We begin with an overview of national policy and legislation relevant to coastal areas and outline key international treaties entered into by the Commonwealth government. Many of these treaties have implications for local government planning. We then summarise State coastal policy directions and their relationships to regional and local planning. We include in this section an overview of the planning provisions for infrastructure in each State. The final part of this chapter compares the way in which State coastal policy is implemented through a sample of five local plans.

4.1 National Policy and Planning Responses to Coastal Urbanisation

In comparison to many other nations, Australia's national responses to coastal urbanisation are limited. This is partly due to a historic devolution of environmental responsibility to the States under the Australian Constitution. However, the Commonwealth has an important indirect influence on environmental policy and planning through its funding, taxation, and international trade powers. It can play an important role in national policy making, by setting policies directly and through national government councils (such as the Council of Australian Governments and the Natural Resource Ministerial Council). The Commonwealth also enters into international agreements and conventions relating to the environment (described below).

Table 4.1 provides a summary of the coastal policy and planning framework in Australia. Table 4.2 shows how State coastal policy relates to regional and local planning arrangements.

International Agreements and Conventions

International agreements and conventions particularly relevant to environmental planning in Australia's coastal areas include:

- The Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and Agenda 21 (1992), which affirms the principles of sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, appropriate environmental assessment, public participation, and the role of indigenous peoples and women.
- The Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), which aims to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions and includes a requirement for research on responses to the potential impact of rising sea levels on coastal areas.
- The Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), which is a legally binding treaty to protect sites on the World Heritage List ("World Heritage Areas"). Many of our World Heritage Areas are located in coastal regions, including the Great Barrier Reef, the Wet Tropics of Queensland, Fraser Island, Tasmanian Wilderness, the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia and Shark Bay.
- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention, 1971), which aims to protect wetland values and promote their ecologically sustainable management.

The extent and significance of these international commitments towards environmental protection and coastal heritage specifically, means that local governments are operating in a very complex policy and legislative context.

[10] CEO of the City of Wanneroo Council and member of the interim Executive of the National Sea Change Taskforce.

Policy

Australia lacks an agreed national policy or framework for coastal planning and management. However, in 1995 the Commonwealth Government prepared a Coastal Policy outlining its own coastal activities. One of the main initiatives to have arisen from this policy is the Coastcare Program which supports projects to monitor, preserve and rehabilitate publicly managed terrestrial and marine environments. Many of these projects are managed or supported by local councils.

In October 2003 the National Natural Resource Ministerial Council prepared a Framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). This framework identifies five issues for national collaboration: land and marine based sources of pollution; managing climate change; introduced pest plants and animals; allocation and use of coastal resources; and capacity building. While an important initiative, it does not yet signify a move towards strategic national policy for managing growth and change in Australia's coastal regions. Implementation arrangements for the framework have not yet been agreed by the States.

Australia's Oceans Policy was developed in the late 1990s to provide a national approach to the management of our marine jurisdictions, and the preparation of Regional Marine Plans. Although it places some emphasis on the land-sea interface due to increasing concern over the impacts of land based pollution on marine waters (managed by the Commonwealth), to date there remains no real integration of marine policy with land use planning decision frameworks in Australia.

Legislation

The main piece of national legislation affecting planning decisions in coastal areas is the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (CEPBC). This Act governs matters of "national environmental significance" which are activities that may affect places such as world heritage areas, Ramsar wetlands, Commonwealth marine areas, nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities, and listed migratory species. The Act also relates to Commonwealth land.

The CEPBC Act has a complex relationship to local and State planning frameworks. It represents an additional level of approval for activities that may be of "national environmental significance", with the onus on the proponent to establish the status of their proposal. For instance, a tourism development adjacent to a World Heritage Area or Ramsar Wetland would most likely trigger the provisions of the CEPBC Act in addition to State and local controls.

The Native Title Act 1993 is also significant for coastal communities. This Act enables provides a framework to recognise the continued existence of native title in certain circumstances, and to manage this cooperatively with non Indigenous uses. Many coastal lands are currently affected by native title claims. As land owners and managers, local councils are frequently involved in native title issues.

4.2 States

All States now have a State coastal policy or equivalent, and an advisory committee to advise on coastal issues (although in New South Wales the functions of the former Coastal Council have been incorporated within a broader natural resource management committee). As shown in Table 4.1, the majority of States have provisions for regional coastal policy and planning, and most also have regional level advisory processes (although these provisions are not always exercised, and very few States actually have final regional coastal plans in place).

Table 4.1: Australian Coastal Policy and Planning Framework

	Commonwealth	SA	VIC	NSW	QLD	WA	TAS
Policy	Commonwealth Coastal Policy 1995 Framework for a National Cooperative Approach to ICZM	Living Coast Strategy for South Australia 2004	Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 State Planning Policy Framework	NSW Coastal Policy 1997	State Coastal Management Plan 2001	Coastal Zone Management Policy for WA 2001 (Draft)	State Coastal Policy 1996 (under review)
Main Legislation	Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	Coast Protection Act 1972	Coastal Management Act 1995 Planning and Environment Act 1987	NSW Coastal Protection Act 1979 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) 14 (Coastal Wetlands); 50 (Canal Estates); 71 (Coastal Protection)	Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 Integrated Planning Act 1997	Town Planning and Development Act 1928 Metropolitan Regional Town Planning Scheme Act 1959 WA Planning Commission Act 1985 Statement of Planning Policy No. 2 – Environment and Natural Resources Management Statement of Planning Policy 2.6 State Coastal Planning Policy Development Control Policy 6.1 Country Coastal Planning Policy	State Coastal Policy Validation Act 2003 Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993
Coastal Advisory Structures	Natural Resource Ministerial Council	Coastal Protection Board	Victorian Coastal Council Regional Coastal Boards	Natural Resources Commission Catchment Management Authorities	Coastal Protection Advisory Council Regional Consultative Groups	Coastal Planning and Coordination Council	State Coastal Advisory Committee
Key Agencies	Department of Environment and Heritage	Office for Coasts and Marine, Department for Environment and Heritage Planning SA, Department for Transport and Urban Planning	Department of Sustainability and the Environment	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources	Environment Protection Agency Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation	Western Australian Planning Commission Department of Planning and Infrastructure (Coastal Planning)	Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment Resource Planning and Development Commission
Regional Initiatives		Regional Strategies	Coastal Action Plans Regional Strategies	Regional strategies / Regional Environmental Plans	Regional Coastal Management Plans Regional Plans	Strategic Plans, Regional Structure Plans, Regional Schemes	Regional Coastal Management Plans
Local Initiatives	Coastcare Program	Development Plans	Local Planning Schemes	Local Environmental Plans	Planning Schemes	Coastal Management Plans Local Town Planning Schemes	Local Coastal Management Plans Planning Schemes

State coastal policies vary in their scope and application: some focus on the coastline itself and the land / sea interface, while others extend to the surrounding catchments and hinterlands. For the most part, State coastal policies focus more on the management of biophysical coastal processes rather than on planning and development assessment. To the extent that coastal policies do refer to planning decisions, the emphasis is on the built and natural environment rather than social aspects of coastal growth and change. Some policies aim to protect the unique character of coastal communities, but the notion of character is loosely defined and linked predominantly to urban form and design.

All State coastal policies emphasise the need to locate new development within existing settlements and centres, avoid linear coastal development, and preserve green buffers between towns. Most State policies recognise indigenous groups as having special connections to coastal areas and resources, and endeavour to involve local indigenous representatives, particularly in decisions concerning the management of cultural heritage. Mechanisms to implement State coastal policies through the land use planning system differ in each State.

Table 4.2 below summarises the key directions of each State's coastal policy and shows the connections to regional and local planning processes.

Table 4.2: Coastal Policy and Local and Regional Planning Framework

State	Coastal Policy	Key Coastal Planning Directions	Coastal Zone Definition.	Connection to Regional Planning	Connection to Local Planning
NSW	NSW Coastal Policy 1997 Coastal Design Guidelines for NSW	• Acquisition of important coastal sites • Ribbon development "discouraged" • Canal estates prohibited • No tourist resorts to impede public access to beaches • Wetland and littoral rainforest protections • Referral of development above a certain threshold to State Government • (Design Guidelines) – promote a hierarchy of settlements, with detailed design guidance for each. • Emphasis on appropriate distribution of population and infrastructure; separation of settlements, appropriate location of new settlements; building on "sense of place".	One kilometer landward from coastal waters, and one kilometer landward around any bay, estuary, coastal lake or lagoon; one kilometer beyond mangroves or tidal limit of river, and coastal waters of State.	Regional environmental plans should include coastal issues. Currently a new regional planning initiative for NSW coastal regions being developed. Design guidelines to be used during regional plan making (distribution of population and infrastructure).	Local Environmental Plans should be consistent with coastal policy. Design guidelines to be used in local plan making.
QLD	State Coastal Management Plan 2001	• Areas of State significance for coastal management (Cultural Heritage, Scenic Coastal Landscapes, Traditional Owner Coastal Regions) to be identified in regional plans • Supports new urban development in existing urban areas • Strong justification needed for new canals and dryland marinas, reclamation works • Urban settlements to avoid significant wetlands, riparian areas, areas at risk of coastal hazards and climate change impacts • Preference to developments dependent on coastal location • Requires consideration of coastal impacts of new rural land uses • No net loss of public access to coast	Coastal waters and "all areas to the landward side of coastal waters in which there are physical features, ecological or natural processes or human activities that affect, or potentially affect, the coast or coastal resources." (Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, s15)	Regional Coastal Management Plans must be prepared (Coastal Protection and management Act 1995). These will have the status of State policy, but are yet to be completed. Coastal issues are also addressed through broader regional plans- eg. Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (OUM 2004) aims to relieve coastal growth pressures by redirecting settlement along the western corridor to Ipswich and Toowoomba.	Regional plans are to be implemented through local planning schemes. All local councils participate in regional planning activities.
SA	Living Coast Strategy for South Australia 2004	• Will develop a strategic vision for coastal development in SA • Will develop a Coast Protection strategy to manage coastal hazards • Will develop a State policy to manage sea-level change • To establish an Authority "with greater powers of direction over coastal and marine development" (DEH 2004, p. 49).	Land above and within 100 metres of mean high water mark and any coastal water body or wetland (Coast Protection Act 1972)	Regional groupings of local government have taken own initiative to develop regional coastal strategies, eg. Great Australian Bight 1000 West Coast Strategy, South East Coastal management Strategy, Southern Fleurieu Coastal Action Plan.	Coastal landscape qualities at risk of development to be identified and protected in local Development Plans through the local Plan Amendment Report process. Some local governments have prepared local non-statutory coastal management plans.

State	Coastal Policy	Key Coastal Planning Directions	Coastal Zone Definition.	Connection to Regional Planning	Connection to Local Planning
TAS	State Coastal Policy 1996	• Priority to development dependent on coastal location • Development in coastal zone subject to environmental impact assessment • New urban and residential development to be encouraged in existing towns. • Encourage agreements between landholders for public access to coast • Coastal safety assessment required for new development likely to attract people to coast (eg. tourism development).	One kilometer landward from land / sea interface and three kilometres seaward.	Regional Coastal Management Plans to address specific aspects of coastal management.	Councils must prepare strategic and operational plans consistent with policy. Local Planning Schemes must be consistent with State Coastal Policy.
VIC	Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002	• Protect scenic value of coastal roads • Direct coastal development by identifying coastal activity and recreational nodes • Contained urban development through town boundaries • Siting and design guidelines for new buildings • Encourage alternative transport around coastal towns (eg. cycling paths) • Explicit support for Integrated Coastal Zone Management	Land and inland waters within coastal catchment (and sea and seabed to State limit of 3 nautical miles).	Regional Coastal Boards to guide location and scale of coastal development by identifying coastal "activity" and "recreational" nodes.	Local planning schemes to implement coastal settlement hierarchy through clear town boundaries.
WA	Coastal Zone Management Policy for WA 2001 (Draft) Statement of Planning Policy 2.6 State Coastal Planning Policy	• Coastal planning strategy / foreshore management plan needed to support development proposals for coast (type of plan depends on stage and scale of development) • Public foreshore access protection – foreshore area given up at time of development / subdivision, over and above required open space provision • Coastal development proposals should demonstrate need to be in coastal location and represent short and long term public benefit • New urban development to be encouraged in and around existing settlements, continual linear urban development to be avoided.	Coastal waters, mobile beach zone, dunes, mangroves, wetlands and flats subject to tidal influence, areas potentially subject to shoreline movements, estuaries and coastal lagoons (WAPC 2001, p. 3).	Regional structure plans provide the basis for allocating land uses. Planning and budgeting for services and infrastructure provision. They generally include planning considerations for the coast.	Coastal planning strategies / and / or foreshore management plans needed to support developments on coast.

4.3 Coastal Policy and Regional Planning

As shown in Table 4.1 , the majority of State coastal policies provide for regional coastal policy and planning, and most also have regional level advisory processes. Some guide regional planning (New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria), although very few regional plans have actually been completed since the introduction of State coastal policies. The definition of the "coastal zone" in State policy or legislation limits the scope of subsequent regional and local planning initiatives. Some of the policies (New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia) are focused on a narrowly defined coastal zone and settlements adjoining the land / sea interface. Others, like Queensland and Western Australia define the coastal zone more broadly to extend to the surrounding hinterlands. These broader definitions facilitate a comprehensive approach to coastal planning within natural water catchment areas and existing local administrative boundaries.

All of the State policies depend for their implementation on decisions made by local government – in preparing plans that protect significant coastal resources and reflect desired settlement patterns, and in ensuring that actual development decisions support these directions. In South Australia, coastal landscape qualities at risk of development must be identified and protected in local Development Plans. In Victoria, local planning schemes are required to implement the desired coastal settlement hierarchy through clear town boundaries. In New South Wales, Tasmania, and Queensland, local plans must be consistent with overarching State coastal policy and regional plans. Coastal planning strategies, and / or foreshore management plans are needed to support certain developments on the coast in Western Australia.

The Coastal Design Guidelines for New South Wales provide comprehensive urban design guidance and directions for regional settlement planning. The guidelines emphasise a "place based" planning approach, focusing on existing and desired future character, and identifying urban design criteria for a hierarchy of coastal settlement types. The guidelines are also intended to guide local plan making. As yet there have been no evaluations of the guidelines so the extent to which they have actually been implemented in local planning is not yet known.

Effective regional settlement planning is crucial for directing population growth to acceptable locations, having regard to environmental and heritage concerns as well as infrastructure capacity. The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (Office of Urban Management 2004) explicitly aims to relieve coastal growth pressures by redirecting settlement to the inland regional centres of Ipswich and Toowoomba. This plan will have statutory force.

4.4 Planning for Infrastructure

As discussed above, the infrastructure needs of coastal councils affected by rapidly growing resident and visitor populations are significant. However, councils have very limited opportunities to increase funds for infrastructure provision under the rates and levies they control. Thus most councils need to look to the land use planning process as a way of levying additional funds to provide for necessary infrastructure. Here too there are a number of constraints. Some states (such as South Australia and Western Australia) permit very limited collection of development levies, while others (such as New South Wales) are much more liberal. The issue raises a fundamental question of principal – whether a "user pays" approach is appropriate, or whether essential infrastructure and services should be funded from a broader tax base. There is also a concern that high levels of development contributions may stifle development or make housing less affordable to lower income groups.

Table 4.3 following, summarises current arrangements for levying developer contributions through the planning processes in each State. As shown in the table, key differences between the States are the circumstances in which funds may be levied, and the purposes to which those funds may be put. The provisions in South Australia are particularly limited, focusing on open space and car parking. In contrast, New South Wales has a fairly comprehensive range of provisions associated with development contributions under s. 94 of the EP&A Act 1979, which permits development contributions to be levied to contribute towards or provide for a range of infrastructure and community services. One way in which land use planning authorities can realise higher contributions from developers is to capture some of the value associated with rezoning. An example of this approach is currently being developed under the new metropolitan planning process in Sydney. Here the intention is to establish a Growth Centre Infrastructure Fund for new release areas in North and South Western Sydney. Higher levels of developer contributions than are normally required under current provisions (up to $65,000 per site) will be levied. The higher levies are being linked to the increased value of land following rezoning for urban development.

Table 4.3: Provisions for Infrastructure Funding through the Development Planning Process

State	Relevant Legislation	Description
NSW	Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EPAA)	• May require development contributions (cash or in kind) for services and infrastructure, subject to approved contributions plan (S94 EPAA). • New provision proposed to formalise agreements between developers and consent authorities for developer contributions instead of or in addition to S94 levies. • New infrastructure levying capacity proposed for growth areas (Sydney's North West and South West). Will amount to between $15-$65,000 per lot depending on size and scale of development.
QLD	Integrated Planning Act 1997 Integrating Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Acts 2003 & 2004	• Contributions for "development infrastructure" may be levied by local councils (a) under a Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP); (b) through an Infrastructure Agreement (an agreement between council and a developer for infrastructure provision or contributions); (c) conditions requiring the supply of non shared infrastructure (eg. internal networks and connecting site to shared networks). • PIP forms part of local planning scheme. Generally includes an Infrastructure Charges Schedule for levies. Low growth councils may use standard or "Regulated" infrastructure charges. • "Development infrastructure" includes land or works for water, transportation, and local services (eg. parks, community halls, libraries).
SA	Development Act 1993	• At time of land subdivision, provisions for dedicating up to 12% for open space (or cash contribution to be put towards open space • Councils can also establish funds for developers to contribute to car parking at a fixed cash rate if this is preferable to car parking being provided on site
TAS	Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993	• "Agreements", which may include provision for payment or other contribution for infrastructure may be made between councils and developers.
VIC	Planning and Environment Act 1987	• Developer contributions levied through: (a) approved Development Contributions Plan (DCP), enforced through conditions attached to planning and building permits; (b) conditions on planning permits (but unless relating to a DCP these contributions must be works or infrastructure on site); (c) Voluntary agreements (registered on title to land). • Voluntary agreements may be used when a developer requests an amendment to a planning scheme, or a planning permit. • Set levies restrict funds able to be collected through DCPs (eg. $900 per residential dwelling for community infrastructure) • State agencies may collect additional funds for specific works directly.
WA	Town Planning and Development Act 1928	• Developer contributions usually levied through conditions imposed by WA Planning Commission (WAPC) on subdivision approvals. • May also be levied through conditions imposed by WAPC or local government on the development of land under a regional or local government scheme. • Three types of contributions: (a) ceding or dedication of land for roads, primary schools, public open space (10% of development), foreshores, drainage, and other reserves needed for subdivision; (b) construction of infrastructure and transferal to public authorities; (c) contributions to acquire land or undertake works by public authorities (particularly when development or subdivision is small scale). • Process predominantly regulated through WAPC operational policies. • Social infrastructure generally not funded through this process.

4.5 Local Planning Approaches

A sample of local plans from each State was undertaken to analyse the way in which different local governments across Australia manage growth in sensitive coastal areas (Table 4.4). The plans selected were Byron Local Environmental Plan 1988 (New South Wales), Maroochy Plan 2000 (Queensland), Victor Harbor Development Plan (South Australia), Wanneroo District Planning Scheme No. 2 (Western Australia), Kingborough Planning Scheme (Tasmania) and Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Victoria). These plans were selected because they represent a variety of sea change communities and State policy and planning frameworks. Note that due to the difference in local plan making within States as well as between them, these plans are not fully representative of other local areas within each State.

The focus of the analysis was on the instruments themselves, rather than the quality of decision making or participatory processes they support (which is beyond the scope of the current research). The analysis focused on the overall objectives contained in the instruments, approaches to zoning or land use categorisation, and special mechanisms relating to coastal planning or protection.

The analysis of local planning instruments showed that there is a diversity of ways in which local councils are addressing the environmental, social, and economic issues associated with sea change development. Some plans have well articulated planning and development criteria to protect the unique qualities, resources, and character of coastal environments and settlements, although actual controls and enforceable requirements are generally less comprehensive in the plans analysed. Thus appropriate outcomes are very dependent on careful, consistent, and resource intensive development assessment, which to a greater or lesser degree is still vulnerable to legal appeal.

Some of the plans – Maroochy, Surf Coast, and to a degree, Kingborough, use descriptive approaches to portray the desired future character and growth of specific localities. The Byron Local Environmental Plan 1988 and Wanneroo District Planning Scheme No. 2 are more "traditional" in approach, relying predominantly on zones to manage development (although both have more detailed plans or policies to govern planning in particular localities).

Of the plans analysed, Victor Harbor Development Plan contains the most integrated and comprehensive range of State and regional coastal planning objectives, clearly interpreted for local application. Surf Coast Shire Planning Scheme is also very consistent with State coastal policy.

Specific mechanisms used to protect coastal environments include referring certain developments to State agencies or a State level advisory body (Byron Local Environmental Plan 1988, Victor Harbor Development Plan). As well as regulatory controls, Victor Harbor Development Plan and Surf Coast Planning Scheme contain proactive strategies for council to undertake. Of the plans in the sample, Surf Coast intends to develop economic strategies that build on local character and has produced a "Style Guide" to ensure new development continues to "distinguish coastal character in Surf Coast Shire from conventional urban and suburban areas" (Surf Coast Planning Scheme).

Maroochy has incorporated a provision to encourage conservation on private land by allowing bonus lot configurations for demonstrated conservation outcomes. This is an important innovation, particularly as the use of environmental planning tools in this way is not much advanced in Australia, partly due to barriers in State legislation (Cripps et al. 1999).

This preliminary analysis of a small sample of plans shows significant potential for cross fertilisation in designing local mechanisms to plan for coastal growth. More extensive research on these and other local planning approaches is needed to determine how these approaches are implemented in practice.

Table 4.4: Implementation of Coastal Policy Objectives in Local Plans

State	(Sample) Local Planning Instrument	Objectives	Zones	Special Mechanisms
NSW	Byron Local Environmental Plan 1988	Overall sustainability objectives	Several coastal zones: (Coastal habitat, coastal land, urban coastal land, scenic escarpment).	Development in coastal zones must be referred to NSW Director of Planning. Byron Coastline Management Plan must be considered when relevant applications assessed. Place specific Development Control Plans with more detailed guidance.
QLD	Maroochy Plan 2000	Desired Environmental Outcomes relating to: environment, social equity, economy, transport, community / culture, urban design and character, infrastructure	Place based approach rather than zones.	Overlay of special management features for higher levels of assessment (including shire beaches). Bonus lot configuration provisions for conservation outcomes. Performance indicators identified for each desired environmental outcome.
SA	Victor Harbor Development Plan	Outer Metropolitan (regional) and local objectives and principals of development control for: sites of environmental, educational or landscape significance; public access; avoiding hazards to coastal development including potential climate change; avoiding ribbon development; properly sequencing urban development; redeveloping and redesigning unsatisfactory coastal developments.	Rural coastal zone and residential foreshore zone	Provisions for proactive strategies, such as actions council is proposing to undertake.
TAS	Kingborough Planning Scheme	Specific scheme objectives include retaining and maintaining natural ecological processes, protecting cultural heritage, including viewsheds and landscapes of cultural significance to local community and visitors; precautionary principle in relation to greenhouse-induced sea level rise; facilitating specific settlement strategy outcomes by ensuring the further expansion of settlements is consistent with coastal management policies of State.	No specific coastal zone (but an environmental management zone). Performance based approach – desired future character statements identified and strategies to show how this character is promoted.	Specific schedule (Schedule 5) for coastal areas, which establishes principles and scheme standards. Under this schedule: • canal estates not permitted • use or development must not interfere with existing or planned formal pedestrian access to coast
VIC	Surf Coast Planning Scheme	Closely reflect directions of State Coastal Strategy. Development to be within existing town boundaries, and unique features of towns to be maintained and enhanced.	Some zones identified but predominantly "place based" approach, with specific descriptions, strategies, and actions identified for each place.	A primary consideration for assessing development applications is: "whether the proposal protects the key assets which distinguish coastal character in Surf Coast Shire from conventional urban and suburban areas. Surf Coast "style guide" ensures new buildings fits desired character. Economic strategies aim to build on special character of Surf Coast.
WA	Wanneroo District Planning Scheme No. 2	No specific focus on coastal issues.	No specific coastal zones.	Special provisions include sites for environmental protection. National parks are currently listed.

4.6 Summary

- Commonwealth, State and local policy and planning instruments covering coastal areas focus on biophysical aspects, particularly environmental protection, and to a lesser degree, settlement structure and urban design. Social issues, such as building community cohesion, catering to the needs of aging populations, or housing affordability, are not addressed within the scope of current policy or planning instruments.

- Similarly, although some planning instruments aim to preserve agricultural land or to provide for tourism development, economic goals are not well articulated or integrated within coastal policy and planning frameworks (though some of the local plans examined do contain economic objectives and strategies).

- This failure to integrate social and economic objectives and strategies within coastal policies and the land use plans applying to coastal areas reflects broader difficulties associated with achieving the spectrum of sustainability goals. However, given the evidence of social and economic disadvantage in sea change localities presented in the preceding chapters, and the likelihood that such disadvantage will continue without effective interventions, broadening coastal policy and planning processes to properly include social and economic dimensions is a priority.

- The review of infrastructure arrangements in each State shows limited potential to use existing planning provisions to address infrastructure needs, with the possible exception of NSW and, to a lesser degree, Queensland.

- There is a need to expand the use of innovative planning tools to encourage conservation on private lands. Maroochy's bonus lot configuration provision is an example. Others include tradable development rights (whereby the right to develop may be sold to the owner of land with less conservation significance), and incentives (where a planning or rating concession is granted for conservation works) (Bateson et al. 2000), though legislative barriers to their implementation must be addressed by State governments.

- This analysis of policy and planning responses in non metropolitan coastal Australia has focused on the policies and instruments themselves. Further research in this area is needed to evaluate the extent to which these are actually being implemented in different coastal settings, particularly the way in which specific tools and place based planning approaches such as the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines are beginning to influence local plan making.

5. Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Priorities for Policy Intervention and Research

As highlighted in the preceding chapters, issues facing sea change communities are complex. They range from the environmental impacts of new urban development to the community impacts of rapid population change. While some of these issues affect all sea change coastal communities, others are more specific to particular settlement types. In this concluding section of this report we summarise the key planning issues affecting sea change communities emerging through our research and identified by councilors and council staff around Australia during our interviews with representatives from the five case study local government areas and National Sea Change Taskforce meetings. As shown in the matrix of issues (Table 5.1), these relate to five key themes: environment and heritage, community wellbeing, economy / tourism, infrastructure, and governance. Following the discussion of these issues, we conclude this report by identifying immediate priorities to enhance local and regional planning in sea change communities of coastal Australia, and directions for future research.

5.1 Matrix of Planning Issues

The matrix on the following page summarises the key planning issues affecting different types of sea change communities in Australia.

Table 5.1: Matrix of Planning Issues Affecting Sea Change Communities in Australia

Issue	Coastal Commuter	Coastal City	Coastal Getaway	Coastal Lifestyle	Coastal Hamlet
Environment and Heritage					
Biodiversity loss / habitat fragmentation	ü	ü	ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Coastal wetlands threatened			ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Water quality	ü ü	ü ü	ü	ü	ü
World / national heritage areas		ü	ü	ü ü	ü
Loss of rural land	ü		ü	ü ü	ü
Loss of cultural heritage	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Landuse conflict				ü	ü
Industrial emissions	ü ü				
Inappropriate development on waterfront sites					
Need for new planning tools (eg. incentives, economic mechanisms)			ü ü	ü ü	ü
Conflicting planning priorities (conservation vs development)			ü	ü ü	ü
Need new models for indigenous involvement in environmental management			ü	ü ü	ü
Community Wellbeing					
Gentrification / loss of affordable housing	ü	ü	ü ü	ü	
Preserving local amenity and lifestyle			ü ü	ü ü	
Social instability – rapid population turnover				ü	
High seasonal populations		ü	ü ü	ü ü	ü
Social networks threatened by scale of population influx			ü ü	ü ü	
Aging population			ü ü		
Loss of local character	ü		ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage	ü			ü ü	
Increasing anti-social behaviour, fear of crime	ü ü				
Loss of young people			ü	ü ü	ü
Native title / reclamation of indigenous lands			ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Engaging indigenous community in planning processes	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Economy / tourism					
Loss and decline of traditional industries			ü	ü ü	ü
High unemployment				ü ü	
Lack of diverse economic base			ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Seasonal economy			ü	ü ü	ü
Lack of skilled tradespersons and professionals			ü	ü ü	ü
Pressure to renew and upgrade tourism facilities			ü ü	ü ü	
Leakage of tourism revenue from local area				ü	ü
Infrastructure					
Insufficient physical infrastructure (roads, sewer, water services)			ü ü	ü ü	ü
Lack of health services			ü	ü	ü ü
Lack of education / training opportunities			ü	ü	ü ü
Lack of public transport			ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Need for new technological / communications infrastructure	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Seasonal infrastructure demands		ü	ü ü	ü ü	ü
Inability to fund infrastructure to support tourism demand			ü	ü ü	ü ü
Too small to support range of infrastructure and services				ü	ü ü
Governance					
Lack of detailed / appropriate local planning controls				ü	ü ü
Lack of effective regional planning			ü	ü	
Competing coastal management, natural resource, conservation, and planning legislation			ü ü	ü ü	ü ü
Overlapping State / local jurisdictions			ü	ü	ü
Need for Federal, State, local cooperation / partnerships	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Need for regional / sub regional partnerships					

ü An issue for many of these local government areas

ü ü A key issue for most of these local government areas

Environment and Heritage

Coastal environments are under major pressure. Environmental problems include habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development and tourism, loss and degradation of coastal wetlands, change in hydrological systems and marine habitats, the introduction of exotic species, and erosion. Global climate change, particularly sea level rise is likely to impact coastal environments in the near future. Thus it is important for some form of monitoring effort to be incorporated in the planning process to provide updated information on ecological changes.

There is a need to effectively protect the attributes of terrestrial and marine conservation areas and manage the impact of activities and development in surrounding lands on conservation values. This is of particular relevance to the many sea change communities defined by major protected landscapes.

In many localities there is also a need to identify other areas of important biodiversity that may need to be protected. This is particularly important in localities that are only just beginning to experience the acceleration of population growth associated with sea change, such as Coastal Lifestyle Destinations and Hamlets. It is often the case that historical planning decisions mean that environmentally sensitive or culturally significant land has already been zoned for urban development, but it is very difficult in Australia to remove planning entitlements once they have been granted.

There is also pressure on local councils to rezone potentially valuable rural land as farmers retire, as smaller farms become less viable in comparison to the values associated with urban development, or are squeezed out through land use conflicts with neighbouring urban uses. Innovative planning mechanisms to offset the financial impacts of conservation on private lands are urgently needed in Australia's coastal communities. Examples include tradable development rights; incentives; and flexible application of development controls (such as higher developmental yield on one part of the site on condition that more sensitive areas are preserved). State governments should assist local councils in developing such approaches and recognise those that do so by both monetary and public awards programs.

Unlike some high amenity inland areas, which have also been experiencing something of a population boom, the focus of new development along the coastal strip distorts settlement patterns and concentrates the demand for growth in the most sensitive environmental contexts.

One of the potential strategies for conserving important coastal landscapes and biodiversity is higher density forms of development. The demographic data indicating an older population profile of sea change areas also suggests a need for greater housing variety and smaller dwellings, particularly well-located retirement accommodation. Yet there is significant community resistance to medium and high-rise developments in many coastal areas due to their visual impact on local character and scenic views. Innovative design solutions that achieve greater densities and housing variety without greater heights (and represent good coastal vernacular design) are needed.

Indigenous Australians have an important connection to many coastal lands and resources. Issues here include access to sites, traditional use of natural resources, and indigenous involvement in planning and management decisions. While all State coastal policies recognise special indigenous interests, the local planning frameworks actually governing coastal areas focus mainly on the protection of indigenous archeological heritage, rather than issues such as continued access to or use of, cultural resources. There is a need to broaden the scope of State policy and local planning to properly recognise contemporary indigenous concerns and to better engage indigenous communities in growth and conservation decisions.

Residents report that cultural heritage, local character and "sense of place" in smaller coastal communities is being overwhelmed by the scale and or pace of new residential and tourism developments. This was a particular issue raised by participants at the Rockingham and Melbourne sea change conferences and has also been documented in previous research (De Jong 2002; Green 2000). There is a lack of effective planning methodologies and tools to preserve and enhance the attributes of place that are important to local residents. A good planning guide or handbook needs to be developed to assist communities in this sensitive planning process that does not merely miniaturise urban approaches but creates a fundamentally different framework for coastal community planning. Here the "Coastal Design Guidelines for New South Wales" provide a good starting point although the emphasis is limited to urban design and the physical planning of settlements.

Community Wellbeing

Socio-economic disadvantage and polarisation is apparent within and between non metropolitan coastal communities. Lower incomes and higher unemployment levels characterise most of these areas, including localities with the highest levels of population growth and development activity. At the same time, rising land values, particularly in Coastal Getaway destinations in proximity to metropolitan centres, means that housing is increasingly unaffordable, particularly to lower income renters. Traditional forms of affordable housing such as caravan parks, which often cater to lower income retirees, are under pressure for redevelopment of the site for residential or more up market tourism development. (This is because despite being an important source of affordable residential accommodation, caravan parks are often located in zones where tourism uses are permissible). Growth management strategies that limit the release of more land can also contribute to gentrification and higher housing costs, with low income renters the first to be priced out of the market. A Sea Change Housing Indicator report might be implemented in each State, perhaps in collaboration with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), to monitor rising house prices and the availability of affordable rental stock.

High levels of unemployment are a particular issue for most sea change localities and particularly Coastal Lifestyle Destinations. Employment opportunities in these communities are limited and the main growth in industries has been in lower paid service sectors like tourism and retail.

The aging profile of sea change communities means that services for the aged, including retirement and nursing homes, doctors, medical facilities, home care support, and public transport will increasingly be needed. However, as discussed above, many older people are choosing to retire in the smaller and more remote coastal destinations, where such services are less likely to be available. At the same time, the main age group in sea change communities are younger people, so educational, training, and employment opportunities for young people is a particular need in many communities.

The transience of sea change communities, (shorter term stays, absentee landlords, loss of repeat visitors) is affecting a number of Coastal Getaways and Lifestyle Destinations. Many of these areas are reporting loss of a sense of community. Planners in high growth areas need to ensure strategies for community building are in place to assist in addressing these issues.

Residents of sea change areas cherish the unique lifestyle and amenity of living on the coast. Certain coastal communities, especially Getaways, Coastal Lifestyle Destinations, and Coastal Hamlets, are particularly valued for offering a low-key semi rural lifestyle with traditionally strong social networks. Residents of these places currently fear that these qualities are threatened by rapid population increases or very high numbers of tourists.

Economy / Tourism

Although population growth has correlated with increased development activity and reduced levels of unemployment in most sea change communities, in 15 of the local government areas in the sample, unemployment fell more slowly than State unemployment rates. Furthermore, the largest increase in employment opportunities was in the retail sector while most areas lost jobs in productive sectors like manufacturing and agriculture / fisheries. Increases in construction and in accommodation, cafes and tourism were recorded in the majority of local government areas in the sample but gains were generally modest.

Coastal Getaway communities in particular experience distortion of their local economies due to ongoing connections with metropolitan areas, particularly from commuters, retirees, and second home buyers (O'Connor 2004). These connections include higher land values as local residents compete in the housing market with "cashed up" newcomers from the city; city dwellers who are able to purchase a weekender while remaining based in the city; and partial commuters or telecommuters whose income flows from the city. Thus it is important for communities to devise "affordable housing" and related schemes that help maintain community socio-economic balance. Communities should be assisted by the States to establish and resource non profit housing organisations for this purpose.

Many sea change communities (particularly Coastal Lifestyle Destinations and Coastal Hamlets) are experiencing a decline in traditional resourced based industries, like agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Specific strategies are needed to assist councils address this issue and its potential impact on the environmental quality and character of their communities. These may include strategies to retain and enhance productive industries in agriculture, fisheries and sustainable forestry, while establishing new conservation, knowledge, culture, tourism, and service based opportunities catering to national and international markets.

A number of industry employers report shortages of people with appropriate qualifications and training, particularly in Coastal Getaway and Lifestyle Destinations. The lack of educational and training opportunities in these areas means that it can be difficult to fill employment vacancies for professional positions with existing residents.

Tourism is regarded as one of the most important new opportunities for such communities. However, actual levels of employment in tourism related industries are only marginally above the Australian average of 4.9% in many sea change communities (Table A4.2, Appendix 4). There is pressure within many communities to renew and upgrade tourism infrastructure to remain competitive tourism destinations. At the same time, there is often a tension between tourists and some local residents who regard high and seasonal visitor populations as a threat to community cohesion and the amenity values of the locality. Many residents of holiday destinations state that incidences of crime and anti social behaviour increase during peak seasons.

Infrastructure

Despite the significant demographic shift towards certain coastal areas, there has been no real attempt to undertake major strategic infrastructure planning in response to forecast settlement needs. Most coastal local government areas participating in the National Sea Change Taskforce report infrastructure shortfalls and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources (grants, rates, and developer contributions) (ALGA 2005). There is a clear need and substantial pressure from new residents for services and infrastructure comparable to that of metropolitan areas.

Actual infrastructure gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population and visitor needs (roads, sewer, water services, and public transport). Smaller population centres experience a shortage of social, professional and health services, libraries and recreational facilities and a lack of education and training opportunities. They also express a need for new technological / communications infrastructure. Infrastructure provision in areas with high seasonal visitation must be adequate for periods of peak demand although many local government areas lack the sufficient rate base or developer contributions framework to finance this level of service. This is because rate rises are generally not sufficient to cover peak demands and there are limitations to the extent to which developers can be compelled to provide funding for physical and community infrastructure (as outlined in Section 4 above).

The tendency toward incremental development and low density, linear patterns of settlement, make it difficult to achieve efficient approaches to infrastructure and service delivery. There is a need to better integrate settlement planning, subdivision design and release schedules with existing and planned infrastructure. Similarly, as major infrastructure (such as highways and airports) greatly influence settlement patterns, regional infrastructure planning must be mindful of the desired future character and environmental capacity of coastal areas.

Long term infrastructure plans – covering a 15-25 year time span need to be crafted for sea change communities, with State government assistance and a subsequent commitment of up front funding to implement these plans. Such plans should be closely linked to regional settlement and environmental planning processes and designed to meet both peak and regular demands.

Governance

Sea change localities are subject to complicated, cross jurisdictional planning and management processes relating to coastal management and protection, heritage conservation, and natural resource management (in addition to core land use planning and development responsibilities). As coastal regions are typically characterised by very high natural and cultural heritage values, there are frequently additional management and planning objectives or requirements at State, national, and international levels. It is often the responsibility for local governments to identify, monitor, or implement these requirements. Therefore mechanisms to combine planning and natural resource management systems need to be devised by each State – perhaps through consolidated legislation and planning policy administered by State governments but implemented by appropriately resourced local councils.

This approach is consistent with a place based form of governance for coastal communities. A place based approach is likely to be most responsive to the multiple environmental, social, cultural and economic issues faced by coastal councils, however, is very difficult to achieve within current administrative arrangements. Thus we suggest a more coordinated process rather than a new layer of government.

A cooperative approach between councils at regional and sub regional levels is needed to pursue effective settlement strategies in high growth coastal destinations. Yet many councils report that processes for regional collaboration are inadequate. Although there are provisions for regional planning in most State coastal policies (see below), few States actually have completed regional plans in place.

Smaller councils lack sufficient numbers of trained, professional staff to manage the multi-dimensional nature of rapid change in coastal areas (ALGA 2005). Many coastal councils that have so far escaped rapid growth pressures report that they do not have adequate planning controls in place to manage recent upsurges in population. These councils need State government assistance to strengthen their planning frameworks and establish supportive processes with other local government areas in the region.

5.2 Priorities to Enhance Local and Regional Planning in Sea Change Communities of Coastal Australia

The research presented here points to a number of immediate priorities to enhance local and regional planning in sea change communities of coastal Australia.

- There is a need for a national framework to lead coastal policy, establish strategic responses to population growth in coastal regions, and to support and resource regional and local coastal planning initiatives. Suitable models for emulation exist in the UK, US and European Union[11].
- There is no lack of State level objectives and guidelines for managing growth in coastal areas – however, it is not clear that these are being implemented at regional and local levels. There is a need to evaluate the implementation of this policy framework and expand it to address the full spectrum of issues affecting the diversity of sea change communities in Australia.
- There is an urgent need to support local governments in:
    - further developing the skills and expertise to address the complex challenges associated with coastal growth;
    - establishing and resourcing appropriate strategies for necessary local infrastructure provision linked to desired settlement patterns and future character;
    - connecting economic and social strategies with physical planning processes and decisions; and,
    - establishing effective regional or sub regional cooperation.
- Many local governments have developed innovative ways to address aspects of the sea change phenomenon but this work has occurred in isolation. There is a need to audit, build on, and share this work with other sea change communities.

5.3 Priorities for Further Research

Additional research is also needed to fully address the challenges associated with demographic change in Australia's coastal regions.

- Research on national and international models of best practice in planning for and managing growth in sensitive environmental settings is needed. This research should emphasise opportunities for application in the spectrum of sea change communities in Australia. (This will form stage two of the National Sea Change Taskforce research project).

[11] The UK has a national coastal planning policy which must be implemented by local authorities in their plan making and development assessment activities (UK Planning Policy Guidance 20). The US has federal legislation to protect the coastal zone (US Coastal Zone Management Act 1972) as well as a dedicated Office of Ocean and Coastal Zone Management to implement this Act and support national, State and local programs. The European Commission adopted an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for the European Union in 2000. As well as addressing environmental issues, this strategy also seeks to address social and cultural problems in the coastal zone, including weakening social "fabric", marginalisation of disadvantaged groups, and unemployment (European Commission 2000).

- Further research on current planning practice and opportunities for enhancement, particularly with respect to policy guidance and regulatory controls; integration of coastal management urban planning, and biodiversity conservation processes; information sources and decision support tools, structures for community participation and collaborative relationships is needed. This research should focus on the potential for a "place building" methodology that assists coastal communities respond to rapid change while preserving and enhancing local character, social capital and environmental integrity.

- Further research on social conditions in sea change communities, particularly emerging evidence of socio-economic disadvantage and polarisation, is a priority. Little is known about the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings or the impact of rapid growth and development on non metropolitan housing markets. There are two issues of concern here: firstly, newcomers increase demand for housing; thus increasing land values. At the same time, environmental conservation policies limit the supply of developable land, also increasing values. There is a need to design environmentally sensitive growth management strategies that do not result in the displacement of lower income residents.

- Research on forms of local economic development suitable for non metropolitan communities subject to high environmental conservation constraints is also important. This research should identify strategies to retain and enhance existing agriculture and sustainable forestry industries and establish new conservation, knowledge, culture, tourism, and service based opportunities, and economic opportunities that depend on, and thus seek to preserve, the unique attributes of place as a basis for economic competitiveness.

5.4 Meeting the Sea Change Challenge

Our coastal areas have iconic status for many Australians. From Byron Bay in New South Wales to the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, the Daintree in Queensland to Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia and Bruny Island in Tasmania, these special places represent unique environmental, cultural heritage and tourism values at local, national, and international scales. The local councils responsible for protecting these areas for all Australians are struggling to address the increasingly complex social needs of their local populations – many of whom are amongst the most disadvantaged.

In these contexts there is a real danger that social disadvantage and the need for economic growth will be used as a rationale to pursue environmentally unsustainable patterns of development that have not yet delivered lasting social or economic benefits. Yet with the current demographic shift towards high amenity non metropolitan areas likely to continue, further coastal growth is inevitable. One priority is to divert this growth to acceptable locations, particularly larger centres and appropriate hinterland communities, through strong regional settlement planning underpinned by legislation. The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (Office of Urban Management 2004) is an example of this approach. The support of State and Commonwealth governments is imperative here – in setting overall policy directions, in establishing regional settlement and infrastructure strategies with statutory force, in providing social and environmental data and other assistance to local governments. With such leadership, local councils will be better able to ensure their own plans establish appropriate constraints and opportunities for growth, having regard to their local character and environmental capacity.

The increasing demand for a coastal lifestyle beyond the major cities represents a growing threat to the fragile environmental and heritage values of Australia's coastline. However, the additional investment associated with the sea change phenomenon, if managed appropriately, also represents some positive opportunities. These include garnering new financial and human resources to restore degraded coastal environments, revitalise disadvantaged coastal communities and foster genuinely sustainable forms of economic development. The next stage in this research is to identify national and international examples of local governments who have seized such opportunities – managing the pressures of rapid population growth while preserving extremely sensitive environments and addressing the social and economic needs of their communities.

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