



THE CHALLENGE OF COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

DRAFT

SUBMISSION

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure,

Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

INQUIRY INTO A NEW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM

July 2008

This submission was prepared by: Alan Stokes and Susan Faulkner

On behalf of: National Sea Change Taskforce
Telephone: 02 9904 0311
Fax: 02 9908 2803
Email: info@seachangetaskforce.org.au

Date: 14 July 2008

© National Sea Change Taskforce 2008

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
Recommendations	2
Introduction	3
Key challenges facing coastal communities	6
NSW Inquiry into Coastal Infrastructure	8
Best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management	12
Planning for climate resilient infrastructure in coastal areas	13
Enhanced Collaboration and Coordination.....	19
Impact of non-resident populations	21
Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities	22
Social, environmental and economic issues.....	22
Policy response to ageing communities	23
Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.....	24
Best Practice Principles and Strategic Responses - Infrastructure.....	25
Review of institutional arrangements	28
Conclusion	30
References	31
Contact details.....	32
Appendix 1- Terms of Reference.....	33
Appendix 2 - About the National Sea Change Taskforce.....	34
Appendix 3 - Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia ..	37
Appendix 4 – Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities.....	37
Appendix 5 – Draft report Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia	37
Appendix 6 – Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas	37

SUMMARY

This submission to the Inquiry into a New Regional Development Funding Program has been made by the National Sea Change Taskforce in response to an invitation from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. The Taskforce welcomes the inquiry and believes it can make a significant contribution to the sustainability and liveability of Australia's coastal regions.

The migration of population to the Australia's coastal areas, which has become known as the 'sea change' phenomenon, has reached significant proportions. Settlements that 50 years ago were little more than small coastal townships and fishing villages have grown to become rapidly expanding urbanised regions experiencing some of the highest growth rates in Australia. Analysis of the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that in June 2007 there were 6.26 million people living in Australia's non-metro coastal areas, which represents 82% of the nation's entire regional population. The data indicates that population in these non-metro coastal areas increased by 1.27 million people in the decade since June 1997. In 2006-07 the number of people migrating to these regional coastal communities exceeded the total number of people moving to all of Australia's capital cities. A further one million people are estimated to start moving to the coast from 2010 as the 'baby boomer' generation starts to reach retirement age. Apart from growth in resident populations, coastal communities face the added impact of non-resident population flows, including tourists and other visitors.

Rapid population growth and tourism demand is having a significant impact on the sustainability and liveability of Australia's coastal communities. Research commissioned by the National Sea Change Taskforce has identified that non-metropolitan coastal communities are often characterised by lower incomes, higher unemployment levels and a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole. Non metropolitan coastal areas have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Coastal councils and their communities are also at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. The combined effect of these social impacts is significant.

One of the major issues facing Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in coastal areas is the lack of adequate resources to meet the continuing increase in demand for community infrastructure and services. The rapid rates of growth, population characteristics and extensive scale of greenfield development in rapidly-growing coastal areas mean that the resource base of LGAs in these areas is inadequate to fund much-needed infrastructure. All coastal councils report a lack of resources to meet increasing demand for community infrastructure such as cultural, sporting, recreation and other community facilities and to catch up with the significant backlog of demand for these facilities. The National Sea Change Taskforce proposes that the new Regional Development Funding Program be designed to assist LGAs in coastal areas to meet this increasing demand and existing shortfall.

The sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on the sustainability and liveability of the vast majority of Australia's regional population. To effectively manage population growth in the coastal zone requires a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic impact of growth within an agreed National Policy Framework which incorporates infrastructure planning. This collaborative approach requires the support and commitment of all three tiers of government. Only then can the range of issues impacting on the nation's coastal communities be adequately addressed. The Taskforce is mindful of the commitment in its *Caring for our Coasts* policy that a Rudd Labor Government 'will provide national leadership and work with local communities to address the challenges of coastal growth and climate change'. We see this commitment as essential to gaining the collaboration of all three spheres of government to the task of achieving an integrated, coordinated response to the impact of population growth on the long-term sustainability of Australia's regional coastal communities.

The sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in all Australian states. Apart from increasing demand for community infrastructure and services rapid growth is also resulting in loss of forestation and biodiversity, which inevitably has an impact on greenhouse gas emissions. To effectively manage population growth in Australia's

coastal zone requires a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic impact of growth within an agreed National Policy Framework which includes infrastructure planning. Only then can the range of issues impacting on the coastal environment and communities be adequately considered and addressed. What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

Recommendations

The Taskforce proposes that the new regional and community infrastructure program be developed to incorporate the following key elements:

- a coordinated national approach to managing coastal growth based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.
- a broad national context for policy and practice be established to strengthen the resilience of coastal community infrastructure to climate change impacts based on the relevant recommendations of the *Planning for Climate Change* research report.
- accurate and consistent methods of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-residents in coastal areas be implemented to enable resources to be better matched with demand associated with population growth.
- further research be conducted to assess the social implications of coastal growth, including socio-economic disadvantage, health and housing
- a considered policy response to the ageing of non-metropolitan coastal populations be developed.
- the new regional and community infrastructure program be developed to reflect the best practice principles and strategies outlined in the research reports commissioned by the National Sea Change Taskforce.

INTRODUCTION

‘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’
(Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p.1)

The National Sea Change Taskforce (the Taskforce) welcomes this current Parliamentary Inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (see Appendix 6 for the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry and Appendix 1 for background information on the Taskforce). The inquiry is of particular relevance to Australia’s regional coastal communities, which comprise more than 80% of Australia’s entire regional population.

The Taskforce notes comments by the Hon Anthony Albanese, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, when announcing the inquiry, that it is to ‘make recommendations on ways to invest funding in genuine regional economic development and community infrastructure with the aim of enhancing the sustainability and liveability of Australia’s regions’. This submission has been prepared to highlight important issues facing Australian coastal areas and has been structured to respond to this request by the Minister.

The migration of population to the Australia’s coastal areas, which has become known as the ‘sea change’ phenomenon, has reached significant proportions. Settlements that 50 years ago were little more than small coastal townships and fishing villages have grown to become rapidly expanding urbanised regions experiencing some of the highest growth rates in Australia. Increasing numbers of Australians have been attracted to the coast in search of a better way of life away from the capital cities and a better environment in which to raise their children. Coastal growth has been particularly strong over the past ten years. Analysis of the latest population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that at the end of June 2007 there were 6.26 million people living in Australia’s non-metro coastal areas, an increase of 1.27 million people since June 1997.

Coastal population outside the capital cities now represents 30% of Australia's national population and 82% of the nation's entire regional population. In 2006-07 the number of people migrating to non-metro coastal communities exceeded the total number of people moving to all of Australia's capital cities. It is estimated a further one million people will commence moving to the coast from 2010 as the 'baby boomer' generation starts to reach retirement age. Apart from growth in resident populations, coastal communities face the added impact of increasing levels of tourism.

The rate of growth currently being experienced in coastal Australia is not sustainable. Coastal communities are attempting to deal with extraordinary growth pressures but research conducted for the Taskforce has shown that coastal councils do not have the resources necessary to keep pace with this demand. The first research project conducted by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney in 2005 observes that coastal communities in Australia are struggling to keep pace with the social, environmental and economic impacts associated with growth. The report finds that coastal councils report infrastructure shortfalls and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources (grants, rates and development contributions). The report notes there is a clear need and substantial pressure from new residents for services and infrastructure comparable to that of metropolitan areas. The report, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, forms part of this submission as Appendix 3.

Average annual growth in Australia's non-metro coastal areas is approximately 2%, which tends to be 50% or 60% above the national average. Growth rates in individual Local Government Areas (LGAs) are often much higher. The Gold Coast City Council, in Queensland, experienced the largest population growth of any local government authority (LGA) in Australia in 2006-07, with a population increase of more than 17,000 people and a growth rate of 3.4%. Other high growth LGAs included Capel in Western Australia (5.8%), Cairns in Queensland (3.2%), Mandurah in Western Australia (3.6%) and Surf Coast in Victoria (3.2%) (ABS 2008). These growth rates are based on estimated resident population figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics each year. This data is limited to an estimate of the number of permanent residents within statistical and local government areas. It does not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents.

The provision of infrastructure to meet demand associated with growth pressures is an issue facing coastal councils throughout Australia. The Queensland State Government was one of the first jurisdictions to recognise the special needs of rapidly growing coastal regions. In 2004 it announced a whole of government approach to dealing with projected growth in the south-east corner of the State – from Noosa to the NSW border. The Beattie Government created the Office of Urban Management to coordinate plans by all state agencies to meet the needs of an additional million people in the south-east corner of the state over the next 20 years. What distinguishes the SE Queensland Regional Plan from most other regional planning schemes is an accompanying infrastructure plan, which allocated \$55 billion to meet the cost of infrastructure and services that would be required by the expanded population in the region. The plan included funding for infrastructure and services such as roads and public transport, social and community infrastructure, energy networks, water infrastructure and health facilities. The Queensland Government recently reviewed and updated the plan, and has now budgeted for infrastructure expenditure of \$82 billion up to the year 2026.

The National Sea Change Taskforce believes there is a need for a similar integrated, whole of government approach to addressing the impact of coastal growth and development at a Commonwealth Government level and in other States and Territories. Currently, there is no single Commonwealth Government agency with coordinating, integrative responsibility for matters relating to coastal planning and management. Instead, this is shared between Departments including Climate Change, Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, with the result that no one department or agency has overriding responsibility for addressing these issues. Similarly, there is a need for a national coastal policy framework that enjoys the political support and commitment of all three tiers of government.

The Taskforce welcomes the policy commitment contained in the Caring For Our Coasts Plan that:

A Rudd Labor Government will provide national leadership and work with local communities to address the challenges of coastal growth and climate change.

This commitment is essential to gaining the collaboration of all three spheres of government to the task of achieving an integrated, coordinated response to the impact of population growth on the Australian coast and the long-term sustainability and liveability of Australia's coastal regions.

Key challenges facing coastal communities

The research project, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, identified the following key challenges facing Australia's coastal LGAs and communities:

Infrastructure

All coastal councils report a shortfall in infrastructure and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources, such as grants, rates and developer contributions. There is a clear need to expand and upgrade services and infrastructure so that they are comparable to those in metropolitan areas. Gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population and visitor needs, including roads, sewer, water services and public transport.

Environment and heritage

Coastal environments are under significant pressure. Major 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.

Community wellbeing

Many non-metropolitan coastal communities are characterised by high levels of unemployment, lower than average household incomes, greater levels of socio-economic disadvantage and higher numbers of seniors than other parts of Australia. Demand for new housing and holiday accommodation reduces affordable housing opportunities. There is a risk of social polarisation within many sea change communities.

Economy/Tourism

Increasing population growth and development activity in coastal areas is not translating to long term economic gains usually associated with population expansion. Many coastal communities are experiencing a decline in traditional

resourced-based industries such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Coastal councils require assistance to manage this process of transition and its impact on environmental quality and character of their communities.

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.

The research report reviewed Australian and State government policies, strategies and legislation relating to the planning and management of Australia's coastal areas and found that:

- 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.
- 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.

NSW INQUIRY INTO COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Concerns about the impact of population growth on Australia's coastal zone have been increasing over the past decade. Apart from the social, environmental and economic impact of growth on coastal communities there is mounting concern among stakeholder groups, including the National Sea Change Taskforce, that current methods of planning, funding and managing population growth and tourism demand in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate. This lack of a consistent policy response to the pressures facing Australia's coastal communities is of significant concern to coastal LGAs. It is also of growing concern to State Governments. This submission outlines the response of the Queensland State Government to rapid growth along that state's coastal zone at p5. At least three states, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, are currently reviewing and updating coastal environmental policy in response to continuing coastal growth pressures in those jurisdictions.

In 2005, concerns about growth pressures in coastal areas of NSW and the provision of infrastructure in coastal communities led to the establishment of a Parliamentary inquiry in that state. The Parliamentary Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, announced on 23 February 2005 by the NSW Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, investigated the effects of population growth on coastal areas and examined the infrastructure needs of growing coastal communities. The report of the Inquiry was released in November 2005. Sections of the report have been incorporated in the following section of this submission for the information of members of the Standing Committee. The complete report of the NSW inquiry has been attached to this submission as Appendix 6.

In his Foreword to the report the Committee Chair, Kevin Greene MP, stated that:

'The Public Work Committee's report provides a snapshot of critical infrastructure issues affecting coastal NSW, including:

- The pressing demands for services needed by concentrated aged communities in coastal areas;
- The tension between preservation of environmental qualities of the coast and the desire for development
- The lack of employment diversity for economic growth in coastal areas; and
- Infrastructure resourcing problems faced by coastal councils.

The body of the report noted that:

‘This inquiry provides a snapshot of current concerns arising from population growth and highlights the ramifications of infrastructure provision. The Committee notes that it cannot be assumed that the current infrastructure is sufficient for the existing residents of coastal areas. The surge of new ‘sea change’ residents has not induced a new problem but exacerbated the pre-existing problem of infrastructure deficiencies’.

The report went on to state that:

‘The Committee sees the key weaknesses in the current arrangements for coastal infrastructure management as:

- gaps in the assessment of specific infrastructure needs and actual shortfall in infrastructure;
- lack of discrete infrastructure goals or measurement of their delivery. This is because of uncertainty about long term funding sources and the financial base of council;
- too many plans and strategies and a lack of understanding of the hierarchy of plans. The planning of various elements of coastal infrastructure is fragmented and overly complex; and
- the absence of a NSW policy emphasis on coastal growth issues in comparison with other jurisdictions and best practice suggestions’.

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Recommendations

The recommendations of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas were as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1 Coastal Cabinet Sub Committee (CSC)

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government establish a Coastal Cabinet Sub-Committee. The basis for the Cabinet Sub-Committee is recognition of the unique service and infrastructure needs and environmental challenges posed by the rising population in coastal areas of NSW. The Coastal Cabinet Sub-Committee would consist of key infrastructure and financing Ministers and the Ministers for Local Government. The Coastal Sub-Committee would be chaired by the Minister for Planning. The primary tasks for the Sub Committee would be to consider progress against infrastructure targets set by coastal Regional Strategies. An annual Regional Report Card would be produced for each region that notes performance against targets and grades coastal regions according to key indicators of amenity.

RECOMMENDATION 2 Regional Strategies

The NSW Department of Planning is currently preparing coastal regional strategies. These Strategies are designed to canvass anticipated needs for services, infrastructure and the environment based on demographic change and other factors. On the basis of issues raised in this inquiry and to enable Regional Report Cards to be generated from the Strategies, the Committee recommends the following components be included in the Regional Strategies:

- Statement of long term vision and values for the coast and each coastal regional area;
- Identified infrastructure projects to be delivered in specific timeframes;
- Nominated and focused areas for coastal growth;
- Set benchmarks and targets for coastal amenity;
- Defined links between Regional Strategies and other strategies, agencies and planning tools;
- Alignment of coastal planning boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION 3 Sustainable Regional Economies

The Committee recommends that a long term goal for all coastal regions be self sufficiency in terms of its economic and employment base.

RECOMMENDATION 4 Regional Report Cards

The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Sub-Committee release an annual Regional Report Card for each region based on the Infrastructure projects and indicators noted in the specific Regional Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 5 Infrastructure Audits

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government fast track and resource the completion of coastal infrastructure audits to a common, nationally agreed methodology. The results of the audits should be integrated into the formation of the Department of Planning's Regional Strategies and be used to assist the ranking of priority infrastructure projects.

RECOMMENDATION 6 Review of local government funding

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government, led by the Department of Local Government, undertake a review of funding options faced by coastal councils including consideration of:

- debt attitudes and borrowing capacity for local government;
- the current impacts of rate pegging;
- the impact of pensioner rebates on rate revenue;
- the effectiveness of new development contribution reforms;
- options for new fees and charges; and
- impacts of increased local government responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 7 Resourcing of Strategies

The Committee recommends that the NSW fast tracks and resources the planning reforms by increasing the planning reform funds to ensure that Regional Strategies are operational sooner and standard Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) generated in less than the current 5 year timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION 8 Section 94 contributions

The Committee recommends that Section 94 Contribution Plans' flat rate of 1% be variable to allow coastal growth councils which can demonstrate they are experiencing higher than average growth to set levies of a higher rate. Such variations should require approval by the Minister for Local Government.

RECOMMENDATION 9 Public Information

The Committee recommends that the Department of Planning provide clear and transparent information on the current planning system in New South Wales and the impact of the planning reforms as they become operational.

Not all of these recommendations are relevant to the inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee. They have been included, however, to provide an outline of the considered views of elected representatives in one State jurisdiction on the initiatives and strategies required to meet the infrastructure needs of growing coastal communities in that State.

BEST PRACTICE MODELS FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

The Taskforce recognises the need for enhanced understanding and use of best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management in coastal areas. These are seen as integral factors that can address the challenge that growth poses to coastal areas. Recent research has indicated that there are planning models in the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission worthy of consideration in the Australian context.

To progress the development and sharing of this knowledge the Taskforce commissioned the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake a research project to identify the key challenges facing Australia's non-metropolitan communities and to outline the planning tools and strategies available to address the challenges. The research report, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local and Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities*, was released in January 2006 (see Appendix 4 that accompanies this report for a copy).

The research identified best practice planning principles for responding to the governance, environmental, community, economic and infrastructure needs of non-metropolitan coastal communities and provided more than 140 examples of best practice for managing the effects of rapid growth drawn from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, the UK and the European Union.

The report, which has been used extensively by policy makers, coastal councils and others with responsibility for managing the impact of coastal growth, points out that several factors suggest that population growth in Australian coastal areas will continue for the foreseeable future. These include:

- the imminent retirement of the 'baby boomer' generation, which will produce a sizeable new market for high amenity retirement destinations;
- the global shift away from manufacturing based economies towards information, service and consumption based industries which are less dependent on a metropolitan location; and

- the growing flexibility of work practices associated with new telecommunications technology, which enables some workers to relocate to small coastal centres or the rural hinterland.

The full text of the Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local and Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities research report is appended to this submission as Appendix 4.

PLANNING FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE IN COASTAL AREAS

The potential impact of climate change is of particular concern to coastal communities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies coastal areas of Australia as the most exposed to potential climate change impacts, from sea level rise to increased frequency and velocity of extreme weather events including storm surges. (Christensen et al. 2007).

The social profile of non-metropolitan coastal communities compounds their susceptibility to the environmental and economic consequences of climate change. Characterised by lower household incomes, higher proportions of older people and rapid population growth and change, non-metropolitan coastal areas are exposed to the cumulative effects of physical exposure, higher levels of social disadvantage and reduced capacity to adapt to climate risk.

How then should local government in coastal areas respond to this heightened vulnerability? The Taskforce commissioned the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake a special research project to assist coastal LGAs address this issue. This research report, titled *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, is due to be released on 28 July, 2008. The aims of the research project, as outlined in the draft report, are to:

- Scope the potential environmental, social, and economic implications of climate change for Australia's coastal amenity communities, including a social vulnerability model to indicate communities which need the most assistance in adapting to these impacts;
- Define leading practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a focus on non metropolitan communities in coastal Australia;

- Establish the broader context of current policy and practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation within Australian local government areas, and particularly within non metropolitan coastal areas; and,
- Identify opportunities to extend and enhance this practice at local, state, territorial, and or national levels.

The key findings of the research report in relation to infrastructure in Australia's coastal areas are as follows:

Infrastructure in many Australian coastal amenity communities is already under considerable pressure. Earlier work for the National Sea Change Taskforce (Gurran et al. 2005) documents infrastructure shortfalls for existing and future population and visitor needs (roads, sewer, water services, public transport) and insufficient capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources (grants, rates, and developer contributions). At the same time, coastal amenity communities continue to experience strong pressure from new residents for services and infrastructure on par with that of the major cities.

Climate change represents several additional challenges for infrastructure provision in coastal areas. Areas with high seasonal visitation experience periods of peak demand for water and energy. However, many communities already experience severe water shortages during summer, coinciding with the visitor season and when the impacts of drought are likely to be the most intense. Similarly, peak energy demands during hot weather are likely to cause power failure during summer holidays when tourism visitation is highest.

At the same time, large scale forms of new infrastructure, associated with expensive maintenance, long life cycles, and major environmental impact, might not be an appropriate response for many coastal amenity communities, particularly given medium and long term uncertainty over climate change impacts. The international trend is towards smaller forms of decentralised water, energy, communications and waste management infrastructure, which are associated with fewer greenhouse gas emissions and are associated with greater overall regional resilience during times of emergency (Bulkeley and Betsill 2003, ODPM 2004). These approaches combine climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

Transport and accessibility are already major issues for Australian coastal amenity communities. By their nature dispersed along the coastline, the private motor car is the main form of transport between and within settlements. As increased

temperatures and sudden storm events will place more pressure on road infrastructure, increasing risks from sudden flooding and landslip, the availability of all weather access roads (and improved intercommunity transport links, such as rail) should become an overriding consideration when planning for the location of new settlements or the extension of existing ones.

Other forms of transportation, linking coastal amenity communities, including island communities, with other areas, may also be affected by climate change impacts, but they may also become increasingly important. The exposure of ports and marinas to major storm surges will need to be appraised regularly and the impact of new port areas, port expansions, and marinas carefully assessed. Airports, providing safe emergency landing areas for services may become critical during times of disaster. Air travel, however, is extremely energy inefficient, and thus alternative travel modes may become more important as regions and travellers seek to reduce their carbon footprints. Heavy rail and new rapid rail may again become important, as climate resilient and carbon neutral forms of infrastructure and transportation to link regional and coastal communities to major centres.

Mixed use areas and reduced need for motorised transport within coastal amenity communities can enhance retail areas, which benefit from increased concentrations of activities. Tourist facilities and associated industries often benefit too from locations that allow visitors to walk or cycle to major attractions, restaurant and retail precincts. These opportunities help create a complete 'destination' experience, while also reducing problems associated with traffic congestion.

However, hot summers, with increased temperatures, may discourage people from walking or cycling and reinforce preferences for air conditioned private vehicles. Strategies to ensure that walkways are shaded and cooled by natural vegetation and cross breezes are critical to ensure that walking and cycling become increasingly important elements of quality of life and visitor experience within coastal amenity communities. Such strategies also support policies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Public transport strategies are needed to connect coastal settlements to regional facilities and to provide all weather transport within settlements for residents and visitors. Increased patronage by tourists may also mean that public transport options become more financially viable. It will be very difficult for Australian cities (and those in other developed countries) to reach their climate mitigation/greenhouse gas reduction goals without addressing the role of private automobile transportation in greenhouse gas emissions.

Plan to strengthen the resilience of community infrastructure to climate change impacts by:

- Assessing the location of existing and planned infrastructure (roads, utilities, recreation centres, swimming pools, hospitals, schools, libraries and community centres etc), and vulnerability climate change impacts.
- Identifying future locations for relocation of major infrastructure or establishment of new, decentralised energy, water, or waste management plants to service existing or planned development. Ensure that land use plans reserve these sites or indicate the need to include them within new release or redevelopment areas. Retrofitting existing urban centres to accommodate renewable energy options including cogeneration possibilities.
- Reviewing the design standards for public buildings and infrastructure items and private buildings (houses, apartments, commercial and industrial buildings etc) to minimise risk in case of more extreme weather events as well as more cumulative impacts of climate change, such as increased temperatures, drought and floods associated with sudden storm events.
- Revising infrastructure capacity plans to take future climate scenarios into account (for instance, likelihood of drought), rather than historical weather events, and adjust settlement thresholds accordingly (for instance, thresholds based on availability of water supply).
- Maximising multifunction opportunities, by prioritising the introduction of new infrastructure that delivers multiple environmental services as well as serving basic settlement needs wherever possible. For instance, wastewater management strategies that utilise natural or constructed wetlands, and may also provide recreational opportunities and contribute to biodiversity and landscape. These strategies have multiple quality of life benefits for amenity communities.
- Similarly, include clear land use planning objectives for new infrastructure forms to have minimal or no net carbon impact. Where such infrastructure is to be provided by private developers, include planning based incentives to support this provision (for instance, increased development potential on the site, or the elimination of other infrastructure levies).
- Emphasise potential for major developments to self provide basic infrastructure services – like energy, water, waste management, through strategies such as micro energy generation, water retention, demand reduction technologies, reuse, and recycling; and waste minimisation, reuse, and disposal. If technology is not currently available, ensure future opportunities are retained to introduce more carbon friendly and climate resilient forms of infrastructure in the future.

Plan for water security in coastal amenity communities by:

- Protecting the integrity of existing water supply by prioritising catchment protection in land use and development planning decisions, by adopting the principles of water sensitive urban design, and by considering other local or regional catchment management plans when decisions are made.

- Prioritising water supply options that are associated with minimal contributions to climate change impacts, so that major forms of intervention like desalination plants (associated with increased energy requirements and some increase in sea temperatures) are considered only if alternative technologies and strategies (including slower growth in certain areas) are not viable.
- Implementing water demand management strategies and requirements for new urban developments, particularly developments associated with major water needs, such as tourist facilities. Requirements might include mandatory use of water savings devices, planting of native species, water capture, recycling, and onsite water treatment (depending on other state government requirements and health standards). Increased rate payments or a special levies on tourism / visitor infrastructure might be required to offset the water impacts of tourist facilities during peak seasons.
- Maintain spaces for floods and water retention in regions where rainfall patterns are likely to become more volatile, characterised by fewer overall rainy periods, interspersed by sudden intense rainfall.

Plan to make transportation improvements a central component of mitigation as well as more resilient to climate change within coastal amenity communities by:

- Designing new settlements and reconfiguring existing settlements to reduce the need for trip generation and to maximise potential viability of public transport.
- Assessing the transportation impacts of all major new developments.
- Ensuring that new settlements are accessible by all weather roads or alternative routes.
- Prioritising attractive and well shaded walkways and cycle paths within existing and planned areas, linking residential, retail, and recreational precincts.

Plan to capitalise on opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation, and to increase resilience to climate change impacts for energy requirements by:

- Identifying and reserving sites or locations that may become suitable for renewable energy plants either now or in the future. Drafting renewable friendly energy planning and building codes, that enable broader environmental benefits to be assessed alongside local impacts on landscape, amenity, and economy.
- Creating planning incentives or requirements for major new developments to utilise local sources of renewable energy as much as possible, or provide offset payments to stimulate investment in local energy generation if technology is not currently available. Reviewing current pricing policy for renewable energy will be critical in making it cost effective to invest in urban renewable energy options.
- Protect solar access to ensure that developments retain capacity for onsite solar energy generation.

- Enforcing building and urban design requirements that minimise energy requirements and maximise thermal comfort.

Plan for carbon neutral and climate resilient waste management in coastal communities by:

- Auditing the location of existing and future landfill sites, and assessing the vulnerability of these sites to major weather events.
- Establishing provisions for composting at site and or neighbourhood level, to reduce waste in land fill and to assist in reducing the water requirements of local gardens. Require major developments to include a sustainable waste strategy as a condition of planning approval – or a special contribution to local waste management and recovery fund.
- In some cases, reserving larger local sites to accommodate waste sorting, recycling and reuse. Minimise the amount of waste in landfill sites, while exploring sustainable ways to harness the energy it represents, such as methane recovery and biomass plants.

The complete research report, *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, is attached to this submission as Appendix 5

RECOMMENDATION

That the new regional and community infrastructure program be developed to establish a broad context for policy and practice to strengthen the resilience of coastal community infrastructure to climate change impacts by adopting the relevant recommendations of the *Planning for Climate Change* research report.

ENHANCED COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

The Taskforce notes that current methods of planning, funding and managing population and tourism growth in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate. The Taskforce promotes the adoption of a coordinated national approach to managing growth in coastal areas that would be based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal growth is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.

Australia does not have an agreed national policy or framework for planning and managing coastal areas. There is a clear need for enhanced coordination of planning and management of coastal growth at a local, regional, state and Commonwealth level. There is also a greater need for cross-jurisdictional coordination between all levels of government in relation to coastal planning and management. The Taskforce notes the release of the 'Caring for Our Coasts' plan, announced by Peter Garrett prior to the November Federal election. This plan commits the Rudd Government to *'provide national leadership and work with local communities to address the challenges of coastal growth and climate change'*. The Plan represents an important step towards development of an agreed national policy framework for coastal planning and management involving the commitment of all three tiers of government.

Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005: 59) point out that there is a need for such a national policy framework 'to lead coastal policy, establish strategy 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'.

The need for greater cross jurisdictional coordination is also evident. The researchers state that in 'comparison to many other nations, Australia's national responses to coastal urbanisation are limited. This is partly due to an 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 Government and the Natural Resource Ministerial Council) (p. 41).

Since its formation in 2004 the Taskforce has had as one of its key platforms in planning for sustainability the establishment of a collaborative working relationship with all State Governments to develop coordinated regional plans that provide:

- a focus on sustainability of social capital, the environment and economic activity
- greater certainty about the extent and rate of growth in sea change communities
- joint planning of infrastructure and services
- employment opportunities to match population growth

The 'sea change' phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in every Australian state and territory. The Taskforce believes it can only be addressed effectively through the commitment of local, State, Territory and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way. It is for this reason that the Taskforce seeks the endorsement and cooperation of all State, Territory and Federal governments to development of a national policy framework for coastal Australia in the interests of safeguarding the Australian coast and coastal communities. Without this commitment there is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid growth and development in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment and the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of many coastal communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That a coordinated national approach to managing coastal growth be adopted based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.

IMPACT OF NON-RESIDENT POPULATIONS

Current demographic data for the Australian coast is based on information from the census and from the annual Estimated Resident Population data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This data does not reflect non-resident population peaks or the impact of part-time residents or other visitors. It is limited to an estimate of the number of usual residents within statistical and local government areas. It does not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents. This inevitably impacts on the capacity of coastal councils to finance the shortfalls in infrastructure and services through existing sources, such as grants, rates and developer contributions.

There is a clear need to establish an accurate and consistent method of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-resident population groups in Australian coastal areas to enable planners and decision-makers to better match resources with demand associated with population growth.

The absence of accurate data on holidaymakers and other visitors to coastal areas means that demand for infrastructure and services in these communities is consistently understated. Most coastal LGAs experience regular influxes of population during holiday periods which place heavy demand on local infrastructure and services. At Byron Bay, for example, the permanent population of about 5,000 expands to more than 20,000 during the summer holiday season and the LGA experiences approximately two million visitors annually. These visitors place substantial demand on water, sewerage, waste collection and other community services. While tourism injects revenue into the local commercial economy, and helps to generate part time employment opportunities, it does not contribute to the cost of public infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors, such as roads, water, sewerage treatment, collection of waste and recreation facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

That accurate and consistent methods of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-residents in coastal areas be implemented to enable resources to be better matched with demand associated with population growth.

MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Social, environmental and economic issues

Rapid population and tourism growth is having a significant social impact on existing coastal communities. Researchers have identified that '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' (Appendix 3 p. 56).

Some existing residents in coastal areas have benefited from rapid population growth. Local property owners in high growth areas have reaped windfall profits from the sale of their land for development. State and Federal Governments have also benefited from the collection of taxes associated with these transactions, such as capital gains tax, GST and stamp duty. Some industry sectors have also benefited, including the construction industry and commercial operators such as retailers, resort owners and food and beverage outlets.

The influx of so many people into a coastal community impacts in many different ways. Affluent sea changers tend to drive up property prices while low-income earners find they are priced out of the local property market. As Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2005) point out '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' (p. 60).

Unemployment rates in sea change areas are noticeably higher than in metropolitan areas and youth unemployment is particular high in coastal growth areas. Apart from high unemployment, research indicates that people living in coastal areas have a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole (Haberkorn 2004, Hugo 2004). Non metropolitan coastal areas also have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Eight per cent are receiving labour market benefits compared to 5.9% in Australia overall (Hugo p. 17).

The Taskforce considers that further research is required to assess the social implications of sea change growth. The focus of such research should include socio-economic disadvantage, health, ageing, housing and the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings.

RECOMMENDATION

That further research be conducted to assess the social implications of coastal growth, including socio-economic disadvantage, health and housing

Policy response to ageing communities

Coastal councils and their communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. The effects of this continuing increase in the percentage of ageing people in coastal communities are profound. Local Government Authorities in coastal areas do not have the resources necessary to meet the increase in demand for community infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of an ageing population.

There is an urgent need for development of national policy initiatives to meet the current and future needs of ageing populations in coastal communities, including programs to meet the current shortfall in aged care facilities, home care and support, advocacy services, support groups, respite care, appropriate housing, nursing homes, retirement accommodation and learning and education services.

In addition, ageing demographic trends present challenges to coastal communities in terms of stimulating inclusiveness, participation and accessibility among older people. There is a need for policy initiatives, to be administered by the Australian Department of Health & Ageing, to foster greater opportunities for older people to play an active and valued role within their communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That a considered policy response to the ageing of non-metropolitan coastal populations be developed and implemented.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

The National Sea Change Taskforce supports the initiative announced by Anthony Albanese, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government that a new Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program will be introduced in 2009-10. It notes that the new program will be designed to fund major investments in regional communities and is in addition to the \$176 million Better Regions Program. The Taskforce sincerely hopes that the new program will be designed to assist local government authorities in coastal areas to meet the on-going growth pressures they are experiencing.

All Australian coastal councils report a lack of resources to meet the on-going increase in demand for community infrastructure such as cultural, sporting, recreation and other community facilities and to catch up with the significant backlog of demand for these facilities. The councils also report infrastructure shortfalls and an inability to finance these shortfalls through existing sources such as grants, rates and development contributions. The rapid rates of growth, population characteristics and extensive scale of greenfield development in rapidly-growing coastal areas means that the resource base of LGAs in these areas is inadequate to fund much-needed infrastructure.

One particular need in sea change areas is additional funding for capital works to meet increasing tourism demand in coastal towns and cities. Coastal councils also struggle to find the recurrent funding necessary to maintain these facilities. The lack or poor state of these facilities reflects adversely on the ability of coastal communities to meet the needs of tourists. Coastal councils also require financial assistance to undertake significant coastal protection infrastructure to minimise foreshore erosion. This is particularly relevant given the potential impact of climate change.

One of the most urgent needs is for funding to assist coastal councils to undertake the initial preparatory work to scope, research, develop, or initiate pilot projects to address priority funding areas. These priority areas, identified by the Taskforce, include:

- Infrastructure - water, sewer, road
- Public transport systems
- Education and health infrastructure
- Managing the interface between urban and natural / protected areas

- Local economic development and community wellbeing

This approach reflects the Taskforce research findings (Gurran, Squires & Blakely 2005) that observe that 'actual infrastructure gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population 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' (p. 58). Further it is noted that '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' (p. 47).

Best Practice Principles and Strategic Responses - Infrastructure

The second research report commissioned by the National Sea Change Taskforce identified best practice models of local and regional planning for coastal communities (Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2006).

The section of the report dealing with infrastructure documented the key infrastructure challenges affecting high amenity destinations and sea change communities in Australia and internationally. The report identified best practice principles in planning for infrastructure provision as well as strategies to implement these principles in various sea change community contexts. The report also described leading examples of regional and local practice in planning for and delivering infrastructure in rapidly growing coastal communities. (The complete report is attached to this submission as Appendix 4)

The report summarised best practice principles for infrastructure provision in sea change communities and other amenity destinations as follows:

- Infrastructure needs must be determined through appropriate research and needs assessment, considering the type, capacity, and location of existing infrastructure, current populations and forecast demographic trends and patterns of visitation (including population thresholds whereby existing infrastructure will be at peak capacity); potential fluctuations in migration; the social and economic needs and aspirations of residents and businesses; environmental capacity; the location of coastal hazards, environmental assets, cultural heritage and landscape values; current maintenance and servicing requirements and the long term costs of maintenance for proposed new facilities.

- Infrastructure investment decisions should prioritise environmental protection, rehabilitation, and sustainable patterns of resource use and management; the promotion of social equity in access to services (with particular emphasis on the needs of low income and socially disadvantaged groups); and preferred economic activities (existing and prospective).
- Infrastructure investment decisions (the type, location, and timing of new infrastructure) must be determined in the context of local or regional planning frameworks, and support desired future settlement patterns and environmental capacity.
- All levels of government involved in infrastructure provision must *collaboratively* plan for the type, location, and timing of new infrastructure, consistent with local or regional planning frameworks, and in consultation with local communities.
- Infrastructure charges and development levies should recognize the real cost of infrastructure provision (and maintenance) associated with the development.
- Public-private partnerships in infrastructure funding and provision are desirable where the infrastructure decision remains consistent with broader community aspirations reflected in the local or regional planning framework.
- Community facilities should be designed for flexibility and multi purpose uses.
- Community consultation and research should inform the assessment of infrastructure priorities (the type, location, level, timing, and scale of infrastructure).

In line with these principles, the report identified the following strategies for managing infrastructure provision and for delivering particular types of infrastructure suitable for coastal and high amenity communities:

- Regional infrastructure planning, to co-ordinate infrastructure provision across all levels of government consistent with regional and local comprehensive planning frameworks. Regional infrastructure plans should incorporate long term funding commitments, provisions for the staging of key infrastructure in relation to population thresholds or environmental indicators, and arrangements for managing capital assets (or funding services) over time. A leading example is the *Regional Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026, South East Queensland*.
- Financial mechanisms such as visitor charges - from flat entrance fees to visit key attractions such as beaches, national parks, or historic communities, through to 'toilet taxes' and 'bed taxes' collected by accommodation providers; negotiated infrastructure agreements between planning authorities and developers; special rates to pay for specific works or services for a particular area; and differential rates applying to some land uses in high amenity areas, such as holiday houses and holiday rental properties.
- Planning for specific types of infrastructure, including: "ecological infrastructure" - infrastructure which contributes positively to the environment,

while addressing community needs; “Integrated Water Cycle Management” and “Water Sensitive Urban Design” - holistic approaches to the management of water supply, sewerage and stormwater, resulting in better environmental outcomes and reduced costs of water supply and management; and innovative approaches to transport, including community transport schemes, and information strategies to encourage the use of existing non motorized and shared transport options. Examples include the *Eurobodalla Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (2003)* and the *Sunshine Coast Integrated Transport Strategy*.

In relation to financial mechanisms such as visitor charges referred to in the strategies outlined above, the research report goes on to state that ‘many of these approaches are unsuitable for high amenity communities in coastal Australia, due to access and equity concerns and the potential impact on the tourist market.’ These mechanisms tend to be controversial in coastal areas, however it should be noted that such charges have been adopted, for example, in relation to airport operations and taxi use at airports, both within Australia and internationally, and are now collected in the cost of air fares and taxi fares.

The National Sea Change Taskforce recommends that the new Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program be developed to reflect the best practice principles and strategies outlined in the research reports commissioned by the Taskforce and referred to above. The incorporation of these principles and strategies would greatly assist high growth coastal LGAs to meet increasing demand for regional and community infrastructure generated by population growth and tourism demand. The new program could be similar to the Federal Government’s Roads to Recovery program and require funds to be spent on approved projects within a prescribed timeframe. Projects undertaken with the program could also provide an opportunity to publicly highlight the Federal Government’s role in supporting rapidly-growing coastal communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That the new regional and community infrastructure program be developed to reflect the best practice principles and strategies outlined in the research reports commissioned by the National Sea Change Taskforce.

REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

As identified in the Planning Research Centre research findings, the National Sea Change Taskforce believes it is timely and important to undertake a broad scale review of governance and institutional settings for the Australian coast, including current arrangements for funding infrastructure in high growth coastal areas. Such a review would describe the current situation, identify areas where improvements are needed and possible, and develop options for improvement for consideration by governments and stakeholder groups.

This matter was considered at a workshop on governance conducted by the National Sea Change Taskforce at Port Douglas in April 2006. The workshop participants, who included representatives of local government, NRM groups and coastal researchers, concluded that more than a decade since the Resource Assessment Commission's overview, and given the widely perceived and often demonstrable fragmentation, overlaps, complexity and lack of coordination in coastal policy and management, that such a review should engage all levels of government (including regional organizations), community stakeholder groups, industry, and relevant research organizations and experts, and draw on expertise both in coastal management and in institutional and policy coordination in federal systems.

Amongst other things, the review would have the following objectives:

- Map and describe current institutions, legislative frameworks, organizations and policy processes that define coastal policy and management, taking an integrated approach (that is, covering environmental, social and economic dimensions).
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, agencies across one level of government, and other organizations.
- Identify unnecessary duplication and redundancies (noting that some redundancy and overlap may be desirable to provide resilience and checks and balances).
- Consider the appropriateness and adequacy of current resources available for coastal policy and management (including human, information and financial resources) currently assigned to those roles and responsibilities.

- Identify conflicting processes, policy goals and processes that impede achievement of integrated coastal policy.
- Identify a range of reforms, options and best practice models for better integration, communication and achievement of synergies.

RECOMMENDATION

That a review of governance and institutional arrangements for the Australian coastal zone be undertaken, including a review of current arrangements for funding infrastructure in high growth coastal areas.

CONCLUSION

The sea change phenomenon, and its impact on infrastructure provision in coastal areas, is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in Australia.

It can only be addressed through a commitment on the part of local, State and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way.

There is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid population growth and tourism demand in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment. It could also lead to the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of coastal communities.

This submission has attempted to identify key issues relating to infrastructure provision in coastal areas. To effectively manage population and tourism growth in Australia's coastal zone requires a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic impact of growth within an agreed National Policy Framework which includes infrastructure planning. Only then can the range of issues impacting on the coastal environment and communities be adequately considered and addressed.

What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) *Regional Population Growth, Australia* Cat. No 3218.0, ABS, Canberra

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005), *National Regional Profile*, Cat. no. 1379.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004a), *Australian Social Trends*, Cat. No 4102.0, ABS, Canberra

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004b), *Tourism Satellite Account: Australian National Accounts 2002-03*, Cat. No.5249.0, ABS, Canberra

Baum, N. and Jackson, N. (2004), *Planning the Local Government Response to Ageing and Place*, Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Association of NSW, Sydney

Burnley, I. and Murphy, P. (2004), *Sea Change: Movement from Metropolitan to Arcadian Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (2004), *NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2001-2031*

Gurran, N., Squires, C. and Blakely, E. (2005), *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, The University of Sydney Planning Research Centre, Sydney

Gurran, N., Squires, C. and Blakely, E. (2006), *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities*, The University of Sydney Planning Research Centre, Sydney

Gurran, N., Hamin, E. and Norman, B. (2008), *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, The University of Sydney Planning Research Centre, Sydney

Haberkorn, G, Kelson S., Tottenham, R. and Magpantay C., *Country Matters: Social Atlas of Rural and Regional Australia*, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra

Hugo, G (2004) *National Overview of Recent Population Distribution and Redistribution*, National Coastal Urbanisation Symposium, Robina 29 March 2004

Jackson, Natalie (2004), *The Impact of Population Ageing on NSW Local Government*, Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Association of NSW <http://www.lgsa.org.au/site/policy/1000074/2000612/2001220.html>

Salt, Bernard (2003), *The Big Shift*, Hardie Grant, South Yarra

Tourism Task Force (2002), *Taking Tourism & Transport Forward: a Ten Year TTF Blueprint*, Tourism Task Force, Sydney

CONTACT DETAILS

National Sea Change Taskforce

Executive Director: Alan Stokes
Telephones: 02 9904 0311/02 9908 2401
Mobile: 0411 592 269
Fax: 02 9908 2803
Email: info@seachangetaskforce.org.au
Address: 6 Powell Street
Neutral Bay NSW 2089

Appendix 1- Terms of Reference

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government - Inquiry into a New Regional Development Funding Program

The committee is to report on the Australian National Audit's Office Performance Audit of the Regional Partnerships Program and make recommendations on ways to invest funding in genuine regional economic development and community infrastructure with the aim of enhancing the sustainability and liveability of Australia's regions.

The Committee's report is to:

- Provide advice on future funding of regional programs in order to invest in genuine and accountable community infrastructure projects;
- Examine ways to minimise administrative costs and duplication for taxpayers;
- Examine the former government's practices and grants outlined in the Australian National Audit Office report on Regional Partnerships with the aim of providing advice on future funding of regional programs; and
- Examine the former government's practices and grants in the Regional Partnerships Program after the audit period of 2003-2006 with the aim of providing advice on future funding of regional programs.

The inquiry was referred to the committee by the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government on 15 May 2008.

Appendix 2 - About the National Sea Change Taskforce

The National Sea Change Taskforce was established in 2004 as a national body to represent the interests of coastal councils. The role of the Taskforce is to provide national leadership in addressing the impact of the 'sea change' phenomenon and to provide support and guidance to coastal councils experiencing the impact of rapid population and tourism growth. The first step towards establishment of the organisation took place in February 2004 when a group of 27 CEOs and General Managers of high growth coastal councils from around Australia met at Maroochydore, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Over two days of workshops, presentations and deliberations the CEOs identified the priority issues facing their coastal communities and agreed to establish a national taskforce to assist their councils to gain the support and cooperation of State and Federal Governments to address the challenge of growth in sea change areas. The number of coastal LGAs in the Taskforce has steadily increased since that first meeting. A Sea Change conference held in Melbourne in May 2004 was attended by CEOs, mayors and councilors representing 56 coastal councils from every State in Australia. By the time the organization was formally constituted, in November 2004, the Taskforce involved more than 60 participating councils. Funding for the Taskforce's activities is derived from membership fees paid by member councils.

One of the initial objectives of the Taskforce was to establish awareness of the impact of the sea change phenomenon and the role of the group with State and Commonwealth governments, media outlets and the wider public. The aim was to communicate the message that coastal councils are struggling to cope with the pressures of population and tourism growth and do not have the resources required to keep pace with demand for infrastructure and services. As a result of an awareness campaign conducted by the Taskforce, which resulted in more than 1,000 media articles over two years, the term 'sea change phenomenon' has become the accepted national expression for the large-scale movement of population to the coast. There is also national awareness of the social, environmental and economic impact that rapid growth is having on coastal LGAs and their communities.

Another initial objective of the organisation was to commission research to identify the key issues facing coastal councils in Australia. It was recognised at an early stage that an advocacy campaign could only be successful if it was supported by the findings of solid and credible research. The first phase of research, undertaken by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney, was completed in March

2005 and the findings distributed to members and to key political figures. The second phase of research, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities* was released in January 2006. This report documented the range of governance, environmental, community, economic, and infrastructure challenges affecting sea change councils in Australia and identified best practice in addressing these issues. It is attached to this submission as Appendix 4. A third phase of research, which identifies best practice measures for responding to the potential impact of climate change on coastal communities, forms part of this submission at Appendix 3.

Advocacy at State and Federal government level has also been a priority. The Taskforce has made representations to politicians, officials, planners and members of the wider community and has used the findings of the sea change research reports to document the key issues facing coastal communities. As a result of the advocacy program the issue of coastal growth and its impact on coastal communities has been addressed in several policy initiatives by both the former coalition government and the Rudd Labor government. In the period leading up to the November 2007 election the coalition released a policy initiative called the Growing Regions Plan, which was aimed at helping communities in sea change areas to meet the costs associated with growth. Shortly before the 24 November election the ALP announced a Caring For Our Coasts Plan, which committed a Federal Labor Government to providing national leadership on coastal management. The ALP plan stated that the challenge associated with coastal growth, compounded by the impacts of global warming, should be a national priority, with Federal Government leadership and cooperation between all levels of government. It further stated that Labor will work with the National Sea Change Taskforce and other stakeholders in developing broad, national principles for coastal management, consistent with its commitment to sustainable development.

National Sea Change Taskforce Member Councils, 2007-08:

Council	State	Population
Albany	WA	33,364
Alexandrina	SA	20,949
Augusta-Margaret R	WA	12,000
Ballina	NSW	40,090
Bass Coast	VIC	30,191
Bega Valley	NSW	32,637

Bellingen	NSW	12,810
Break O'Day	TAS	6,334
Bunbury	WA	32,499
Bundaberg	QLD	89,814
Busselton	WA	28,649
Byron	NSW	30,898
Cairns	QLD	132,765
Capel	WA	10,517
Circular Head	TAS	8,051
Clarence Valley	NSW	50,102
Coffs Harbour	NSW	68,315
Colac Otway	VIC	21,802
Copper Coast	SA	11,899
Denmark	WA	5,337
East Gippsland	VIC	42,075
Esperance	WA	13,089
Eurobodalla	NSW	36,613
Exmouth	WA	2,245
Fraser Coast	QLD	89,390
Gingin	WA	4,606
Gladstone	QLD	55,556
Glamorgan Spring Bay	TAS	4,356
Glenelg	VIC	20,337
Gold Coast	QLD	524,667
Gosford	NSW	163,469
Great Lakes	NSW	35,068
Greater Taree	NSW	47,110
Irwin	WA	3,350
Kempsey	NSW	28,763
Kiama	NSW	20,382
Kingborough	TAS	32,057
Mandurah	WA	65,273
Moreton Bay	QLD	343,553
Moyne	VIC	16,060
Onkaparinga	SA	156,037
Pt Macquarie-Hastings	NSW	71,084
Port Stephens	NSW	63,650
Richmond Valley	NSW	21,267
Rockhampton	QLD	103,297
Rockingham	WA	89,629
Shoalhaven	NSW	94,181

Sorell	TAS	11,758
South Gippsland	VIC	27,440
Streaky Bay	SA	2,072
Sunshine Coast	QLD	303,050
Surf Coast	VIC	24,195
Townsville	QLD	169,484
Victor Harbor	SA	12,528
Wanneroo	WA	115,136
Wellington	VIC	42,147
Whitsunday	QLD	31,980
Wollongong	NSW	192,131
Wyong	NSW	144,297
Yankalilla	SA	4,193

Appendix 3 - Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia

Authors: Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2005)

Accompanies this report

Appendix 4 – Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities

Authors: Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2006)

Accompanies this report

Appendix 5 – Draft report *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*

Authors: Gurrán, Hamín and Norman (2008)

Accompanies this report

Appendix 6 – Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas

Authors: NSW Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (2005)

Accompanies this report