

Tweed Shire Economic Development Strategy

TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL | DESTINATION TWEED | OCTOBER 2013



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Tweed Shire Economic Development Strategy is a joint project between Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed. Both organisations play a key role in the economic development and promotion of Tweed Shire.

Tweed Shire Council's role in economic development is to facilitate business investment, implement policy and create an environment conducive to appropriate industry as outlined in this strategy.

Destination Tweeds' role in Economic Development is to market and promote the Tweed region as a tourist destination, provide destination information, investigate, develop and deliver new tourism product and market and promote the Tweed Shire for business investment.

The aim of the Economic Development Strategy is to identify practical actions for the enhancement of the Tweed Shire economy, responding to the opportunities and constraints to economic and business growth in Tweed Shire and the values of the Tweed Shire community.

The material in the Economic Development Strategy draws on industry research, consultation with the reference group and comments provided in relation the Economic Development Strategy Background Paper, prepared in May 2013.

A number of the initiatives identified in the Economic Development Strategy are currently underway by Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed. This document provides a framework for both existing and new economic development initiatives.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Tweed Shire provides 30,800 jobs and has a total industry value of \$2.8 Billion. The key industry sectors in terms of jobs and value are Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Education and Training and Construction.

The following trends highlight some key characteristics of Tweed Shire for consideration of the Economic Development Strategy:

- Tweed Shire has a diverse industry base with employment access to a range of service sector and primary sector industries.
- Tweed Shire's economy is influenced by the Gold Coast City, which provides a market catchment of 500,000 residents on Tweed's doorstep;
- Tweed Shire's population is growing at a rate of 1.6% per annum and is projected to continue to grow to over 120,000 residents by 2031.
- The Tweed population is gentrifying, the proportion of residents with higher education attainment has increased significantly over the past 10 years.
- Tweed Shire's population is aging, but it has also attracted significant growth in families since 2001;
- Demographically, there are two Tweed Shires; there are areas of high socio economic demographic characteristics inland from Tweed Heads and along Tweed Coast and areas of low socio economic demographic characteristics in Tweed Heads and in rural areas within the Shire.
- The service industries such as health and education have grown significantly in jobs over the past 10 years, whilst many primary industries such as agriculture and manufacturing have declined.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were identified and agreed with Council and the Reference Group during development of the Economic Development Strategy:

- Maintain a diverse industry and business base;
- Provide investment certainty;
- Support existing businesses;
- Increase job participation and inclusion;
- Grow jobs in Tweed Shire;
- Promote and develop business sustainability (economic, environmental, and social);
- Grow and develop an economy which does not negatively affect the natural environment and landscape values of Tweed Shire.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

Seven economic development pillars have been developed which respond to the issues and opportunities facing economic development in Tweed Shire Council. These provide the platform for future economic development initiatives and policy for Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed.

1. TWEED HEADS ECONOMIC REVITALISATION

Vision: Tweed Heads will continue to develop as a dynamic place for business and investment, led by growth in health, retail, tourism and knowledge industries.

Key Projects

Health precinct masterplan
Tweed Heads city centre revitalisation
Attraction of Government offices
Tweed foreshore tourism precinct

2. THE CREATIVE CAULDRON

Vision: The Tweed Hinterland will become a place recognised nationally as a creative region, allowing existing creative practitioners to prosper and continue to attract new creative businesses to the region.

Key Projects

Establish Murwillumbah as a centre of creativity
Grow and develop creative villages
Murwillumbah riverfront masterplan

3. RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE

Vision: Tweed Shire will continue to transition with innovative farming and non-traditional farming industries supported by growth in local markets and downstream food processing.

Key Projects

Food processing cluster
Growing non-traditional agriculture
Rural land owner education
Small scale on site value adding and direct to market opportunities

4. TWEED SHIRE: OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Vision: Tweed Shire to become regarded as an attractive and desirable place for business and investment, where the balance between lifestyle and work is achieved.

Key Projects

Tweed Shire concierge
Tweed business incubator
Red tape audit
Business support levy
Linking with Northern Rivers Regional Plan initiatives
Northern gateway

5. TWEED SHIRE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Tweed Shire will become recognised for high quality tourism experiences in food, well being and nature based tourism.

Key Projects

Green Caldron brand
Events development
Paddock to plate initiatives
Destination management plan
Rural village tourism
Coastal village tourism

Renewable energy
Public transport
Expand global business networks

6. LEVERAGING FROM TWEEDS' GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Vision: Tweed Shire effectively leverages off its strategic location in proximity to the Gold Coast Airport and South East Queensland through attraction of investment and growth in targeted sectors.

Key projects

Transport and freight hub feasibility study
Education, research and business park

7. PLAN FOR AN ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE

Vision: Council will plan for the future growth and prosperity of the Shire, with consideration to renewable energy, climate change, workforce participation, digital technology and continued diversification of the business base.

Key projects

Sustainable industries
Diverse business base
Effects of climate change on business
Strengthen workforce participation
Transition to digital

PART A – BACKGROUND



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Tweed Shire Economic Development Strategy is a joint project between Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed. Both organisations play a key role in the economic development and promotion of Tweed Shire. The Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee includes representatives from both organisations.

Tweed Shire Council's role in economic development is to facilitate business investment, implement policy and create an environment conducive to appropriate industry as outlined in this strategy.

Destination Tweeds' role in Economic Development is to market and promote the Tweed region as a tourist destination, provide destination information, investigate, develop and deliver new tourism product and market and promote the Tweed Shire for business investment.

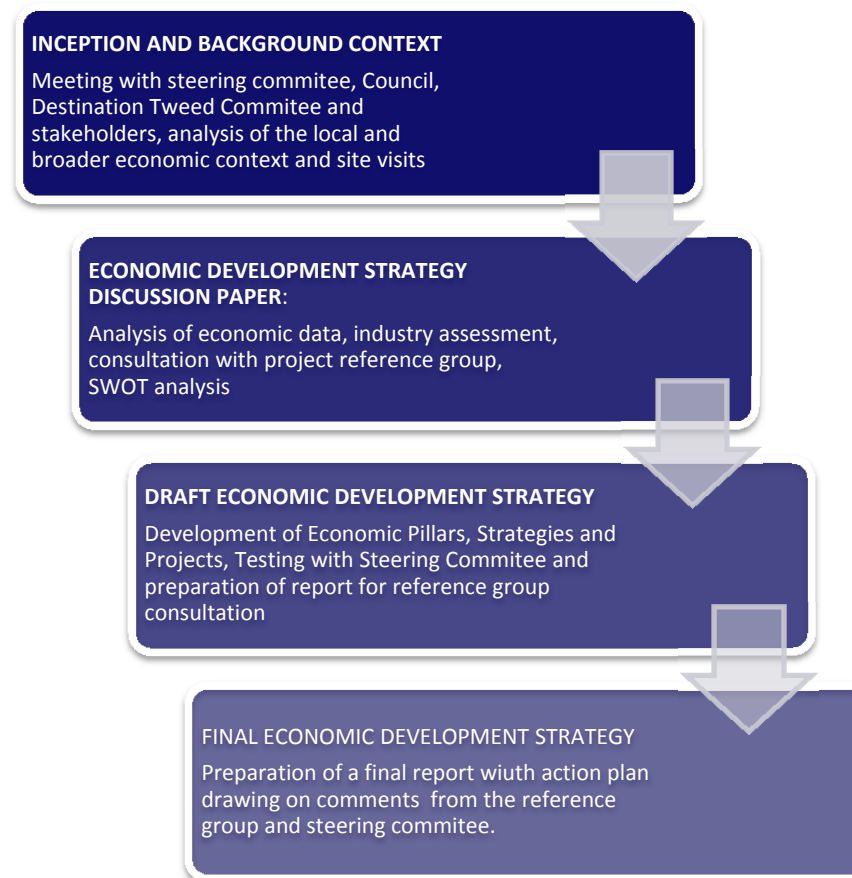
The aim of the Economic Development Strategy is to identify practical actions for the enhancement of the Tweed Shire economy, responding to the opportunities and constraints to economic and business growth in Tweed Shire and the values of the Tweed Shire community.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology shown in Figure 1 provides a broad overview of the Economic Development Strategy process.

The process responds to the requirements of the project brief provided to consultants and was developed and agreed with the project steering committee.

FIGURE 1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROCESS



1.3. HOW TO INFLUENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While it is acknowledged that the private sector (business and industry) remains the primary contributor to economic development driven by a desire to develop business, build the economy and accumulate wealth, Council and Destination Tweed still have important roles to play in terms of influencing and supporting appropriate investment and business development in line with Council's and Destination Tweeds' goals.

Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed can influence investment and business development through:

- Supporting and facilitating business networks;
- Enhancing existing industry clusters and encouraging the development of new clusters;
- Supporting appropriate tourism development that balances the benefits of visitation as well as against amenity and environmental impacts;
- Nurturing entrepreneurialism through support for new and potential industries and businesses; and
- Marketing, promotion and advertising of investment opportunities, lifestyle change/attraction;
- Encouraging and facilitating innovation.

Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed can facilitate a conducive business environment through:

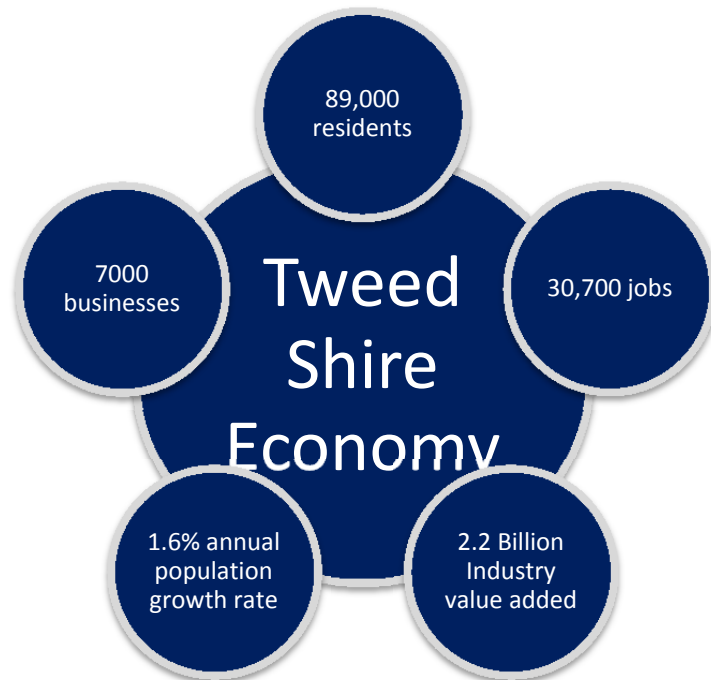
- Amending the Local Environment Plan to reflect economic strategy objectives;
- Provide dedicated Council resources to facilitate linkages to businesses;
- Encouraging the use of environmentally, economically and socially sustainable business practices;
- Undertaking specific infrastructure and / or development projects;
- Facilitating training and capacity building initiatives;
- Fostering social inclusion; and
- Providing business information and advisory services.

2. ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1. TWEED SHIRE ECONOMY OVERVIEW 2011

The Tweed Shire provides 30,700 jobs and has a total industry value of \$2.2 Billion. The key industry sectors in terms of jobs and value are Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Education and Training and Construction.

FIGURE 2 OVERVIEW OF TWEED SHIRE ECONOMY 2011



Source: ID Consulting

FIGURE 3 TWEED SHIRE INDUSTRY DIVISION JOBS AND VALUE 2011/12

Industry	Number	\$m
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,054	319
Retail Trade	4,678	206
Construction	3,541	247
Accommodation and Food Services	2,904	155
Education and Training	2,201	167
Public Administration and Safety	1,726	133
Manufacturing	1,557	123
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1,458	104
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1,272	79
Administrative and Support Services	1,254	87
Other Services	1,155	63
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,153	85
Wholesale Trade	684	85
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	531	83
Arts and Recreation Services	478	22
Financial and Insurance Services	454	119
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	312	54
Information Media and Telecommunications	232	40
Mining	72	6
Total Industries	30,715	2,176

Source: Census 2011, ABS

2.2. KEY ECONOMIC TRENDS

Spatial Economic Context Tweed Shire is influenced significantly by its location, just south of the Queensland border. Tweed Heads is part of the defined Gold Coast City Urban Area which has a population of over 500,000. The Gold Coast is a significant employer of Tweed Shire residents and also provides a large catchment market for Tweed Shire businesses.

Growing Population Tweed Shire has had strong population growth over the past 10 years at around 1.6% per annum, significantly higher than the Northern Rivers Region average. The population is forecast to grow, with Tweed Coast to capture the majority of this growth in the Northern Rivers Region. Population growth will continue to provide demand for service industries including retail, health, recreation, education, property and construction.

Gentrifying Population The Tweed Population is gentrifying. In the past 10 years the Tweed Shire has shown growth in persons with post-secondary education attainment. This growth suggests that there are new opportunities for business development in the knowledge and professional service industries.

Aging Population and growing family Demographic Tweed Shire has long been acknowledged as a retirement destination, the age profile of the Shire shows aging of the population, particularly in the urban areas around Tweed Heads. Tweed Shire, in the past 10 years

has also begun to show growth in young families, attracted to the region for its lifestyle attributes. Capturing growth in younger family demographics is essential for community sustainability and should be a continued focus for the Shire.

Two Tweeds Demographically, there are two Tweed Shires, there are areas of high socio economic demographic characteristics inland from Tweed Heads and along Tweed Coast and areas of low socio economic demographic characteristics in Tweed Heads and in rural areas within the Shire.

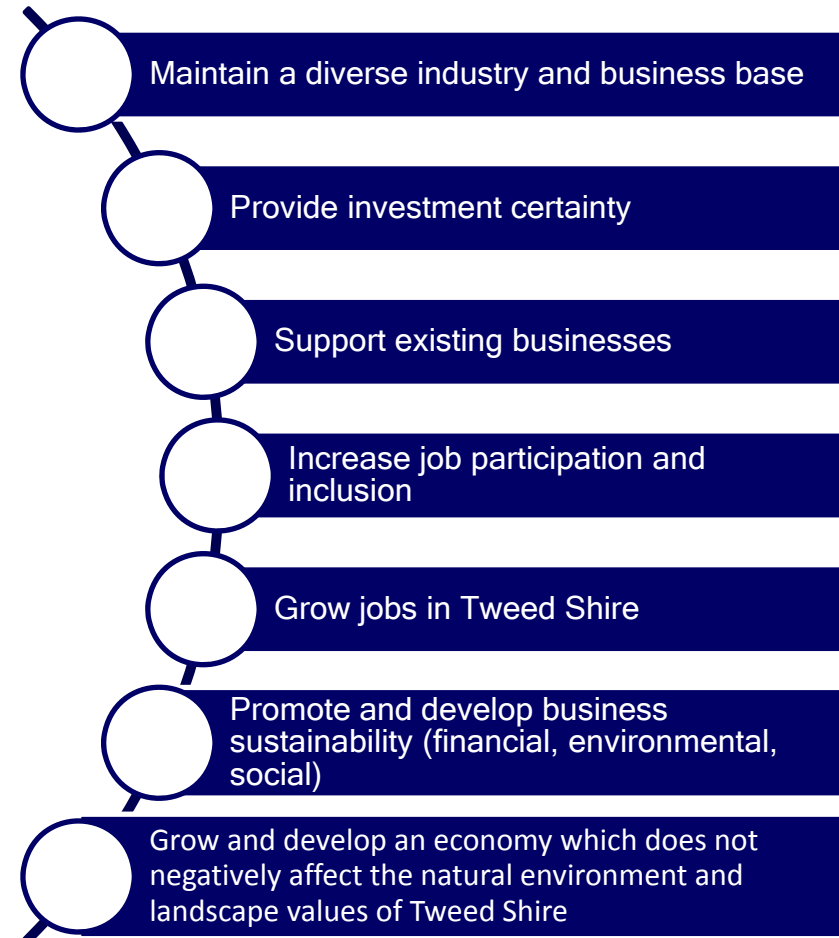
Growth in Service Industries Over the past ten years, Tweed Shire supported a net increase in employment by 4,693 workers or 25% growth over ten years. Major contributors of employment growth included the services industries including Health Care and Social Assistance which grew by 1,836 new workers, or 80% over the decade. Over the same period, the Shire also saw a loss of 40% of employment (or 464 workers) in the Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing sector. Similarly, the Retail Trade industry saw a loss of 10% of employment or 421 workers over the same decade.

Diverse Economy The Tweed Shire is ranked 5th of all Australian Local Government Areas for economic diversity. This means that it has a good spread of employment across many industry divisions. This diversity strengthens the Tweed Shire economy against broader economic shocks.

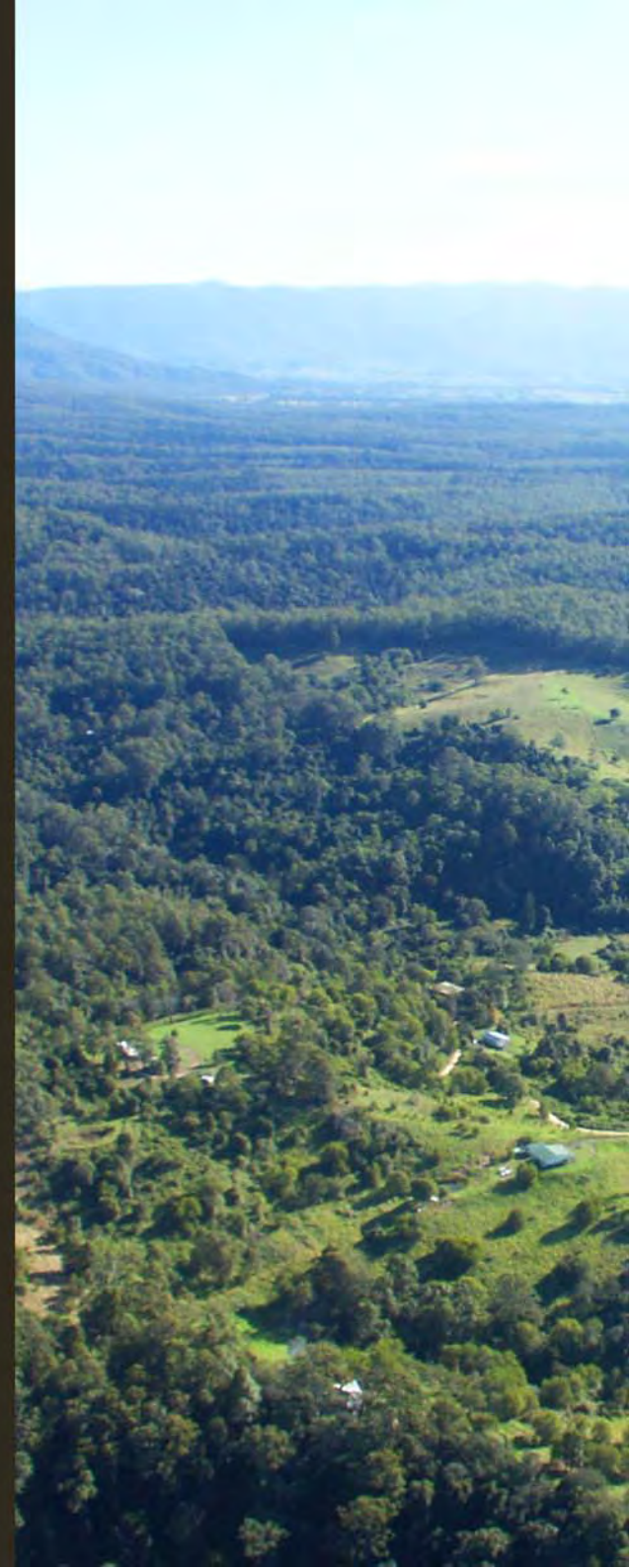
3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were identified and agreed with the Steering Committee and Project Reference Group during development of the Economic Development Strategy. They constitute the key issues for business and investment in Tweed Shire and the underlying community values of Tweed Shire's residents.

These objectives underlie the development of the strategies for economic development in Tweed Shire.



PART B – TWEED SHIRE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PILLARS



4. TWEED HEADS ECONOMIC REVITALISATION

4.1. VISION

Tweed Heads will continue to develop as a dynamic place for business and investment, led by growth in health, retail, tourism and knowledge industries.

4.2. PROFILE

Tweed Heads is the engine room for Tweed Shire's economy. It is the home to the education, health, knowledge and tourism sectors and has the largest urban population. Tweed Heads supported 68% of jobs (15,776) in the Tweed Shire.

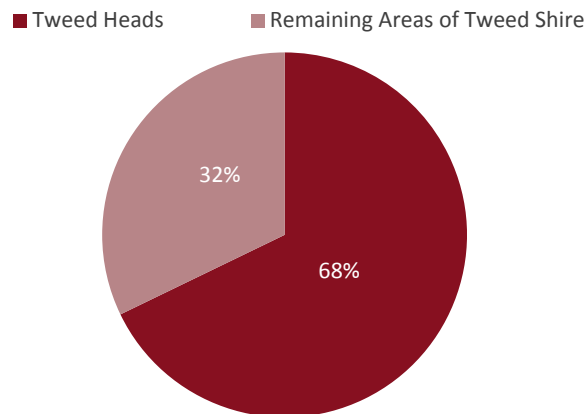
The proximity of Tweed Heads to the Gold Coast, its large residential catchment area and strong visitation provide an excellent base for further investment and development.

For the economic health of Tweed Shire, it is critical that resources be directed towards projects that plan and create opportunities for investment in Tweed Heads. Careful and thoughtful planning now will lead to a strong and prosperous future for the border City.

The focus for Tweed Heads should include:

- Implementation of the Tweed Heads Masterplan;
- Planning for growth of the Tweed Heads hospital and health industry opportunities;
- Attraction of offices and professional services;
- Improving Tweed Heads as a destination.

FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF TWEED SHIRE JOBS IN TWEED HEADS

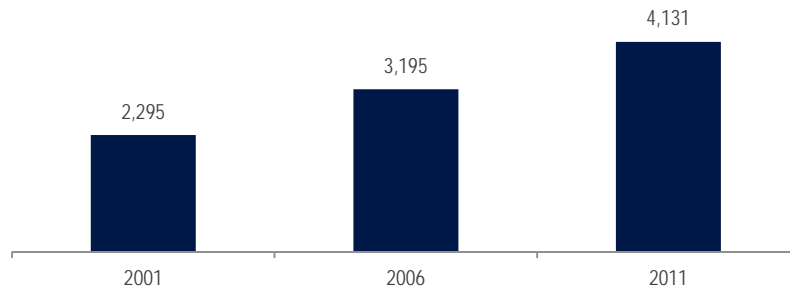


4.3. KEY PROJECTS

4.3.1. HEALTH PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

Consultation with industry in Tweed Shire has highlighted continued growth in the Tweed Hospital and in the health sector generally. This is confirmed by Census Data which shows a significant increase in health related jobs in Tweed Shire to service the growing and aging population (depicted in the table below).

FIGURE 5 GROWTH IN HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY JOBS, TWEED SHIRE, 2001 TO 2011



The Tweed Hospital is one of the largest employers in the Shire and generates substantial flow on economic benefits to Tweed Heads such as demand for retail, offices and residential housing.

There is a need to plan and accommodate growth of the Tweed Hospital and supporting industries within Tweed Heads. There is opportunity for integrated planning for the health precinct in Tweed Heads: including consideration of space for allied health, hospital growth and residential needs.

Consideration should be made for land around Tweed Hospital to accommodate service industries and allied health and other service sectors which could leverage from the hospital.

Direction 1

UNDERTAKE A COORDINATED MASTERPLAN FOR TWEED HEADS HEALTH PRECINCT, INCORPORATING FUTURE HOSPITAL GROWTH PLANS AND FEASIBILITY OF OTHER LAND USE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN A DESIGNATED HEALTH PRECINCT. SPECIFICALLY THE STUDY SHOULD:

- Define the health precinct;
- Identify and plan for long term land and property needs of the Tweed Heads hospital;
- Identify and plan for other related health and community services in the precinct;
- Identify demand for flow on services such as food, beverage and accommodation and retail;
- Infrastructure requirements;
- Identify redevelopment opportunities and parcels;
- Identify changes to the LEP which will facilitate the masterplan.

Direction 2

DEVELOP PROSPECTUS MATERIAL TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIES TO THE PRECINCT FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE MASTERPLAN.

4.3.2. TWEED HEADS CITY CENTRE REVITALISATION

The Tweed Heads Masterplan provides a number of strategies to revitalise the CBD. It is critical that funding be sought to implement aspects of the Tweed Heads Masterplan to bring renewed investor confidence and create opportunities for private sector investment.

Direction 3

CONTINUE IMPLEMENT THE TWEED HEADS CBD MASTERPLAN.

4.3.3. ATTRACTION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Tweed Heads is the largest regional centre in the Northern Rivers Region and has the potential to increase its position as a regional service centre to Northern New South Wales.

The NSW Government response to the NSW Decentralisation Taskforce Report prepared in August 2013 highlights support for “identifying more public sector job opportunities for relocation to regional areas”.

The NSW Government has committed a target of 1500 public sector jobs for relocation from metropolitan Sydney to regional NSW.

It will be important for Tweed Shire Council to keep up to date with the process of relocating Government agencies and target agencies which would be suited to a Tweed Heads location.

Direction 4 CONTINUE DIALOGUE WITH THE NSW GOVERNMENT REGARDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECENTRALISATION

Direction 5 DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE FOR ATTRACTING NSW GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, HIGHLIGHTING THE BENEFITS OF A TWEED SHIRE LOCATION

Direction 6 INVESTIGATE SUITABLE LOCATIONS WHICH MAY BE OFFERED TO ATTRACT NSW GOVERNMENT OFFICES

4.3.4. TWEED FORESHORE TOURISM PRECINCT

The Jack Evans Boat Harbour resume has recently been upgraded to provide a new and attractive interface between Tweed Heads and the harbour.

There are further opportunities to activate other land at the Jack Evans Boat Harbour precinct to provide a new destination for tourists and residents. For example public land may be utilised to provide a new tourism precinct in Coral Street.

Investigation into the opportunities in conjunction with the State Government should focus on:

- Dining opportunities overlooking the boat harbour and estuary;
- Watercraft hire (paddle boats, canoes) at the harbour;
- Leasehold for private development;
- Tourist retail.

Direction 7 UNDERTAKE A FEASIBILITY STUDY AND MASTEPRLAN THAT ACTIVATES THE JACK EVANS BOAT HARBOUR

5. THE CREATIVE CAULDRON

5.1. VISION

The Tweed Hinterland will become a place recognised nationally as a creative region, allowing existing creative practitioners to prosper and continue to attract new creative businesses to the region.

5.2. PROFILE

Tweed Shire is defined by its volcanic national heritage landscape. This setting provides inspiration for many creative practitioners who are drawn to Tweed Shire's hinterland and coastal areas to establish their businesses.

Murwillumbah and the small villages of Tweed Shire are developing a reputation for creative industry and it is important that the economic development strategy support this.

Growth in creative industries has flow on benefits for residents, improving liveability through a broader cultural offer and provides another layer of tourism product for visitors.

5.3. KEY PROJECTS

5.3.1. ESTABLISH MURWILLUMBAH AS A CENTRE OF CREATIVITY

Creative Villages, a website developed which shows clusters of creative businesses demonstrates the growing creative industry base in Murwillumbah and the surrounding rural villages.

In addition Tweed Shire Council is currently investing in the Tweed River Art Gallery and Margret Olley Art Centre highlighting the Shire's commitment to the arts in Murwillumbah.

Consultation with the creative sector highlights opportunity to develop a hub or creative practitioner studios in Murwillumbah.

Direction 8 BRAND AND PROMOTE MURWILLUMBAH AS A CREATIVE HUB. THIS INCLUDES:

- Development of a brand strategy for Murwillumbah to provide it with an identity as a creative centre.
- Use free press social media and other marketing avenues to raise Murwillumbah's profile as a creative place.

Direction 9 IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO ESTABLISH SUBSIDISED CREATIVE SPACES IN MURWILLUMBAH USING THE "CREATIVE SPACES" MODEL. THIS INCLUDES:

- Identification of disused and underutilised buildings;
- Refurbish identified building/s for creative studios;
- Seek interest from registered artists from across Australia;
- Place artists in creative studios.

Direction 10 **GROW A PROGRAM OF CREATIVE EVENTS IN MURWILLUMBAH TO RAISE THE PROFILE AND ESTABLISH THE TOWN AS A NATIONAL CENTRE OF CREATIVE ARTS.**

Direction 11 **CONTINUE TO PROMOTE THE TWEED RIVER ART GALLERY AND MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE**

5.3.2. MURWILLUMBAH RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

Murwillumbah is located on the Tweed River, however much of the town turns it's back on the Tweed River.

There is opportunity for the township to engage with the river more effectively through improvement of connectivity, encouraging commercial businesses to maximise their outlook over the river and improve the riverfront reserves through landscaping and art projects.

Direction 12 **UNDERTAKE A RIVERFRONT MASTERPLAN FOR MURWILLUMBAH**

5.3.3. GROW AND DEVELOP CREATIVE VILLAGES

Tweed has a number of small picturesque villages, all within half an hour of Murwillumbah. Many of the small villages such as Uki and Tyalgum have a growing arts focused community. Harnessing the creative potential of the smaller villages provides a range of social and economic benefits for these villages. Examples of prosperous small villages include Central Tilba (Sapphire Coast, NSW), Yackandandah (High Country Victoria).

Direction 13 **UNDERTAKE MASTERPLANS FOR TWEED SHIRE'S VILLAGES TO IDENTIFY:**

- Streetscape improvements which lead to private sector investment;
- Creative arts retail opportunities;
- Creative Art opportunities;
- Art and sculpture trail.

Direction 14 **BRAND THE VILLAGES OF THE CREATIVE CAULDRON**

6. RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE

6.1. VISION

Tweed Shire's agriculture sector will continue to transition with innovative farming and non-traditional farming practices supported by growth in downstream food processing.

6.2. PROFILE

Tweed Shire has long been the home for many agricultural enterprises. The nature of traditional agricultural land uses has changed over the region's history. Changing market conditions, competition from imported low cost products, increasing land fragmentation and growth in business costs have created difficult business conditions for many agricultural enterprises.

Enabling farmers to be resilient into the future is a key objective for economic development.

The food and downstream processing sector is also a prominent industry in Tweed Shire and is critical to providing value adding to the regional economy.

Key opportunities for the agriculture and agri-product processing sector includes:

- Protecting against further fragmentation and management of land use conflicts;
- Transitioning into non-traditional agricultural products;
- Investigating direct to market sales;
- Synergies in food and beverage processing clustering;
- Education of rural lifestyle and hobby farm owners;
- Improved monitoring of the local education sector through health surveys.

6.3. KEY PROJECTS

6.3.1. FOOD PROCESSING CLUSTER

There are a number of existing smaller and medium sized businesses that process food in Tweed Shire. There is an opportunity to nurture and work closely with these enterprises to realise growth potential in these sectors. There are examples such as the Plenty Food Group in Melbourne which have been successful in working together on a range of related opportunities to develop the food processing sector including increasing buying power, cross marketing of products, trade missions etc.

Destination Tweed and the Caldera Institute in collaboration with local producers are in the final stages of completing an accredited branding process for Tweed Fresh and value added products. This existing work should be built upon to develop a food processing cluster in Tweed Shire.

Direction 15

UNDERTAKE A STRATEGY WHICH REVIEWS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH A FOOD PROCESSING CLUSTER IN TWEED SHIRE. THIS INCLUDES:

- Identifying existing food processing businesses;
- Consultation with the processing industry;
- Identifying regional produce;
- Branding food processed in the Tweed;
- Opportunities for collaboration between processing businesses.

6.3.2. GROWING NON TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Organic farming is an expanding agricultural sector globally. There is growing demand for local organic dairy, meat, coffee and sugar. There are a number of success stories in Australia and locally in the Northern Rivers Region for the development of organic farming and local produce. The value of organically certified product far exceeds that of traditional goods.

In addition to organic farming there is opportunity to explore other non traditional agricultural enterprises that have emerged elsewhere in the Northern Rivers Region.

Organic farming could be explored in the following sectors:

- Beef
- Dairy
- Sugar cane
- Vegetables
- Coffee
- Herbs
- Tropical and plantation fruits

Exploration into non-traditional industries may also be explored further in Tweed Shire. This includes:

- Coffee;
- Tea;
- Herbs;
- Native bushfoods.
- Bushfoods, organics.

Direction 16 INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES INTO ORGANIC AND NON-TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES. A STUDY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WHICH ANALYSES THE FOLLOWING:

- Commercial demand for organic and non-traditional agricultural production.
- Suitability of non-traditional agriculture to Tweed Shire land characteristics.
- Identification of areas in Tweed Shire that would support various non-traditional agricultural activities.

Direction 17 PREPARE AN INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS FOR HIGHLIGHTING THE REGIONS ATTRIBUTES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ORGANIC FARMING AND NON-TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

6.3.3. RURAL LAND OWNER EDUCATION

Following the completion of a study into non-traditional agricultural production, there is opportunity to promote the potential non-traditional agricultural uses to rural land owners, including farmers, rural lifestyle residents and hobby farmers.

Improving the economic skills of farmers is also important as a key barrier to growth is not necessarily lack of understanding of non-traditional farming opportunities but how to link in with supply chains and markets. Education programs focused on improving farmer awareness around the economic opportunities in non-traditional farming should be explored.

Direction 18 EDUCATE RURAL LAND OWNERS REGARDING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE. THIS MAY INCLUDE:

- Literature relating to opportunities;
- Seminars on non-traditional markets, supply chains and case studies that demonstrate success factors.

6.3.4. SMALL SCALE ON SITE VALUE ADDING AND DIRECT TO MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous examples of on-site value adding in dairy and beef production around Australia such as Jonseys Dairy in Kerang, Victoria. Small scale on site value adding can strengthen the profitability of agricultural production significantly. The key is the development of direct supply chains. With the growth in digital technology, direct to market opportunities are greater than ever. Aussie Farmers provides an excellent case study of the success of direct to market initiatives that bypass the supermarket duopoly.

Direction 19 **PROVIDE CASE STUDIES OF SMALL SCALE ON SITE VALUE ADDING AND DIRECT TO MARKET SUCCESS STORIES TO TWEEDS' FARMERS AND RURAL LAND OWNERS**

Direction 20 **CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE TWEED FRESH SCHEME**

7. TWEED SHIRE: OPEN FOR BUSINESS

7.1. VISION

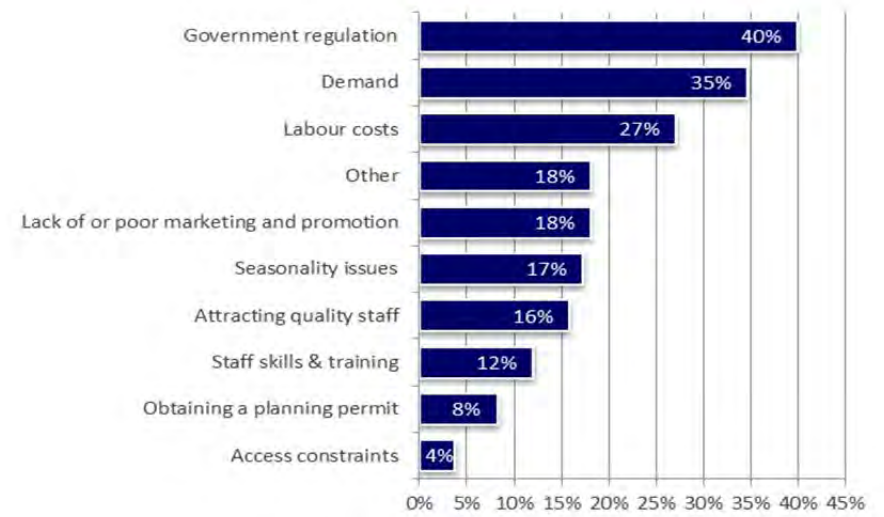
Tweed Shire to become regarded as an attractive and desirable place for business and investment, where the balance between lifestyle and work is achieved.

7.2. PROFILE

It is important that Tweed Shire provide an environment conducive to investment and business growth. Consultation with the business sector highlights that Government regulation is the largest barrier to business growth; therefore Tweed Shire's role needs to consider how it can best provide an environment that supports business.

The following chart taken from the Tweed Shire Business Survey highlights the barriers to business growth. Government regulation is identified as the number one barrier to business growth by industry.

FIGURE 1 BARRIERS TO BUSINESS GROWTH



7.3. KEY PROJECTS

7.3.1. TWEED SHIRE CONCIERGE

The slow development application process has been highlighted by many businesses as a barrier to investment. Some of this relates to State Planning Policy, but there may be also requirement for Council to provide a more service orientated process, particularly for business.

The reference group has highlighted a need for improved dedicated resources to support businesses in Tweed Shire.

Direction 21 INVESTIGATE THE APPOINTMENT OF A BUSINESS CONCIERGE AND GATEWAY WEBSITE FOR BUSINESS

7.3.2. TWEED INCUBATOR

Direction 22 INVESTIGATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TWEED BUSINESS CENTRE AND INCUBATOR, FOCUSED ON PROVIDING ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO BUSINESS, PROVIDING OFFICES FOR START-UP BUSINESS AND OTHER BUSINESS SERVICES. THE STUDY WOULD LOOK AT:

- Micro business needs;
- Size and function of the facility;
- Suitable location to establish a Tweed Business Centre;
- Funding/resourcing needs;
- Requirement for serviced offices;
- Services and programs to support small and micro business.

7.3.3. BUSINESS SUPPORT LEVY AND BUSINESS REFERENCE GROUP

In order to pay for additional resources to be provided to support the business base in Tweed Shire, it is proposed to investigate a 1% levy on commercial rated properties.

The establishment of a reference group made up of representatives from local chambers and business groups to guide spending of the levy goes may also be reviewed.

Direction 23 INVESTIGATE A BUSINESS SUPPORT LEVY AND GOVERNANCE MODEL

7.3.4. RED TAPE AUDIT

As specified above Government regulation is identified as a key barrier to business investment in Tweed Shire. Some of these barriers are related to State Government policy and some are related to local Government policy. Council has prepared a new business investment policy that provides concessions and the opportunity for staged development contributions payments for businesses that meet criteria set forward by Council.

In addition to barriers to investment from the development contributions levy, the development application process was also identified as onerous for business. Some of this is due to State Government legislation.

An audit of red tape will provide a clear understanding of barriers to investment as a result of Government Policy.

Direction 24 UNDERTAKE AN AUDIT OF RED TAPE, FOCUSING ON THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESS, DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REGULATION.

Direction 25 REVIEW TWEED SHIRE'S DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION FOR BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATING DEVELOPMENT

Direction 26 PREPARE A SIMPLE AND CONCISE EDUCATION PACKAGE FOR BUSINESS TO EXPLAIN THE VARIOUS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND STATE GOVERNMENT POLICY

Direction 27 REVIEW TWEED SHIRE'S BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT POLICY FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF OTHER RED TAPE ASSESSMENTS.

Direction 28 REVIEW COUNCILS FEES AND CHARGES DOCUMENT WITH THE AIM TO STREAMLINE CONTENT

7.3.5. NORTHERN GATEWAY

It was acknowledged by the Tweed Shire Economic Development Strategy Reference Group that the northern Gateway to the Shire does not present a positive arrival point for visitors to the Shire.

There are a series of dated signs, poor landscaping and lack of garden maintenance that reflect poorly on the NSW State Government and on Tweed Shire.



Whilst much of the northern gateway area is controlled by State Government, there is a need for Tweed Shire to work with the State Government to improve the entry point to highlight that Tweed Shire and NSW are progressive and welcoming of visitors and business.

Direction 29 IN CONJUNCTION WITH NSW STATE GOVERNMENT IMPROVE THE NORTHERN FREEWAY GATEWAY

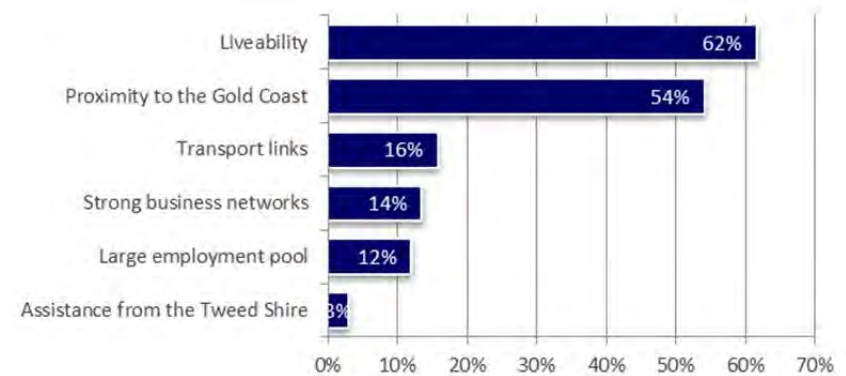
7.3.6. PROMOTE TWEED AS A “LIFESTYLE BUSINESS DESTINATION”

The Tweed Shire has become a choice location for migration from various regions in Australia. It is well regarded as a location with strong liveability credentials. These include:

- Strong sense of community;
- Proximity to a major international airport;
- Access to health and community facilities;
- Pleasant sub tropical climate;
- Access to broad range of recreational pursuits;
- Natural environment including coast and hinterland;
- Quality of natural resources such as water, renewable energy potential;
- Growing arts, culture and food sector.

The figure below highlights the key attractors for business in the Tweed Shire. Liveability is identified as the most popular reason for locating business in Tweed Shire by respondents to the Tweed Shire Business Survey.

FIGURE 2 KEY ATTRACTORS FOR BUSINESS



Source: Tweed Shire Business Survey May 2013

Direction 30

**UNDERTAKE MARKETING INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON PROMOTING
TWEED SHIRE AS A LIFESTYLE BUSINESS DESTINATION**

**7.3.7. WORK CLOSELY WITH NORTHERN RIVERS REGIONAL PLAN
INITIATIVES**

There are a number of initiatives that are undertaken at a regional level by Northern Rivers RDA and other organisations which address issues identified in the Tweed Shire Economic Development Strategy. They provide opportunities for Tweed Shire to leverage off existing and successfully funded programs.

Some regional programs and initiatives that are undertaken that Tweed Shire should consider are highlighted below.

Program	Description
Sustainability Advantage:	A program developed by NSW Government: Environment and Heritage is tailored to assisting pinpoint ways in which business can benefit from sustainable work practices and provides a clear path for action.
Sustain Food and My Food Northern Rivers	Sustain Food and My Food Northern Rivers is a tool to enhance access to food grown, produced and sold in the region.
Digital Economy Strategy	The Northern Rivers Digital Economy Strategy identifies ways to improve digital take up by business and opportunities for economic growth through digital.

Direction 31

**INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO LINK WITH NORTHERN RIVERS
REGIONAL PLAN INITIATIVES**

8. TWEED SHIRE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

8.1. VISION

Tweed Shire will become recognised for high quality tourism experiences in food, well being and nature based tourism.

8.2. PROFILE

Tweed Shire's environment and setting is one of its greatest tourism assets. The geography and natural attractions provide an unparalleled backdrop for the tourism industry.

Tweed Shire already has a diverse and attractive tourism offer, including the popular coastal areas and the developing hinterland product.

There is great opportunity to continue to develop Tweed Shire as a unique destination that sets it apart from the neighbouring Gold Coast. Tweed Shire has the potential to become a globally recognised destination with further investment in product and infrastructure.

8.3. KEY PROJECTS

8.3.1. GREEN CALDRON BRAND

Tweed Shire's tourism industry has had difficulty finding its place. The Tweed Shire is on the doorstep of two well recognised tourism brands: Gold Coast and Byron Bay. Part of the issue is that Tweed Heads is acknowledged as part of the Gold Coast City Region; however the remainder of the Shire is vastly different in its product essence than the Gold Coast. The development of a well-defined Tweed brand which highlights Tweed Shire's natural assets is a way to define the Shire amongst the book ends of Byron Bay and Gold Coast.

Destination Tweed has been working towards developing Tweed's brand alignment in the context of Australia's Green Cauldron and Legendary Pacific Coast. These existing initiatives should be supported and developed.

There is great opportunity to exploit the green caldron brand which centres Tweed Shire at the heart of one of Australia's National Landscapes. The redevelopment of Tweed's World Heritage Rainforest Centre should reflect this alignment and provide a starting point for visitors to explore the region.

Direction 32 UNDERTAKE A BRAND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR TWEED

Direction 33 PROMOTE THE VALUES AND MAGNIFICENCE OF THE TWEED'S WORLD HERITAGE RAINFOREST THROUGH A REDEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING WORLD HERITAGE RAINFOREST CENTRE AND THE SURROUNDING GATEWAY AT ALMA ST

8.3.2. EVENTS DEVELOPMENT

Events development presents a significant opportunity for Tweed Shire, particularly with regard to business events, sports events and festivals.

Tweed Shire has a relatively large accommodation base along the coast which could be used in the off peak seasons to support events.

Direction 34 UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE EXISTING EVENTS STRATEGY IN ORDER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO EXISTING OPERATIONS, FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES REQUIRED TO DELIVER EVENTS.

8.3.3. PADDOCK TO PLATE INITIATIVES

The food culture in Tweed Shire is relatively undeveloped aside from some small nodes. There is need to significantly improve the food offer through the development of local produce supply chains through farmers markets and other local service providers. Further investigation into paddock to plate strategies should be investigated.

Destination Tweed through its Tweed Fresh project has commenced work in this area, it is envisaged that this project would continue.

Direction 35 CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE TWEED FRESH PROJECT WHICH PROMOTES LOCAL PRODUCE IN TWEED SHIRE

8.3.4. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Tweed Shire does not need to compete with the Gold Coast for “mass” low cost tourism. The quality of the setting and new tourism product such as Salt provide for a higher yield market. Tourism destination development for Tweed Shire needs to focus on its point of differentiation from the Gold Coast and build on the region’s unique landscape attributes and setting.

This includes:

- High quality boutique rainforest accommodation;
- Improved food offer;
- Touring routes (arts trails, villages trail)

- Rail trail and national parks infrastructure;
- Spa and wellness;
- Agri-farm tourism;
- Guided nature based tourism.

Direction 36 UNDERTAKE A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOCUSING ON PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT. THE DMP SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A product, infrastructure and experience audit;
- Assessment of target market needs;
- Identification of gaps in product and infrastructure provision;
- Priority investment projects to meet visitor needs and target growth.

8.3.5. RURAL VILLAGES

Tweed Shire has a number of interesting villages which could be further promoted and developed as boutique tourism destinations. Townships like Uki support an emerging arts and cultural tourism scene and could be further enhanced with specific projects, including street scape improvements, land use needs assessment, product gap assessments.

Initiatives listed under the creative sector development would strengthen the tourism appeal.

Direction 37 UNDERTAKE A RURAL VILLAGE PLAN WHICH LOOKS AT THE FOLLOWING:

- Touring links between villages;
- Streetscape improvements;
- Infrastructure needs;
- Product opportunities;
- Branding.

8.3.6. COASTAL VILLAGES

The coastal strip from Kingscliff to Pottsville contains a series of coastal villages each with their own unique character and economic opportunities. These villages are popular tourist destinations and residential lifestyle locations.

The villages have grown significantly over the past 10-15 years and are projected to grow in population in the near future.

It is important to have a strategic plan for the coastal villages which ensures that the village charter of the coastal areas is maintained and enhanced and that the Tweed Coast remains a popular place to live, work and visit. Specifically a coastal village plan should consider:

- Sports tourism events and opportunities that leverage from the natural assets (e.g.: triathlons, surf carnivals, lifesaving carnivals and multi-sport adventure races).
- Strengthening the tourism product and infrastructure supply along the coast;
- Branding of the Tweed Coast area as a distinct destination and raising the awareness of the Tweed Coast as a destination.

Direction 38

UNDERTAKE A COASTAL VILLAGE PLAN WHICH FOCUSES ON:

- Tourism product and infrastructure;
- Village amenity improvements;
- Branding;
- Events opportunities.

9. LEVERAGING FROM TWEEDS' GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

9.1. VISION

Tweed Shire effectively leverages off its strategic location in proximity to the Gold Coast Airport and South East Queensland through attraction of investment and growth in targeted sectors.

9.2. PROFILE

Tweed Shire is exceptionally well located on the fringe to the Gold Coast City Region, two hours from Brisbane and 20 minutes to the Gold Coast Airport. Tweed Shire has excellent highway access through the Shire linking to these destinations.

These elements make Tweed Shire an attractive place for investment and also highlight the opportunity to target industries that can leverage off the proximity to the Airport and South East Queensland.

9.3. KEY PROJECTS

9.3.1. TRANSPORT AND FREIGHT HUB FEASIBILITY STUDY

Transport development opportunities have been identified through the preparation of the Economic Development Strategy. However an independent study should be commissioned which investigates how substantial these opportunities are and whether Tweed Shire is best placed to provide these given the competition for land.

Direction 39 UNDERTAKE A FEASIBILITY STUDY WHICH IDENTIFIES THE NEED AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR A TRANSPORT AND FREIGHT HUB. THIS INCLUDES:

- Understanding the requirements of freight, transport and storage businesses;
- Assessing possible locations to house a transport hub;
- The long term economic benefits from the hub, with consideration of other competing uses that may generate higher employment;
- Links with community and environmental values.

9.3.2. EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND BUSINESS PARK

There are limited opportunities to attract professional service businesses and research firms in a high quality greenfield setting. A business park may be explored further, which provides the following advantages over existing locations:

- Ability to build new 6 star offices;
- Masterplanned business park;
- Purpose built/ designed facility;
- Proximity to Southern Cross University;
- Proximity to the Gold Coast Airport.

An investigation into available sites within proximity of Southern Cross University and the Gold Coast Airport should be undertaken for the master planned business park.

It is envisaged that the business park would focus on higher order activities including professional services, research and IT.

There are limited opportunities for business park development within proximity to the Gold Coast Airport.

Direction 40 **FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO ESTABLISHMENT OF A BUSINESS AND RESEARCH PARK ON SITES IN PROXIMITY TO GOLD COAST AIRPORT AND SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY. THIS INCLUDES:**

- Assessment of potential site locations;
- Demand assessment for a business and research park;
- Strategic land use planning policy to support the initiative.

10. PLAN FOR AN ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE

10.1. VISION

Council will plan for the future growth and prosperity of the Shire, with consideration to climate change, workforce participation, digital technology and continued diversification of the business base.

10.2. PROFILE

There are a number of issues facing business growth in the future within Australia, and many of these issues are highly relevant for Tweed Shire.

It is important to plan for Tweed Shire's future economy to ensure that it is resilient in an economic climate that is influenced by a number of external influences. Key issues facing Tweed Shire, that need to be understood and addressed include:

- Increasing energy costs;
- Climate change on business;
- Diversity of industry;
- Workforce participation and access to jobs;
- Transition to a digital world;
- Growing global business networks.

10.3. KEY PROJECTS

10.3.1. SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIES

The global business environment is changing with a much greater focus on environmentally sustainable business practices. It is important for Tweed businesses to grow their green credentials to ensure that they remain up to date with customer expectations and do their part for improving the environmental health of Tweed Shire. Transition of businesses to provide "green jobs" has the following benefits:

- Reduces business costs through application of green star building design, energy efficiency and renewable energy generation;
- Marketable and links to Tweed Shire's clean and green values/brand;
- Meets expectations of changing market preferences;
- Maintains the environmental quality of Tweed Shire's World Heritage Landscape.

Direction 41

COUNCIL TO PROMOTE AND PROVIDE TRAINING PROGRAMS TO BUSINESS TO ENHANCE BUSINESSES ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE. EXISTING PROGRAMS FOR CONSIDERATION INCLUDE:

- Sustainability Advantage;
- Grow me the Money.

10.3.2. DIVERSE BUSINESS BASE

A report by the Regional Australia Institute highlights that Tweed Shire is ranked fifth of all Local Governments in Australia in terms of economic diversification.

This is based on the diversity of the jobs base in Tweed Shire compared to other LGAs. The peri-urban nature of the Shire, its proximity to the Gold Coast and its hinterland create an environment conducive to diversification. It has a strong primary industry base through agriculture and manufacturing and also a very urbanised service sector job profile centred at Tweed Heads and the coastal areas.

Maintaining Tweed Shire's diverse business base will continue to ensure a strong economic future for the Shire.

The focus for continued diversity of the business base is to focus on those industries which are under threat from overseas competition and which have lost jobs during census years. Primary production including agriculture and manufacturing are industries that provide high levels of flow on benefit for the economy. It is critical that primary production businesses are supported in Tweed Shire.

Direction 42 **CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE EXISTING PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN TWEED SHIRE, THROUGH:**

- Training programs;
- Investment attraction;
- Supply chain improvements;
- Promoting business growth opportunities;
- Business mentoring and support.

10.3.3. AFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON BUSINESS

Tweed Shire, like many other areas affected by increasing frequency of severe weather events needs to consider the effects of climate change. In the context of the Economic Development Strategy the effects of climate change on local business needs to be understood and prepared for in order to plan for Tweed's economy of the future.

Direction 43 **MATCH REGIONAL EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL BUSINESS SECTOR AND PLAN TO MITIGATE THESE EFFECTS.**

10.3.4. STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Tweed Shire has a relatively low job participation rate as a result of retired and disadvantaged community groups. This impacts on the local economy through lower spend on services and creates disengaged segments within the community, leading to broader social issues.

Direction 44 **WORK CLOSELY WITH EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATIONS TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN TWEED SHIRE.**

10.3.5. TRANSITION TO DIGITAL

Murwillumbah will receive the NBN fibre over the years 2014 to 2018. This provides opportunity for existing businesses to improve their access to the internet and also provide opportunities to attract new businesses which require higher internet speeds.

Furthermore growth in use and consumption of the internet is continuously changing the way we do business, it provides opportunities for new business and also affects the way existing businesses operate and research their customer base.

Direction 45 **PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ATTRACTING DIGITAL RELATED BUSINESSES**

Direction 46 **EDUCATE THE EXISTING BUSINESS BASE ON TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE DIGITAL PRESENCE.**

10.3.6. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport is seen as an important economic development initiative for the following reasons:

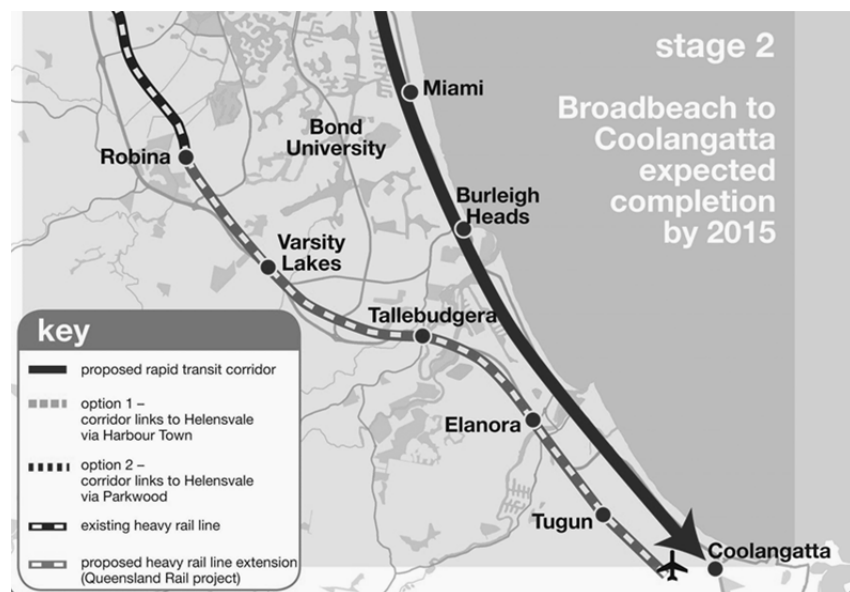
- It provides a transport alternative to workers in the Tweed Shire;
- It provides public transport for the aging population;
- It increases the attractiveness of Tweed Shire as a place to do business, particularly with the link through to the airport;
- It provides ease of travel for tourists arriving at Gold Coast Airport and strengthens the Tweed Shire as a tourist destination.

There are a number of initiatives highlighted in the Tweed Public Transport Strategy that should be supported. This includes:

- Promote Tweed Heads as a public transport hub/terminus point for all public buses from the coast and Murwillumbah / rural villages;
- Support the multi-nodal transport terminal concept to be located at the Gold Coast Airport in conjunction with the extension of the Robina to Gold Coast Airport standard rail extension.

- Support the implementation of a rapid bus transport system across Tweed Shire;
- Support the extension of the Gold Coast light rail into Tweed Heads in the long term.

FIGURE 3 PROPOSED STAGE 2 ROUTE BETWEEN BROADBEACH AND COOLANGATTA



Source: Gold Coast City

Direction 47 **SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN TWEED HEADS**

- Tweed Heads as public transport hub/terminus point for all public buses from the coast and Murwillumbah / rural villages;
- Multi-nodal transport terminal concept to be located at the Gold Coast Airport in conjunction with the extension of the Robina to Gold Coast Airport standard rail extension.

- Support the implementation of a rapid bus transport system across Tweed Shire;
- Support the extension of the Gold Coast light rail into Tweed Heads.

10.3.7. RENEWABLE ENERGY IN TWEED SHIRE

There is an opportunity to develop a range of renewable energy resources in Tweed Shire. A renewable energy think tank at Tweed Shire has identified a range of opportunities for further exploration in Tweed Shire such as:

- Better use of biomass, including cogeneration plants.
- Opportunities for government assistance, including funding.
- Battery storage of electricity generate by renewable energy.
- Local government as an electricity retailer.
- Public education.
- Hydro to generate and store energy.
- Tweed Shire as a 'clean energy hub'.
- Greater assistance for private industry to generate renewable energy - remove barriers.
- Solar-powered street lights.

These opportunities should be investigated by Tweed Shire to provide new industry, reduce costs for existing industry and position Tweed Shire as a clean and green Shire.

Direction 48 **CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE RENEWABLE ENERGY IN TWEED SHIRE**

10.3.8. EXPAND GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORKS

Establishing global business links may provide opportunities for various business sectors in Tweed Shire.

It is important that businesses in Tweed Shire are provided with the opportunity to expand their business networks.

Tweed Shire can take a lead role in this through:

- Investigating sister city relationships;
- Promote trade missions to businesses;
- Working closely with NSW trade and investment.

Direction 49 INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORKS TO CREATE NEW MARKETS FOR TWEED BUSINESS

11. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

This Strategy represents collaboration between Tweed Shire Council and Destination Tweed. These two agencies will take primary responsibility for the delivery of the Key Projects.

The Steering Committee recognises that significant dedicated resources will be required for successful implementation of the EDS Action Plan. In considering this, the Committee have identified and agreed on, the need to work together to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and to rationalise the distribution of available human and financial resources able to be allocated to the Plan. This is intended to be one of the first steps in plan implementation.

ACTIONS

1. That Council and Destination Tweed meet with members of the chambers of commerce, rural industry peak bodies and others are required on a quarterly basis to discuss matters affecting economic development in the Tweed.
2. That the Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee established to draft this Strategy continues to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss the direction of economic development and this Committee be renamed the Economic Development Committee (EDC).
3. It is envisaged that this Strategy be used as a framework for economic development activities in the Tweed over the next 5-10 years.