

NEW STATISTICS SHOW 'SEA CHANGE' CONTINUES TO SURGE

28 March 2005: New figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show the shift of population to the coast continues to surge, according to the National Sea Change Taskforce.

The Taskforce was established last year as a national body to represent the interests of coastal councils and communities experiencing the effects of rapid population and tourism growth.

Cr Joe Natoli, Chair of the Taskforce and Mayor of Maroochy on the Sunshine Coast, said the growth rate in Australian coastal councils during the year to June 2004 was 2%. This is two thirds higher than the national growth rate of 1.2%.

"The new figures show Australia's population at June 2004 was 20.1 million, an increase of 238,700 people compared to the previous year," Cr Natoli said.

"Nearly half the population increase occurred in coastal areas, even though only 28% of the Australians live in these areas.

"The migration to the coast continues to gather momentum, placing unprecedented demand for infrastructure and services on councils in sea change areas."

Cr Natoli said one of the main factors driving the population shift to the coast is housing affordability.

"Research we are undertaking with The University of Sydney shows it is mainly younger people moving to the coast, not baby boomers," he said.

"79% of 'sea changers' are under the age of 50. Many of them have been priced out of capital city housing markets and are looking for more affordable housing by the coast which has the added benefit of a more enjoyable lifestyle."

Cr Natoli said the state with the highest rate of coastal population growth was Western Australia, with a growth rate of 3.45% for the year to June 2004. This is followed by Queensland, with a coastal growth rate of 2.67%

"The new figures show the need for a coordinated national approach to managing rapid growth in coastal Australia," he said.

"The National Sea Change Taskforce has had initial discussions with State and Federal governments about the need to find long-term solutions to the challenge of growth in sea change areas and we have been encouraged at the response to date.

"We are currently preparing submissions to a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Provision of Infrastructure in Coastal Growth Areas and to the Federal Government on the issue."

Ends

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Background information – next page

ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION (ERP) – Coastal Local Government Areas (LGAs)

Source: ABS Catalogue 3218.0

Coastal LGAs	ERP at 30 June			Change		
	1999	2003	2004	1999-2004 %	Number 2003-2004	2003-2004 %
New South Wales	1,534,045	1,617,578	1,632,301	6.4%	14,723	0.9%
Victoria	753,382	825,195	844,572	12.1%	19,377	2.4%
Queensland	1,759,431	1,945,419	1,997,646	13.5%	52,227	2.7%
South Australia	315,781	321,642	323,628	2.5%	1,986	0.6%
Western Australia	458,780	510,371	527,964	15.1%	17,593	3.5%
Tasmania	202,823	204,953	207,081	2.1%	2,218	1.0%
Total national	5,024,242	5,425,158	5,533,192	10.2%	108,034	2.0%

COASTAL LGA TYPES

A research report titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge*, which was undertaken for the National Sea Change Taskforce by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney, has identified five types of local government areas in coastal areas.

The five types of LGAs in sea change areas are:

- β Coastal cities – substantial urban centres beyond the State capitals with populations greater than 100,000 e.g. Cairns, the Gold Coast and Maroochy (QLD) and Greater Geelong (VIC);
- β Coastal commuters – suburbanised satellite communities at the edges of capital cities e.g. Gosford and Wyong (NSW), Pine Rivers and Caboolture (QLD), Wanneroo, Mandurah and Rockingham (WA) and Onkaparinga (SA);
- β Coastal getaways – small to medium coastal towns within three hours drive of a capital city e.g. Bunbury and Busselton (WA), Bass and Surf Coasts (VIC) and Victor Harbor (SA)
- β Coastal lifestyle destinations – Communities more than three hours drive from a capital city with a tourism and leisure focus e.g. Coffs Harbour and Byron (NSW) Whitsunday (QLD) and Moyne (VIC)
- β Coastal hamlets – Small, remote coastal communities often surrounded by protected natural areas e.g. Robe and Grant (SA), Augusta-Margaret River (WA) and Douglas (QLD)