

**LAND USE HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT
REPORT No. L11/25**

**BUSINESS CENTRES HIERARCHY REVIEW AND DRAFT
COFFS HARBOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2011**

SEPARATE ATTACHMENT

**Discussion Paper
October 2011**

Review of Coffs Harbour Business Centres Hierarchy

Discussion Paper October 2011

Undertaken for
Coffs Harbour
City Council



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Executive Summary and Conclusion

This Review of the Coffs Harbour Business Centres Hierarchy undertaken for Coffs Harbour City Council aims to:

- identify whether the existing hierarchy, which protects the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD as the primary retail and commercial centre of the LGA, is appropriate for future growth of Coffs Harbour as a regional city
- recommend modifications to the existing Business Centres Hierarchy as appropriate
- analyse how the new Standard Instrument business zones should best be applied to the recommended Business Centres Hierarchy for various business zone locations throughout the LGA
- provide recommendations as to resultant zoning and built form controls for all B6 Enterprise Corridor zones within both the City Centre Plan area and the wider LGA.

The Review found that considerable research has been undertaken by Coffs Harbour City Council into commercial centres and employment land. This research has identified a clear hierarchy of centres, which has been confirmed by this Review.

The existing research has consistently found that Council's land use policies should ensure that development in other centres should not detract from the primacy of the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD. The research found that Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD lacked critical mass and that additional development was important to enable it to achieve the vitality and vibrancy of a regional centre. These findings are supported by this Review.

There is sufficient capacity in the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD to accommodate considerable additional retail and office development. The City Centre CBD generally has a low intensity of development, and planning controls permit a much higher intensity of development. A number of sites exist in a single ownership, facilitating site assembly for redevelopment.

This Review examined the application of the Standard Instrument to commercial centres and other selected locations in Coffs Harbour and has recommended an allocation of business land use zones to the centres consistent with the existing commercial centre hierarchy, as shown in **Table 1** below. The Review has also produced a table of suggested land uses for each zone which is contained in **Appendix 1** of the Review.

The content of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan and the associated Development Control Plan are generally supported by this Review. However, a number of important changes to the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan and the City Centre Development Control Plan are recommended. These changes are directed towards simplifying controls, such as floor space ratios, improving urban design through the use of improved advice and more effective controls, and providing stronger support for the City Centre CBD. The requirements of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan for restrictive floor space ratio controls on small sites are recommended for deletion. It should be noted that some recommendations refer to amendments to the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan. Because this draft Plan is close to finalisation, it is likely that any

adopted amendments will be incorporated into the draft LGA Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011)

Land uses in the B5 Business Development Zone should be closely managed to ensure that only large floor plate uses such as bulky goods retailers and warehouses are permitted, and the intrusion of non-bulky goods retailing does not occur.

There should be no increase in the land area where bulky goods retailing is permissible for at least 10 years.

Recently, the Standard Instrument was amended by the NSW Government to require the inclusion of “commercial development” as a permissible land use in the B2, B3 and B4 business zones. Commercial development includes retail and office development. The requirement for this land use (which is actually a group term for a wide range of retail and office type land uses) significantly restricts the ability of a Council to tailor these business zones to their local needs. In order to differentiate the B4 Mixed Use zone from other business zones and to allow the B4 zone to perform the role it is best suited in the Coffs Harbour LGA, there should be a limit on the maximum allowable retail, business and office floorspace of individual premises in the B4 Mixed Use zone in order to protect the commercial centre hierarchy.

The B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone should apply to much of the land along the Pacific Highway from the City Centre CBD to Bray Street, on both sides of the Highway. Only low scale development that does not detract from the City Centre CBD should occur on this land.

There should be a limit on the maximum allowable office and business floorspace of individual premises in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone in order to protect the commercial centre hierarchy.

Retail and commercial development in Woolgoolga should be focused on the Town Centre (Beach Street) and additional commercial zonings elsewhere should not take place unless there is an insufficient available land for development of a large supermarket or the like. The mere availability of suitable land for development elsewhere is insufficient justification for establishing a potential threat to the vitality of the Town Centre unless there is little alternative, because the impact of an additional supermarket on the Beach Street centre would be significant (Hill PDA, 2006). The work undertaken by Hill PDA for Council highlights this dilemma and suggests that a site at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Pullen Street may be suitable only if a supermarket was permissible but not speciality shops. The Coffs Harbour Employment Lands Study (SGS) states expansion of retail or commercial floorspace along the Pacific Highway would only be appropriate if it is demonstrated that the expansion was not to the detriment of the Town Centre at Beach Street. SGS identify that additional floorspace is required in the Town Centre and that opportunities to accommodate demand should be explored, including an expansion of the commercially zoned land or an adjustment of development controls.

The provisions of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan that permit a public administration building as an additional permitted land use on land at Beryl Street are proposed for deletion. This clause is superfluous because this land use is already permitted under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure). The accompanying variations in maximum building height are also proposed for deletion because a higher building could potentially receive approval under Clause 4.6 of

the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan if the applicant provided a case justifying such a height increase. The inclusion of these specific variations matters in the existing draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan contradicts Council's policy framework to support the City Centre CBD and to maintain only low scale business support development in the B6 Enterprise Corridor zoned land to the north of the City Centre CBD.

A number of recommendations are made in this Review and are listed in **Table 2**.

Table 1: Standard Instrument Zones relevant to Centres.

Zone	Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance	Application to Coffs Harbour
B1 Neighbourhood Centre	For neighbourhood centres that include small scale convenience premises, business premises and the like that serve the day to day needs of residents within walking distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Northside Shopping Centre, Park Beach Rd ✓ Bray Street Shopping Centre, Bray Street ✓ Linden Avenue Shopping Centre, Linden Avenue ✓ Emerald Beach Shopping Centre, Fiddamans Road ✓ Coramba Main Street , Orara Way ✓ Nana Glen Main Street, Nana Street ✓ Corindi local shops, Cnr Tasman and Pacific Streets (undeveloped) ✓ South Coffs local shops, Stadium Drive Streets (undeveloped) ✓ William Sharp Drive local shops, (undeveloped) ✓ Korora local shops , Korora Basin Road Streets (undeveloped)
B2 Local Centre	Centres that provide a range of commercial, civic, cultural and residential uses that typically service a wider catchment than a neighbourhood centre. This zone is appropriate to most local and town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Park Beach Plaza ✓ Toormina Shopping Centre ✓ Moonee Shopping Centre ✓ Sawtell Town Centre ✓ Woolgoolga Shopping Centre (Beach St)
B3 Commercial Core	For major centres that provide a wide range of uses including large scale retail, office, businesses, entertainment and community uses. These centres are intended to serve the needs of a wider region as well as those of the local community. It should only be applied to major metropolitan and regional centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD including lands proposed to be zoned B4 Mixed Use by the draft City Centre LEP at Lyster and Albany Streets (i.e. this land should be zoned B3)

B4 Mixed Use.	This zone is generally used where a wide range of land uses are to be encouraged, including commercial, residential, tourist and visitor, and community uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Woolgoolga River Street ✓ Jetty ✓ Promenade ✓ Moonee Shopping Centre Surrounds
B5 Business Development	To provide for business, warehouse and bulky goods retail uses that require a large floor area, in locations close to, and that support (but not detract from) the vitality of centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parts of Isles, Mansbridge and Cook Drives ✓ Homebase, Pacific Highway
B6 Enterprise Corridor	To be applied where commercial or industrial development is to be encouraged along main roads. Retail activity needs to be limited to ensure that Enterprise Corridors do not detract from the centre hierarchy of the locality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pacific Highway Woolgoolga ✓ Halls Road /Pacific Highway ✓ Gateway (lands fronting the Pacific Highway generally from Coffs Creek north to Bray Street) ✓ Stadium Drive/Pacific Highway
B7 Business Park	Primarily accommodates office and light industrial uses, including high technology industries. This zone should be used for larger campus style business parks not isolated office buildings.	Nil
SP3 Tourist	A special purpose zone targeted to tourist oriented precincts or sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bray Street Tourist Service Centre

Table 2: Summary of Recommendations

Note: Some recommendations refer to amendments to the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan. Because this draft Plan is close to finalisation, it is likely that any adopted amendments will be incorporated into the draft LGA Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011)

No.	Recommendation	Section
1.	It is recommended that the listed centres and locations are assigned land use zones as shown in Table 1 (Table 5 in the body of the Review). (Note: this table has recommendations for specific locations).	9.0-9.9
2.	It is recommended that land uses are permissible within specific business zones as shown in Appendix 1 . (This table contains detailed land use recommendations for each zone.)	9.0-9.9
3.	It is recommended that the retail, business and office floorspace of individual premises in the B4 Mixed Use zone be limited to 750 sq. metres by the inclusion of a suitable clause in the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).	9.4
4.	It is recommended that retail premises in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone is only permitted in the area including and adjacent to the Bailey Centre, and on Halls Road (Lot 10 DP 1076396), shown in Schedule 3 of the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000, and limited to a maximum of 750 sq. m. for each individual retail premise; and that this provision is incorporated into the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).	9.6
5.	It is recommended that office and business premises in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone are limited to a maximum gross floor space of 150 sq. m. on each lot; and a suitable clause included in the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).	9.6
6.	It is recommended that small scale medium density residential development is permissible with consent in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone, and this provision incorporated into the Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).	9.6
7.	It is recommended that the additional permitted use of a public administration building shown in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour), is deleted.	9.6
8.	It is recommended that the apparent inconsistency of Figures 3.8 and 8.6 in the draft City Centre DCP in relation to the building form along Harbour Drive at the Jetty is clarified consistent with the maintenance of the unique streetscape.	10.0
9.	It is recommended that the height variation shown in Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (including floor space ratio variation in Item 4) (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is deleted.	10.1
10.	It is recommended that the simplified Floor Space Ratio framework shown in Table 6 be adopted, and that the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan or its successor is amended as appropriate.	10.2

11.	It is recommended that Council review the application of maximum floorspace ratio controls to residential development throughout the LGA and amend the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011) accordingly.	10.2
12.	It is recommended that Section 2.3 of the draft City Centre Development Control Plan is amended to be consistent with Section 4.6 in relation to a requirement that development in the Gateway precinct “address the street”.	10.3
13.	It is recommended that Section 4.2 of the draft City Centre Development Control Plan is amended to show the Pacific Highway frontage of Park Beach Plaza as having a minimum requirement of “a street address”.	10.3
14.	It is recommended that Council consider the application of the Design Excellence subclauses 6.4 (1)-(3) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan to other parts of the LGA, particularly key locations such as the Sawtell Town Centre, to ensure a consistent approach to the quality of building design	10.4
15.	It is recommended that Council establish an Urban Design Advisory Panel to be used on occasions when additional or independent urban design advice is required.	10.4
16.	It is recommended that Council develop criteria to be used to determine when it is appropriate to use the services of the Urban Design Advisory Panel	10.4
17.	It is recommended that Clause 6.4 (4)-6.4(6) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan relating to architectural design competitions is replaced with new subclauses requiring a review of a Development Application by the proposed Urban Design Advisory Panel in specified circumstances (note: alternatively this proposed requirement may be able to be achieved through a DCP or a Policy)	10.4
18.	It is recommended that: (i) clauses 6.4(7) - 6.4(9) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is deleted, and (ii) Council develop a policy to define the circumstances under which a variation in the development standards under Clause 4.6 of the Standard Instrument, such as floor space ratio or building height, may be considered in the City Centre and surrounds, and consider whether to incorporate a suitable provision in the draft Coffs Harbour LEP 2011.	10.4
19.	It is recommended that the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is amended to include a clause requiring developments that meet or exceed specified criteria (such as a building height or floor space ratio) to submit an urban design report with a Development Application (the urban design report would be more elaborate than the “design excellence” statement required with all Development Applications). (note: alternatively this proposed requirement may be able to be achieved through a DCP or a Policy).	10.4
20.	It is recommended that the draft Coffs Harbour City Centre Development Control Plan clause 4.4 (Site Amalgamations) is deleted.	10.5

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This review of Council's Business Centres Hierarchy aims to:

- Identify whether the existing hierarchy, which protects the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD as the primary retail and commercial centre of the LGA, is appropriate for future growth of Coffs Harbour as a regional city
- Recommend modifications to the existing Business Centres Hierarchy as appropriate
- Analyse how the new Standard Instrument business zones should best be applied to the recommended Business Centres Hierarchy for various business zone locations throughout the LGA
- Provide recommendations as to resultant zoning and built form controls for all B6 Enterprise Corridor zones within both the City Centre Plan area and the wider LGA.

The commercial areas reviewed are listed in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Commercial Centres reviewed

Coffs Harbour City Centre	Coffs Harbour CBD
Park Beach Plaza and surrounds	Park Beach
Centro Toormina and surrounds	Toormina Shopping Centre, Toormina
Moonee Shopping Centre	Moonee
Jetty Village	Coffs Harbour Jetty
Promenade both sides of road	Jarrett, Mildura & Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour
Sawtell Town Centre	Sawtell main street
Moonee Shopping Centre surrounds	Moonee Beach Road, Moonee Beach
Woolgoolga Town Centre	Woolgoolga main street
River Street shopping area	River Street, Woolgoolga
Highway Sites, Woolgoolga	Cnr Pullen Street & Pacific Highway, Woolgoolga
South side bulky goods	Isles, Mansbridge, Cook Drives, Coffs Harbour
North side bulky goods	Homebase – Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour
Gateway Site, Coffs Harbour	Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour CBD to Bray Street
Halls Road area	Pacific Highway and Halls Road, Coffs Harbour
Stadium Drive Corner (undeveloped)	Pacific Highway and Stadium Drive, Coffs Harbour
Northside Shopping Centre	Park Beach Road, Park Beach
Bray Street Shopping Centre	Bray Street Coffs, Harbour
Linden Avenue Shopping Centre	Linden Avenue, Boambee East
Emerald Beach Shopping Centre	Fiddamans Road, Emerald Beach
Coramba Main Street	Orara Way, Coramba
Nana Glen Main Street	Nana Street, Nana Glen
Corindi local shops (undeveloped)	Cnr Tasman & Pacific Street, Corindi Beach
South Coffs local shops (undeveloped)	Stadium Drive, Coffs Harbour
William Sharp local shops (undeveloped)	William Sharp Drive, Coffs Harbour
Korora local shops (undeveloped)	Korora Basin Road, Korora

2.0 Structure

The structure of this Report is as follows:

- A discussion on methodology
- A review of previous studies and policies relevant to the Review
- A review of the commercial land hierarchy that exists within Coffs Harbour LGA
- A discussion on the application of the Standard Local Environmental Plan to centres in Coffs Harbour LGA
- A table of suggested land uses for business zones in Coffs Harbour
- A Review of Built Form controls applying to the City Centre
- The Review is preceded by an Executive Summary and Conclusion which includes the recommendations made in this Review.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 *Briefing*

The consultant was provided with a number of briefings by staff from Coffs Harbour City Council.

These briefings discussed a number of issues including:

- The context of growth in Coffs Harbour and the strategic planning framework
- The content of planning instruments affecting commercial and industrial centres
- Issues affecting Coffs Harbour and its commercial centres
- The history of Coffs Harbour commercial centres
- Topography and transport issues
- The nature of the Coffs Harbour economy
- Local issues affecting each centre.

This material was then assessed and analysed. The results of the analysis are presented in this Report.

3.2 *Site inspections*

The consultant undertook site inspections of all the commercial centres in the Coffs Harbour LGA over three days. A number of centres were inspected more than once in order to follow up on issues identified in the briefings with Council staff, and to obtain additional information. The inspections were undertaken by foot in all centres.

3.3 *Literature Review*

A review was undertaken of relevant studies and local policies relating to the development of centres in Coffs Harbour as well as of relevant State Government policies applying to centres. This material was analysed and conclusions drawn about the planning regime that should apply to centres in Coffs Harbour. Key documents are reviewed in Section 5 and a list of all references is at the end of this Review.

4.0 The Locality

Coffs Harbour is a regional centre located on the north coast of NSW. It is the administrative centre for the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA). Coffs Harbour is widely known as a tourist destination, and offers a wide range of tourist accommodation and experiences. The tourist numbers dramatically increase the population of the LGA in the holiday seasons.

The LGA has a diverse economy. Retailing is the largest major employment sector in Coffs Harbour, followed by health and community services, and education. Horticulture and fruit growing are important rural industries in the LGA.

Coffs Harbour LGA is growing rapidly. Its 2006 population of 67,900 is expected to reach 101,800 by 2036. Most of the population growth results from net migration to the LGA from other areas. The growth is being accommodated in a series of settlements located along the coast to the north and south of Coffs Harbour City Centre. Council is seeking to accommodate a greater proportion of population growth in medium density housing close to the existing centres.

Figure 1 below shows the location of centres in the wider LGA, and **Figure 2** focuses on Coffs Harbour city, and shows centres and employment areas with a close relationship to the City Centre as shaded areas.

Figure 1: Coffs Harbour Locality Map

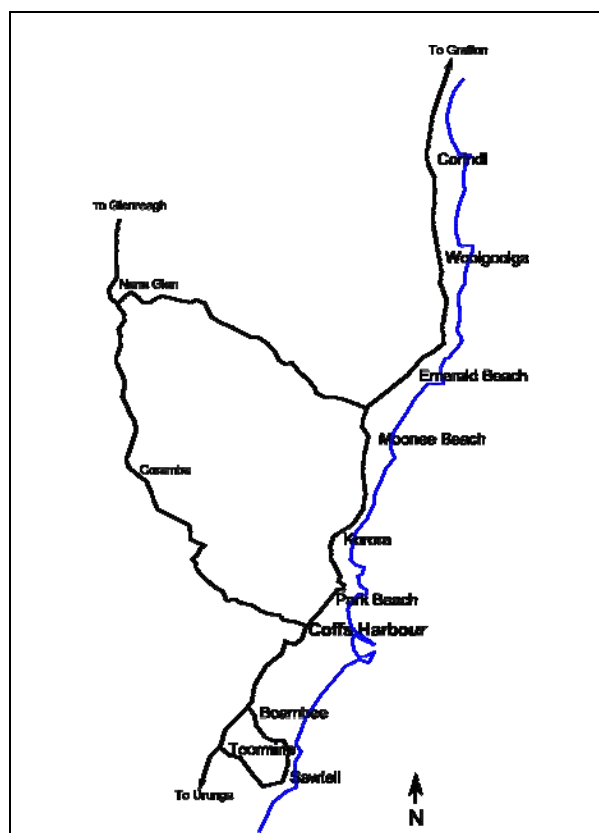
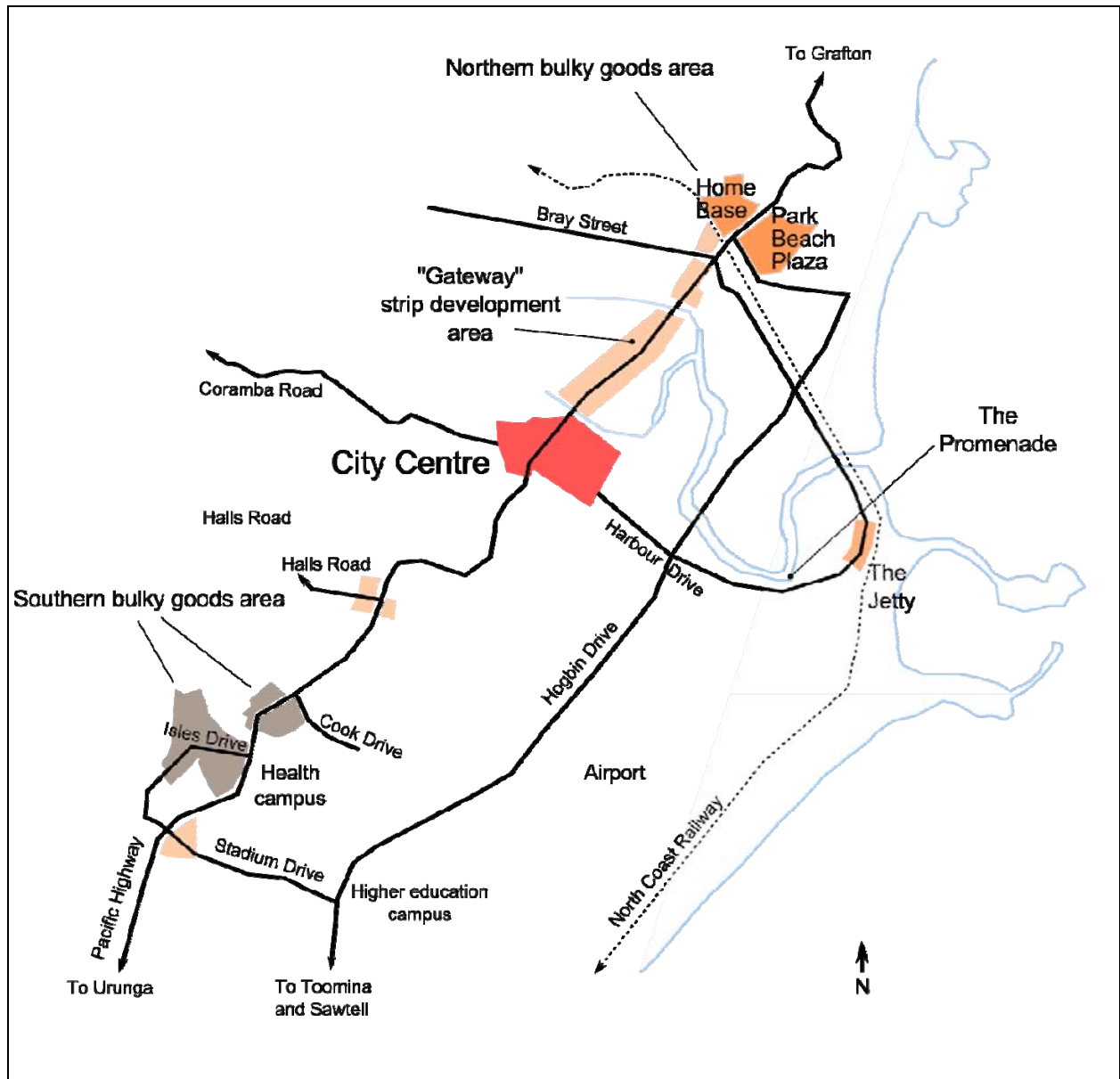


Figure 2: Significant centres with a close relationship to the City Centre



Note: Areas and locations shown are schematic.

5.0 Review of previous studies and Council policies

A review of relevant Council policies and studies was undertaken in order to obtain the background to the existing policy framework, to provide background on the issues facing the commercial hierarchy, and to understand the nature of planning controls which apply to the commercial centres.

The major documents reviewed and/or consulted included:

- Business Lands Component of the Local Growth Management Strategy (2010)
- City Centre Strategic Management Plan (2011)
- Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan (Revitalising Coffs Harbour)
- City Centre Vision (Department of Planning, 2010)
- City Centre Development Control Plan (Department of Planning, 2011)
- Coffs Harbour Employment Lands Strategy (SGS 2009)
- Coffs Harbour City Council reports on the Standard Local Environmental Plan various 2010-2011)
- Coffs Harbour City Centre DCP Review (Tract 2007)
- Coffs Harbour Retail Strategy (AEC, 2006)
- Coffs Harbour Gateway Strategy (Planning Workshop 2005)
- Draft Centres Policy (Department of Planning 2009)
- Draft Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environmental Plan (2010)
- Draft Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (Standard Instrument)
- Local Environmental Plan Local Environmental Strategy (1997)
- Mid North Coast Regional Strategy (Department of Planning 2009)
- Our Living City Settlement Strategy (various parts, 2007/8)
- Summary table of Public Submissions to the Draft Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environmental Plan (2010)
- Woolgoolga Business Lands Review (Hill PDA, 2006)

These documents provide a very comprehensive assessment of the nature of planning issues facing commercial centres in Coffs Harbour. They have been intensively developed over the last five years and cover commercial hierarchy, planning controls, gateway strategy, and floorspace projections.

5.1 *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy*

The State Government's *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* was published in 2009, and describes the State Government's spatial planning strategy for the Region.

The Strategy identifies Coffs Harbour as one of four regional centres. According to the Strategy, Coffs Harbour has several regional functions including air transport, tertiary education, high level health care, and resort tourism. It identifies significant growth for the Local Government Area.

In respect of commercial areas, the Strategy states that additional commercial floor space will be needed, and that this should be provided in a way that reflects the existing hierarchy of centres and business zones. In this context it states that Councils should consider higher densities and review the maximum building height limits in centres. It also recognises that new commercial development will be required to service new release areas, consistent with the commercial hierarchy.

The Strategy also states that:

- Fragmentation and out of centre retailing should be resisted
- Some commercial opportunities should be provided along the Pacific Highway in accordance with the Highway Centres Policy (Section 117 Direction 5.4)
- Opportunities for bulky good retailing should be identified in accessible locations in or near commercial centres
- Bulky goods retailing should be restricted in industrial zones, consistent with the policy "*The right place for business and services*"
- Other than a limited number of identified opportunities for highway service centres, no out of town commercial zonings should occur to permit commercial development along the Pacific Highway, including bulky good retailing
- Higher residential densities should be encouraged in appropriate locations, including centres.

In summary, the Strategy states that the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area is expected to undergo considerable growth, and that this growth should occur in a way that reinforces the existing hierarchy of centres.

5.2 ***Coffs Harbour 2030 Plan***

Coffs Harbour 2030 aims to provide holistic and wider-ranging strategic planning direction for future decision making in the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area. It was adopted in 2009, and consists of a Vision and a Plan.

A key outcome of the Plan is that the City Centre should be lively and diverse with a balanced mix of retail and residential opportunities, and that the City Centre is developed as a social and cultural focus for Coffs Harbour. It also aspires to an efficient public transport system which links the urban centres of the LGA. Accompanying this is a strategic statement directed to focussing development on "central medium density urban centres".

5.3 ***Coffs Harbour City Local Growth Management Strategy elements***

The 2007 Our Living City Settlement Strategy is Coffs Harbour's growth management strategy to guide future urban development. It has been amended several times since its adoption, in order to accommodate State Government directions and changes in policy.

The "Our Living City" (OLC) Settlement Strategy:

- Outlines a vision for the future, and a strategy to achieve it
- Sets out a "big picture" approach to guide Council's land use decisions to 2031
- Provides mechanisms to ensure the growing city offers a range of quality styles of living, working and recreating
- Offers a balanced approach to land supply and demand issues
- Provides a series of policies to tackle transport and urban growth issues

- Contains a number of elements addressing economic, social and environmental aspects of urban planning.

A major policy objective is concentrating growth in major centres, consistent with a hierarchy.

A retailing hierarchy report by AEC provided background and direction for the Strategy, and more recently work by SGS has led to the development of a Business Lands Component of the Strategy. These two reports are discussed below.

5.4 *Coffs Harbour Gateway Strategy*

The Coffs Harbour Gateway Strategy (Planning Workshop 2005) provides a comprehensive assessment of urban design and public domain issues along the Pacific Highway through the Coffs Harbour City Centre and its approaches. It also makes a number of useful observations and recommendations about land use issues along the Highway Corridor, which are described below.

In relation to the:

- “Northern Precinct” between Bray Street and the Big Banana, the zoning is appropriate. Developments are set back and do not address the Highway; the poor appearance could be improved by landscaping.
- “Marcia Street Precinct” (between Coffs Creek and Bray Street), the Strategy notes the evolution of small scale business uses within the residentially zoned area, and suggests that this Precinct be rezoned Business 3G Mixed Use, in recognition of the low scale business support function this area provides to the City Centre. The intention of the Strategy is to maintain the low scale “support” nature of development in this locality. No recommendations were made to change the zone of land currently zoned other than residential within the Precinct.
- “Central Business District” (CBD), the zoning is appropriate. The increasingly “professional office” character of the western side of the Highway should be encouraged. Given their strategic visibility from the southern approach on the Highway, the Telstra and Jax sites should be redeveloped with a high quality “entry statement” building. The eastern side of the Highway has a vibrant focus along Harbour Street, while the eastern outskirts have a more professional office focus. The southern perimeter, dominated by older motels, has a poor visual appearance that needs to be upgraded. The northern perimeter contains a cultural and civic focus which is appropriate to the location.
- “Halls Road Precinct”, the zoning is appropriate, but the sites and their surrounds are of poor visual appearance; landscaping is needed.
- “Southern Precinct” on the Pacific Highway to the south of Hall Road to the urban outskirts, visual clutter should be improved amongst the myriad of light industrial and related uses, and improved landscaping to screen developments from the Highway.

5.5 *Coffs Harbour Retail Strategy*

The Coffs Harbour Retail Strategy was undertaken by the AEC group in 2006. It used a methodology based on market research and retail modelling, as distinct from one based on land use planning considerations.

It found that visitors are responsible for almost 20% of the LGA's retail trade. According to the Study, the LGA's retail market is becoming increasingly fragmented, with increased retail in industrial zones and as strip retail, at the expense of centres. Discount retailers were identified in bulky goods zones, even when the primary component of their business could not be considered as "bulky".

The City Centre CBD was seen as requiring "consolidation" and a 50% increase in floorspace to 75,000 sq. m over the next 25 years, with a focus on higher order retail tenants. Despite the City Centre CBD being seen to "lack critical mass", its low vacancy level was noted.

Park Beach Plaza was seen as having potential for future development by an additional 10,000 sq. m over 15-20 years, by continuing to focus on its current retail and service mix.

Toormina was seen as having the potential for an increase in floorspace of an additional 10,000 sq. m over 15-20 years, in response to new residential development in the area.

It was recommended that Moonee shopping centre not increase its floorspace over the next 15 years.

Redevelopment to provide an additional 10,000 sq. m at Woolgoolga was recommended. Although the additional floorspace was recommended at Woolgoolga East (Beach Street), the practical constraint of land availability was identified as potentially leading to a need for retail floorspace on the western side of the Highway.

A new hospitality precinct of around 1,700 sq. m was recommended for the Jetty, in addition to redevelopment of the Jetty Shopping Village to more closely match the amenity and quality of the surrounding area.

The Study found there was no need to increase bulky goods floorspace. It also concluded that Council should tighten retail development controls to overcome inappropriate retail activities occurring in industrial zones.

5.6 *Employment Lands Study*

The 2009 Employment Lands Study by SGS Economics and Planning provides a recent assessment of the supply and demand of employment land in the LGA. Its methodology was based on demographic and demand modelling, combined with a land use planning assessment of floorspace supply.

It found that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate demand for commercial and industrial land to 2031. The Study generally confirmed the existing retail hierarchy in the LGA, and made some

recommendations to reinforce the hierarchy and to ensure sufficient supply of floorspace for certain categories of land uses.

The Study found that the LGA had a higher than average retail floorspace per capita due to the tourist trade and because of the nature of many small businesses. A wide range of retail formats was found in the City Centre CBD, but significant out of centre retailing was found in the form of big box and bulky goods retail, including in industrial areas. Out of centre retailing was identified as a concern because of its potential impact on the viability of business in town centres. The Study comments that the scale of development and proximity of Park Beach to the City Centre CBD means "that great care should be taken that any further development at this Precinct does not cannibalise trade in the CBD and threaten its economic viability".

The Woolgoolga East commercial zone was recommended to remain the principal retail area in Woolgoolga, with the western commercial areas more suitable for "space extensive" land uses. Retail or commercial expansion would only be appropriate where studies indicated that this would not be to the detriment of the Woolgoolga East commercial area.

5.7 *Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan*

The Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan is a joint product of the then NSW Department of Planning and the Coffs Harbour City Council. The Plan covers a study area which includes the City Centre CBD and a wider "frame" district, which contains a range of related land uses. The three components of the Plan are a Vision Statement, a Development Control Plan (DCP), and a Local Environmental Plan (LEP). . It should be noted that some recommendations in this Review refer to amendments to the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan. Because this draft Plan is close to finalisation, it is likely that any adopted amendments will be incorporated into the draft LGA Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011)

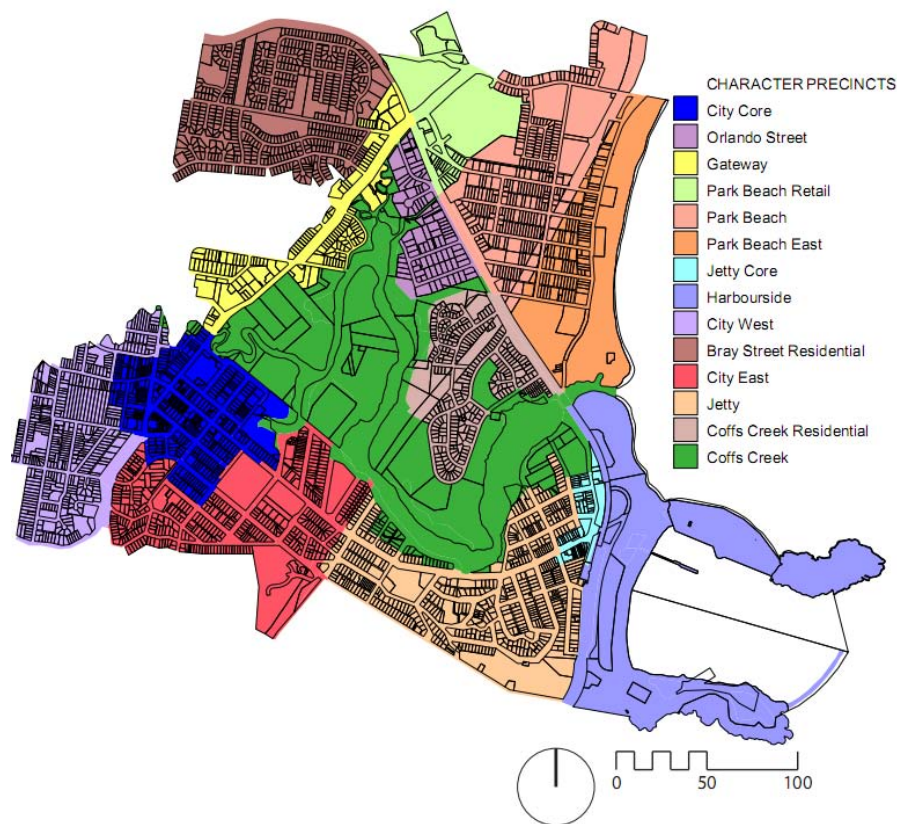
Figure 3 shows the Study area is broken up into several functional units or "character areas" including:

- City Core (CBD)- the "main business centre"
- City East- a "strong residential focus with a high density zone"
- City West- "predominantly residential with high density potential"
- Orlando Street- a "mixed industrial area"
- Gateway- between Coffs Creek and Bray Street- "a low key commercial use with low scale buildings"
- Park Beach Retail- a "local centre offering retail and service roles"
- Park Beach- "a residential precinct catering for tourist/visitor and permanent accommodation"
- Park Beach East- "a mixture of holiday and permanent accommodation, tourist facilities, and associated coastal recreation areas"
- Jetty Core- "a thriving mixed use area with small cafes, retail strip, some short term accommodation, and permanent accommodation"
- Harbourside- "recreational, port and environmental area"
- Bray Street Residential- "low density residential".

The City Centre Plan clearly states the City Centre CBD has highest intensity of economic activity, and the support role that should be played by the other character areas. The DCP devotes considerable detail to specifying development controls which aim to enable the City Centre to intensify as a mixed use commercial centre which has high quality urban design and amenity.

The City Centre Plan includes the development of a State Government precinct on a site just northwest of the City Centre CBD, within the Gateway precinct. State agency activities would be consolidated on this site. The site suggested is on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Beryl Street. The reasons for identifying this location, other than it is a large site in State Government ownership, are not clear because this proposal is otherwise inconsistent with the general policy direction and development parameters of the Plan.

Figure 3: City Centre Plan Character Precincts



Source: Department of Planning, 2010, Coffs Harbour City Centre Plan

Council has since adopted the City Centre DCP, and the draft Local Environmental Plan is with the Department of Planning and infrastructure awaiting finalisation.

6.0 Commercial Land Hierarchy in Coffs Harbour LGA

For the purposes of this Review, a commercial centre hierarchy has been used to assist in understanding the functions of the commercial centres in Coffs Harbour, and the relationship between them. Because of the history of development in Coffs Harbour, its geography and the demands of economic activity, there are a number of commercial areas which perform specialised functions, and as a result have a special place in the hierarchy.

The development of a commercial hierarchy is important, because it has a major influence on the form of a city, guides public and private investment, and helps build economies and agglomerations of scale of commercial and social activity. Collectively, these factors shape the character of a city and local government area, and underpin the extent to which desirable higher order activities are likely to locate in an area. In the case of Coffs Harbour, the role and function of commercial areas and centres is instrumental in providing economic activity and employment to broaden the City's economic base and bring long term prosperity to the area. For Coffs Harbour, this is particularly important if the impacts of the strong seasonality in the tourism industry are to be buffered by a high level of "year round" economic activities, and to provide a foundation upon which to attract sophisticated service industries and professionals to the area.

The commercial centre hierarchy is comprised of the types of centres described in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Commercial Centre Hierarchy of Coffs Harbour

Type of Centre	Characteristics	Coffs Harbour Examples
Regional	Regional Centres provide a widest range of commercial and community activities. They usually contain the highest concentration of activity and the "higher order" activities. They cater for a wide catchment, often an entire Local Government Area and beyond. Regional Centres often have significant office components.	City Centre
Specialised centres	Specialised centres tend to focus on a limited number of commercial activities and play a lesser role in the location of commercial activities.	Bray Street Tourist Service Centre (Tourism)
Specialised tourist/ leisure services	This type of specialised centre often has a wide spatial catchment and caters for the leisure needs of tourists and residents- it often has a large amount of its floorspace devoted to cafes and food outlets	Jetty core
Specialised standalone retail	This type of specialised centre has a wide spatial catchment, and frequently takes the form of a large subregional retail mall. They are usually heavily dependent on the motor vehicle and do not support the intensive residential and mixed use development that typically surrounds a regional centre. The "bulky goods" centre also falls into this category.	Park Beach Retail Park Beach East Homebase

<p>Specialised highway oriented retail and services</p>	<p>This type of specialized centre often represents the evolution of the highway “strip centre”. It is often found on the outskirts of a town or city area, or along the main roads leading from a regional centre. Because of the relatively low rents and high visibility of such a centre, they support wide range of land uses, many of which need larger sites for display, storage or work. This type of centre sometimes includes bulky goods retailers.</p>	<p>Gateway (Coffs Creek to Bray Street)</p> <p>Woolgoolga Pacific Highway</p> <p>Pacific Highway- Halls Road</p> <p>Pacific Highway – Isles/Mansbridge/Cook Drive (parts)</p>
<p>District Centres</p>	<p>District centres serve a number of towns or suburbs. They typically provide a wide range of goods and services to meet weekly and monthly needs, and are often anchored by one or two supermarkets.</p>	<p>Woolgoolga Town Centre (Beach St)</p> <p>Toormina</p> <p>Moonee</p>
<p>Town Centres</p>	<p>Town centres generally serve a town or suburb. They provide a range of goods and services to meet weekly and occasionally monthly needs. Sometimes town centres develop a specialisation because of their location, and may have a greater concentration of a specific land use, e.g. cafes or galleries in tourist locations.</p>	<p>Sawtell</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Centres</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Centres generally serve a suburb. They typically provide a range of goods and services to meet daily, and occasionally, weekly needs. Neighbourhood centres are frequently under considerable competition pressure from supermarkets in the town and district centres.</p>	<p>William Sharp Drive*</p> <p>Boambee East</p> <p>Bray Street</p> <p>Corindi*</p> <p>Emerald Beach</p> <p>Korora *</p> <p>Northside</p> <p>Safety Beach *</p> <p>Stadium Drive local shops*</p> <p>Woolgoolga (River Street)</p>
<p>Villages</p>	<p>Villages generally serve a small urban settlement. In rural areas, they would serve the surrounding rural properties, have a general store, and generally provide only day to day, or occasionally weekly needs. Sometimes villages have one or two land uses that have a wider spatial catchment, such as a café or gallery in tourist locations.</p>	<p>Nana Glen</p> <p>Coramba</p> <p>Lowana</p> <p>Ulong</p> <p>Red Rock</p>

* Zoned but not developed

7.0 Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 and the Standard Instrument

The Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 was developed with a suite of locally tailored zones that have been formulated to meet the specific needs of centres in Coffs Harbour LGA.

There are 7 business zones, namely:

- Business 3A City Centre Zone (Zone 3A)
- Business 3B City Support Zone (Zone 3B)
- Business 3C Town Centre Zone (Zone 3C)
- Business 3D Tourist Service Centre Zone (Zone 3D)
- Business 3E Town Centre Support Zone (Zone 3E)
- Business 3F Neighbourhood Zone (Zone 3F)
- Business 3G Mixed Use Zone (Zone 3G)

The land use tables, including objectives of the zones, for each of these zones is at Appendix 1

The State Government is requiring all Councils to change over to a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) based on the “Standard Instrument”.

The Standard Instrument offers greater consistency across LGA’s but at the expense of losing local flexibility. It has also resulted in a reduced ability to precisely tailor land use zones and other provisions of LEPs to a Council’s local needs. While the Standard Instrument also has 7 business zones, they are not directly equivalent zones to each of the existing Coffs Harbour LEP zones. As a result, a “best fit” must be determined for each of the zones. The business zones of the Standard Instrument are:

- Zone B1 Neighbourhood Centre
- Zone B2 Local Centre
- Zone B3 Commercial Core
- Zone B4 Mixed Use
- Zone B5 Business Development
- Zone B6 Enterprise Corridor
- Zone B7 Business Park.

In addition, the application of the Standard Instrument is governed by a number of Orders and Directions, including the specification of mandatory minimum land uses in certain zones. Of particular interest to this Review is the requirement that “commercial development” must be a permissible land use in the B2, B3 and B4 business zones. Commercial development includes retail and office development. The requirement for this land use (which is actually a group term for a wide range

of retail and office type land uses) significantly restricts the ability of a Council to tailor these business zones to their local needs.

Coffs Harbour City Council is in an advanced stage of producing a draft Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan for public exhibition.

An objective of this Review is to examine the application of the Standard Instrument to the hierarchy of centres in Coffs Harbour, to identify issues relating to the impact of the Standard Instrument on the hierarchy, and to recommend ways of addressing these challenges.

8.0 The Standard Instrument and Business Zones

8.1 *Draft Centres Policy*

The Draft Centres Policy – Planning for Retail and Commercial Development (DoP 2009) provides a framework for the planning and development of commercial centres. The Policy strongly advocates a defined network of centres setting out the spatial framework for commercial growth. It states that this framework should be anchored by an assessment of floorspace supply and demand- which Coffs Harbour City Council has undertaken.

The draft Policy states that retail and commercial activity should be located in centres to ensure the most efficient use of transport and other infrastructure, proximity to labour markets, and to improve the amenity and liveability of those centres. A defined network of centres is also seen to provide certainty for public and private investment. For example, investment in new shopping centres will be more likely to be in an area where there is a commitment to increasing commercial floorspace, and therefore potential retail customers.

While the draft Policy indicates that new centres can be designated, it states that in the first instance Councils should examine whether market demand can be accommodated through more floorspace or more flexible zoning in existing centres and failing that, the expansion of existing centres.

The draft Policy describes the appropriate zones which could be applied to edge of centre and out of centre retail or commercial development. These zones- B5 Business Development and B6 Enterprise Corridor- are to be applied to locations that “are close to and that support the viability of centres”, and “maintain the economic strength of centres by limiting retailing activity”, respectively.

Other matters discussed in the draft Policy include:

- Bulky goods premises should be preferably located in centres in zones B2-B4, and where this is not realistic, clustered in a B5 zone in an out of centre location
- Concern that non-bulky goods are being increasingly sold through bulky good premises, such as audio visual and electrical goods
- Entertainment and recreation facilities should be located in zones B2-B4 within centres, where possible
- Edge of centre and out of centre commercial and retail proposals should only be considered when there are no suitable zoned sites in the existing centre
- Where no suitable within centre or edge of centre locations are available, out of centre locations for commercial or retail development will not be supported unless there is a net community benefit (a methodology is provided to determine the level of benefit).

9.0 Application of the Standard Instrument to Coffs Harbour Business Centres

Department of Planning Practice Note PN 11-002 provides guidance on the application of the standard instrument zones, as shown in **Table 5** at Section 9.8.

This Review has undertaken an assessment of the “in principle” appropriateness of these zones to the commercial areas of Coffs Harbour. Each relevant zone is discussed in turn. There is a longer discussion on the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone because this was specifically required by the brief of this Review.

9.1 **B1 Neighbourhood Centre**

The application of the B1 Neighbourhood Centre is relatively straightforward because the smaller centres of the LGA clearly meet the standard instrument objectives of a neighbourhood centre, namely:

“To provide a range of small-scale retail, business and community uses that serve the needs of people who live or work in the surrounding neighbourhood”.

Furthermore, an inspection of each of the centres confirmed the appropriateness of the zone.

9.2 **B2 Local Centre**

The B2 Local Centre zone is best allocated to the larger centres in the LGA which meet the Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance and the relevant zone objective, namely:

“To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area.”

The addition of locally determined objectives will enable the Council to fine tune the zone objectives to reflect the role of these centres in the hierarchy of centres in the LGA.

Despite the size of Park Beach Plaza, it is important that it be allocated a zone that clearly reflects its secondary role to the City Centre CBD. Park Beach Plaza is essentially a standalone retail centre that does not have the comprehensive range of goods and services evident in the City Centre CBD, or the presence of higher order civic and financial functions. Previous research into commercial centres in Coffs Harbour and the findings of this Review strongly support the primacy of the City Centre CBD and the importance of its unique role being maintained and not eroded by the growth of other centres. The B2 Local Centre zone is the most appropriate zone to perform this function amongst the limited suite of zones for use in the Standard Instrument. A similar comment applies to the Toormina Centre.

The Woolgoolga Town Centre at Beach Street is the most vibrant centre in Woolgoolga, and offers a wide range of goods and services. Previous research into commercial centres in Coffs Harbour and the findings of this Review support a continuation of this role as the northern most comprehensive “local centre” and the dominant centre in Woolgoolga. Accordingly, a B2 Local Centre zone is appropriate for this centre.

The Moonee shopping centre acts as a local centre for the expanding residential areas nearby. The centre is still developing its role and under Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 consists of a core area zoned 3F Business Neighbourhood surrounded by a large area of generally undeveloped land zoned 3G Business Mixed Use. The land zoned 3F Business Neighbourhood is appropriate for a B2 Local Centre zone, while the land zoned 3G Mixed Use is discussed under Section 9.4 of this Review.

The Sawtell Town Centre performs the role of providing a diverse range of goods and services commensurate with a local centre. A B2 Local Centre zone is appropriate for this centre.

9.3 ***B3 Commercial Core***

The B3 Commercial Core zone is intended for major regional centres such as the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD. The primacy of the City Centre CBD in the LGA is supported by previous research into commercial centres in Coffs Harbour and the findings of this Review, and is consistent with its designation as a major regional centre in the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy.

The City Centre's role is consistent with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance and the relevant zone objective which emphasises the wide range of land use and activities that occur there, namely:

“To provide a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community”

Accordingly, a B3 Commercial Core zone is appropriate for the City Centre CBD.

In the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan lands off Lyster Street and Albany Street adjacent in the City Centre CBD are proposed to be zoned B4 Mixed Use. This land should be bought under the B3 Commercial Core zone because there appears to be no particular benefit in applying the B4 Mixed Use zone to those lands, particularly after a Standard Instrument Order required the B2, B3 and B4 zone land use tables to include commercial development, such as shops and offices, as a permissible land use. The impact of this Order was a significant reduction in the differences between these zones.

9.4 ***B4 Mixed Use***

The B4 Mixed Use zone is intended for areas where a wide range of land uses is being encouraged. Commercial uses are usually quite evident, if not dominant, but other uses such as higher density housing are more evident than the traditional local centre. The flexibility of the B4 zone allows it to be applied to centres which do not fit neatly into the description and role of the other zones of the Standard Instrument.

Care needs to be taken in the application of the B4 Mixed Use zone because of the wide range of permissible land uses. The indiscriminate application of the B4 Mixed Use zone can lead to unintended consequences which can challenge the commercial centre hierarchy. This issue and ways of managing it are discussed later in this Section.

Examples of areas where to mixed use zone is appropriate in Coffs Harbour LGA include the Jetty, the surrounds of Moonee Beach shopping centre, the Promenade and Woolgoolga River Street.

The application of the B4 Mixed Use zone to these centres is consistent with Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance and the relevant objective of the standard instrument, namely:

“To provide a mixture of compatible land uses

To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.”

Because commercial premises are a mandatory land use in the B4 Mixed Use zone, some Councils have chosen to limit the permissible maximum floorspace of individual retail, office and business premises in the zone. This strategy effectively prevents the development of large supermarkets and offices or similarly large floor plate land uses which may otherwise challenge the commercial centre hierarchy of the LGA. However it does permit the growth of small scale retail and office uses in conjunction with a range of other land uses. It is very important that a similar floorspace limitation is applied to the B4 Mixed Use zone in Coffs Harbour LGA.

It is recommended that the retail, business and office floorspace of individual premises in the B4 Mixed Use zone is limited to 750 sq. metres by the inclusion of a suitable clause in the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).

9.5 B5 Business Development

The B5 Business Development zone is not intended for commercial centres as such, and is intended for localities which are appropriate for large floor plate space extensive uses, such as warehouses and bulky goods retailers. Often these uses co-exist with light industrial uses that occupy similarly large scale sites and buildings. Coffs Harbour has considerable land where these uses have been approved. The Coffs Harbour Retail Strategy and the Coffs Harbour Employment Lands Study reports identify that there is more than sufficient land available for bulky goods retail. The Employment Lands Study states that that the bulky goods sector in Coffs Harbour LGA should consolidate for at least 10 years.

An important consideration of the B5 Business Development zone is to limit its spatial extent in order to ensure that it does not erode retail activity in other centres. Another important consideration is to ensure that retailing is well regulated in the B5 Business Development zone so that non bulky goods retail does not occur.

The areas proposed to be zoned B5 Business Development in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan/ Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan appear to be pragmatically appropriate in size because they correspond to those areas where bulky goods retailing and similar large floorplate land uses have been approved, but do not extend these areas. The highway location of the proposed zone is appropriate because these uses rely on easy access and some exposure to major roads, such as the Pacific Highway.

Localities where the B5 Business Development zone is appropriate are in the south of the City along parts of Isles, Mansbridge, and Cook Drives, and in the north at Homebase. This allocation of land to this zone is potentially in excess of what would normally occur without impacting excessively on other centres; however it recognises that bulky good retailing is already widespread in these areas. Expansion of the spatial area zoned B5 beyond these allocations is very undesirable.

The application of the B5 zone to these localities is consistent with Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance and with the objective of the Standard Instrument, namely:

“To enable a mix of business and warehouse uses, and bulky goods premises that require a large floor area, in locations that are close to, and that support the viability of, centres.”

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance on this zone states that:

The zone may be applied to areas that are located close to existing centres and which will support and not detract from the viability of those centres.

In Australia, bulky goods retailing plays an important and legitimate role in the retail sector. However, considerable care needs to be taken to ensure that bulky goods retailing does not expand to such an extent that it significantly detracts from the retail vitality of centres, such as the Coffs Harbour City Centre CBD. In addition care needs to be taken to ensure that only bulky goods retailing occurs in bulky goods areas. In many localities, other forms of retailing that are more appropriately located in centres have been occupying space in bulky goods retail areas, and as a result they have eroded the viability of centre based retailers. The Coffs Harbour Retail Strategy refers to the City Centre CBD as “lacking critical mass”. It is essential that Council act to ensure the City Centre CBD attains critical mass and that it is not unduly eroded by inappropriate development in other areas. Indiscriminate growth of bulky goods retailing is one area where such erosion could easily originate.

A land use table has been produced for the B5 Business Development zone as part of this Review and is at **Appendix 1**. The differences between the land uses proposed by this Review and those in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan are not major but they do reflect a sharpened focus on large floor plate users within the zone.

9.6 B6 Enterprise Corridor

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance for the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone is that it is intended to provide a relatively flexible zone to manage economic land uses, usually on significant road corridors leading to a major centre. Typically uses along these corridors are low scale low rent businesses which in many cases are reliant on road exposure. An important aspect of land uses in the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone is that they must support and not detract from the vitality of other centres.

In common with the B5 Business Development Zone, care needs to be taken that development in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone does not erode the vitality of centres, particularly the City Centre CBD. While relatively low land costs or rent and frequently larger site sizes makes the B6 Enterprise Corridor a superficially attractive place for retail and offices to locate, this “attraction” should not be allowed to over-ride the policy imperative of supporting the City Centre and other centres by taking damaging actions such as permitting a wide range of land uses to locate in the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone.

The objectives of the standard instrument in relation to the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone are:

“To promote businesses along main roads and to encourage a mix of compatible uses.”

“To provide a range of employment uses (including business, office, retail and light industrial uses).”

To maintain the economic strength of centres by limiting retailing activity”.

There are four localities confirmed by this Review for the application of the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone. They are:

- The area adjacent to the intersection of Stadium Drive and the Pacific Highway Coffs Harbour.
- The area adjacent to the intersection of Halls Road and the Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour
- Gateway- the Pacific Highway from Bray Street to the City Centre CBD, Coffs Harbour
- Pacific Highway Woolgoolga

These localities have different characteristics; although they share one element- they are located on a major arterial spine road, the Pacific Highway. Their highway location is the reason for their existence because it provides easy access, exposure, in some cases low rent.

Vacant land at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Stadium Drive is currently zoned Business 3G Mixed Use. The location of this land and relationship to other land uses is appropriate for a B6 Enterprise Corridor zone. This land is undeveloped and is located at the entry to a proposed new residential area. Land is zoned further east on Stadium Drive for a small neighbourhood commercial centre to serve the proposed residential area. Retail and other intensive commercial development is not desirable on the Stadium Drive/Pacific Highway site because it would detract from other planned commercial development in the area, and could lead to the development of another hub for bulky goods retailing or a standalone shopping centre. There is more than sufficient land already zoned for bulky goods retailing, and for general business, such as shopping centres, in the south of the City. Additional development of these types would detract from the existing and proposed centres and should not occur.

Land around the Pacific Highway/ Halls Road intersection is currently zoned 3B Business City Support. This land is mainly occupied by car related uses. A B6 Enterprise Corridor zone would allow these uses to continue as well as permit other support uses to evolve on the land without detracting from the vitality of other centres.

The land along the Pacific Highway between the City Centre CBD and Bray Street –the “Gateway Corridor” - is currently in three land use zones:

- Land to the south of Bray Street on the both sides of the Highway is currently zoned 2A Residential. In recognition of the significant long standing intrusion of business uses (typically car related uses and small offices) into this area, it is appropriate to rezone the land to B6 Enterprise Corridor. This will regularise the long standing business uses, and maintain the low scale support role for the City Centre.
- The land on the eastern side of the Highway zoned 2E Tourist Residential is also appropriately zoned B6 Enterprise Corridor under the Standard Instrument. The B6 zone will allow a wider range of business support uses and will assist in maintaining the low scale nature of development on the land. It is noted that this land is located between two green corridors and assists providing one of two important green spaces which visually break up the strip of development from the City Centre to Park Beach Plaza/ Homebase. This attribute of the land should be maintained.

- Further south, and just north of the City Centre CBD the land on the western side of the Highway is zoned 3B Business City Support and 4A Industrial. Once again, the application of the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone is appropriate.

A small retail area commonly known as the “Bailey Centre” and adjacent properties is located along the Pacific Highway just north of the City Centre CBD, by virtue of shops being made an additional permitted use in Schedule 3 of the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000. Small scale retailing has been well entrenched in this location for some time, and should continue in a limited form as a permissible use, but not expand. There is a risk that the site might be redeveloped in the future as one or two large retail spaces. This would not be a desirable outcome for the City Centre CBD.

Retail is not generally desirable in the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone because of its impact on other centres, however the permissibility of retail land uses in the “Bailey Centre” and some adjacent sites could be maintained by an enabling clause for this site in the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011), as is proposed for the land in Schedule 1 of the draft Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environmental Plan. Similarly, land at Halls Road (Lot 10 DP 1076396) is appropriate for local shops to serve the residential areas to the west, particularly since the previously proposed North Boambee shops will not eventuate. However, it is undesirable to permit retail in the other areas proposed for the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone at Woolgoolga (see discussion below), and Stadium Drive (there is land zoned for a local shopping centre nearby and in a more central location to service the planned new residential area). This is because there is sufficient land zoned for retail in the nearby locations, and additional retail will detract from these and other centres. It is important that the retail floorspace for each retail premise is limited on the land affected by the enabling clause, as was suggested earlier for the B4 Mixed Use Zone.

It is recommended that retail floorspace of individual premises be limited to a defined maximum.

It is recommended that retail premises in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone is only permitted in the area including and adjacent to the Bailey Centre, and on Halls Road (Lot 10 DP 1076396), shown in Schedule 3 of the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000, and limited to a maximum of 750 sq. m. for each individual retail premise; and that this provision is incorporated into the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).

Another locality specific matter is that office premises should be permitted in the proposed B6 Business Enterprise zone in order to regularise their long standing operation within the “gateway corridor”. However if offices and business premises are to operate in the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone it is critical that their development be managed to protect the role of the City Centre CBD. This can be done by limiting the floorspace of premises to a defined maximum. This provision would permit small scale office operations but would not permit larger office premises whose presence would detract from the vitality of City Centre CBD. The City Centre CBD lacks critical mass and it is very important that every opportunity is taken to encourage office and retail development in the City Centre CBD.

A maximum gross floorspace area of 150 sq. m per lot will permit most small office operations, without creating a significant threat to the City Centre, and will maintain the low scale nature of development in the area.

It is recommended that office and business premises in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone are limited to a maximum of 150 sq. m. gross floor space on each lot; and that a suitable clause is included in the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).

The proposed "Gateway" B6 Enterprise Corridor zoned land to the north of the City Centre CBD between Coffs Creek and Bray Street has evolved from a base of light industrial and service industries in the south and home based small businesses in the north. It provides a relatively low intensity area of business uses between the more intensive Park Beach Plaza and the City Centre. It should continue in this role.

The nature of development in the zone is generally low scale and is dominated by dwellings or domestic scale business buildings in the north. Quite a number of small scale businesses operate in the area apparently contrary to their permissibility in the current zone (Zone 2A Residential in the north) provisions of the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000. These businesses have clearly been operating for a long time and in some locations dominate the land uses. It is considered appropriate this land be placed in a zone where they can continue to operate as a permissible use- the B6 Enterprise Corridor is such a zone.

In order to provide additional flexibility to the B6 Business Enterprise Zone, and in recognition of its existing residential component in the "Gateway" precinct, it is appropriate that residential development is permitted in the zone, with small scale medium density residential development being permitted. Such development is considered to be a suitable companion land use in all four locations recommended for the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone.

It is recommended that small scale medium density residential development is permissible with consent in the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone, and this provision incorporated in to the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011).

The additional permitted use of a public administration building, shown in shown in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour), raises a number of issues.

Should a public authority wish to carry out this form of development, it can be undertaken under the provisions of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure). It should not be included in the Local Environmental Plan because it establishes an undesirable precedent for others. Matters addressed in State Environmental Planning Policies are not normally allowed to be included in Local Environmental Plans by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure as a matter of policy, and therefore the inclusion of this matter in the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan is unusual. Furthermore, the inclusion of this provision appears to be contrary to Council policy regarding support for the City Centre CBD.

A critical issue is to prevent the development of large scale office buildings outside of the City Centre CBD. If a large new office building was built outside of the City Centre CBD, rather than on redeveloped land within the City Centre CBD, it will lead to existing users vacating lower grade floorspace within the City Centre when they move to the new building. The vacant lower grade office floorspace will take some time to fill, and drain energy and investment from the City Centre, as has happened in Newcastle.

Furthermore, it would decrease the demand for additional office floorspace to be provided in the City Centre CBD.

There is considerable potential for growth and intensification in the City Centre and other centres without retail and office uses having to “spill out” into land zoned B6 Enterprise Corridor or other adjacent zones. The City Centre CBD is mainly one to two storey development, and contains a number of larger sites in a single ownership; it is underdeveloped and has plenty of scope for new development to respond to market demand. There appears to be no justification for large scale retail or office development outside of the City Centre CBD area.

It is recommended that the additional permitted use of a public administration building shown in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour), is deleted.

The Pacific Highway at Woolgoolga, which is currently zoned 3D Business Tourist Service Centre is in transition. It is proposed to be zoned proposed B6 Enterprise Corridor. This land has been the subject of a number of studies, including the Woolgoolga Business Lands Review (Hill PDA, 2006). Over time it will assume a role of servicing the needs of the expanding urban area of Woolgoolga, rather than the previous dominant role of servicing passing trade on the Pacific Highway. This transition will take place over a number of years and will provide a relatively flexible land bank for new businesses to establish and grow. As with all B6 Enterprise Corridor zoned land, care needs to be taken to ensure development on this land does not detract from the existing centres at Woolgoolga.

It is understood that there has been difficulty in assembling a sufficiently large parcel of land for a full line supermarket in the Woolgoolga Town Centre at Beach Street. This has occurred despite the existence of underdeveloped land on blocks adjacent to the Town Centre, which could be rezoned to permit the development of a supermarket. The work undertaken by Hill PDA for Council highlights this dilemma and suggests that a site at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Pullen Street may be suitable for a supermarket, but only if a supermarket was permissible and not speciality shops. The Coffs Harbour Employment Lands Study (SGS) states expansion of retail or commercial floorspace along the Pacific Highway would only be appropriate if it is demonstrated that the expansion was not to the detriment of the Town Centre at Beach Street. SGS identify that additional floorspace is required in the Town Centre and that opportunities to accommodate demand should be explored, including an expansion of the commercially zoned land or an adjustment of development controls.

It is beyond the brief of this Review to investigate the difficulties of assembling large land parcels in this locality. Accordingly statements in studies such as the Woolgoolga Business Lands Review, that attempts to assemble a large land parcel have been unsuccessful, have been taken at face value. In these circumstances, there may be merit in considering rezoning a limited area of land along the Pacific Highway at Woolgoolga within the proposed B6 Enterprise Corridor for a large supermarket, such as at the intersection with Pullen Street. However, extreme care needs to be taken. The advice of the Woolgoolga Business Lands Review that the development of a supermarket in this out of centre location will detract from the Town Centre, is supported by this Review.

If such a rezoning is agreed by Council in the future, supportive action will need to be undertaken to assist the Woolgoolga Town Centre, including improving its attractiveness as a tourist destination, area improvements, and an improved relationship with the beach and coastal area (which is a

significant asset of the Centre). Council and the business community should also consider undertaking a Business Retention and Expansion Survey (BRES) to help plan further action. Funding support is available from the State Government for BRES surveys.

9.7 **SP3 Tourist**

The SP3 Tourist zone is intended to be used where tourism is the focus of a particular location, and the intended future use of the area is developing those tourist related uses.

The land currently zoned 3D Business Tourist Service Centre at the intersection of Bray Street and the Pacific Highway contains a range of land uses which are directed towards tourism and leisure, such as the cinemas and fast food restaurants. A suitably defined SP3 Tourist would allow the continuation of the existing uses.

SP3 zone appears the best fit for this site, consistent with the mandatory zone objective:

“To provide for a variety of tourist-oriented development and related uses.”

Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance states that examples of permissible development in the zone may include *“tourist and visitor accommodation, function centres, information and education centres, recreation facilities, food and drink premises, and other ancillary and compatible land uses. Other uses permitted in the zone should not undermine existing centres, or be compatible with the primary tourist oriented nature of the zone.”*

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure also states that the SP3 tourist zone should only be used for areas where the other zones are not appropriate.

Should Council wish to broaden the range of permissible land uses on the site, a B4 Mixed Use zone could be appropriate provided the permissible land uses are limited to those which did not detract from the vitality of the City Centre. The B4 zone is only a viable alternative to the SP3 Tourist zone if a floorspace limit is placed on retail and office floorspace as is proposed elsewhere in this Review.

Considering the role and function of the other land uses on the subject site, and the nature of the other zones proposed to be used in Coffs Harbour LGA, it is considered that the SP3 zone is the best alternative for the subject site. The use of other zones either offers the risk of permitting land uses, such as unrestricted retail or offices, which may pose a threat to the commercial centre hierarchy, and in particular the City Centre CBD; or may lead to existing land uses on the subject site becoming non permissible with “existing use rights”. For example, if the B6 Enterprise Corridor zone was applied to the Bray Street Tourist Service Centre and entertainment uses were included as a permissible land use this would provide the opportunity for cinemas and the like to potentially receive development consent anywhere along the Highway from Coffs Creek to Bray Street, at Halls Road and Stadium Drive. This type of impact is undesirable because locating intensive entertainment uses such as cinemas outside centres would detract from the vitality of centres and adversely impact on the commercial centre hierarchy of the LGA.

There is no equivalent zone in the Standard Instrument other than the SP3 Tourist Zone. This Zone is appropriate to the land uses occurring on the Bray Street Tourist Service Centre. However, it is understood that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure is very reluctant to use this zone

except in a limited number of specifically tourist oriented circumstances, rather than developments with broader community appeal such as the subject site. Nonetheless exceptions do exist, such as Brighton Le Sands in Sydney. The B4 Mixed Use zone is the next best fit, provided retail, office and business floorspace is limited by a specific clause in the LEP.

9.8 *Land Use zone allocation*

It is recommended that listed centres and locations be assigned land use zones as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Standard Instrument Zones relevant to Centres.

Zone	Department of Planning and Infrastructure guidance	Application to Coffs Harbour
B1 Neighbourhood Centre	For neighbourhood centres that include small scale convenience premises, business premises and the like that serve the day to day needs of residents within walking distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Northside Shopping Centre, Park Beach Rd ✓ Bray Street Shopping Centre, Bray Street ✓ Linden Avenue Shopping Centre, Linden Avenue ✓ Emerald Beach Shopping Centre, Fiddamans Road ✓ Coramba Main Street , Orara Way ✓ Nana Glen Main Street, Nana Street ✓ Corindi local shops, Cnr Tasman and Pacific Streets (undeveloped) ✓ South Coffs local shops ✓ Stadium Drive Streets (undeveloped) ✓ William Sharp Drive local shops, (undeveloped) ✓ Korora local shops , Korora Basin Road Streets (undeveloped)
B2 Local Centre	Centres that provide a range of commercial, civic, cultural and residential uses that typically service a wider catchment than a neighbourhood centre. This zone is appropriate to most local and town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Park Beach Plaza ✓ Toormina Shopping Centre ✓ Moonee Shopping Centre ✓ Sawtell Town Centre ✓ Woolgoolga Shopping Centre (Beach St)
B3 Commercial Core	For major centres that provide a wide range of uses including large scale retail, office, businesses, entertainment and community uses. These centres are intended to serve the needs of a wider region as well as those of the local community. It should only be applied to major metropolitan and regional centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coffs Harbour City Centre including lands proposed to be zoned B4 Mixed Use the draft City Centre LEP at Lyster and Albany Streets (i.e. this land should be zoned B3)

B4 Mixed Use.	This zone is generally used where a wide range of land uses are to be encouraged, including commercial, residential, tourist and visitor, and community uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Woolgoolga River Street ✓ Jetty ✓ Promenade ✓ Moonee Shopping Centre Surrounds
B5 Business Development	To provide for business, warehouse and bulky goods retail uses that require a large floor area, in locations close to, and that support (but not detract from) the vitality of centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parts of Isles, Mansbridge, Cook Drive ✓ Homebase, Pacific Highway
B6 Enterprise Corridor	To be applied where commercial or industrial development is to be encouraged along main roads. Retail activity needs to be limited to ensure that Enterprise Corridors do not detract from the centre hierarchy of the locality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pacific Highway Woolgoolga ✓ Halls Road /Pacific Highway ✓ Gateway (Coffs Creek to Bray Street) ✓ Stadium Drive
B7 Business Park	Primarily accommodates office and light industrial uses, including high technology industries. This zone should be used for larger campus style business parks not isolated office buildings.	Nil
SP3 Tourist	A special purpose zone targeted to tourist oriented precincts or sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bray Street Tourist Service Centre, Pacific Highway

9.9 *Standard Instrument Land Use Table*

It is recommended that the land uses be allocated within specific business zones as shown in Appendix 1.

10.0 Built Form Controls

The built form controls of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan and associated Development Control Plan have been reviewed.

Generally, the controls proposed for the City Centre and surrounds are appropriate and establish a relatively sophisticated suite of inter-related development guidelines for future development.

In particular the built form framework of street wall heights and frontage setbacks to achieve a pedestrian scale and solar access to streets is strongly supported by this Review.

In relation to street and building setbacks there is an inconsistency in those shown for Harbour Drive at the Jetty in Figures 3.8 and 8.6 of the City Centre Development Control Plan. Figure 3.8 shows the retention of a street wall height and a 10m setback to upper levels consistent with the existing shopfronts on the southern side of Harbour Drive, whereas Figure 8.6 shows a lesser setback. This apparent inconsistency needs to be clarified.

It is recommended that the apparent inconsistency of Figures 3.8 and 8.6 in the draft City Centre DCP in relation to the building form along Harbour Drive at the Jetty is clarified consistent with the maintenance of the unique streetscape.

10.1 *Maximum Building Heights*

It was not within the scope of this Review to undertake a detailed assessment of the appropriateness of maximum building heights, however on the basis of a site inspection and review of documentation, these appear to be appropriate.

A detailed assessment of building heights in localities proposed to be zoned B6 Enterprise Corridor was undertaken, consistent with the brief of this Review. This Review found the building heights shown for these localities in draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan to be appropriate, and they are supported. However, the variation to permitted building heights for land in Beryl Street Coffs Harbour, as detailed in Schedule 1 items 3 and 4 of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is not supported. It is considered that inadequate justification and analysis for these variations is provided in the City Centre Plan documentation, and accordingly it is recommended that this provision be deleted. In any case, general provision exists in the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan (Clause 4.6) for a development standard, such as building height, to be varied by the consent authority if adequate justification is provided with a development application. It is recommended that the height variation shown in Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (including floor space ratio variation in Item 4) (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is deleted.

It is recommended that the height variation shown in Schedule 1 Items 3 and 4 (including floor space ratio variation in Item 4) (certain land at Beryl Street Coffs Harbour) of the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is deleted.

10.2 *Floor Space ratios*

It was not within the scope of this Review to undertake a detailed assessment of the appropriateness of maximum floor space ratios. However on the basis of a site inspection and review of

documentation, these appear to be generally of the right order of magnitude in most localities. It should be noted that it may not be possible to achieve the specified maximum floor space ratio in a number of localities due to the effect of other development controls, such as setbacks, car parking and landscape requirements.

It is considered that the presentation of maximum floor space ratios (FSR) could be simplified and rationalised from 12 categories to 8 categories in the following manner, in order to increase the useability of the LEP:

Table 6: Simplified floor space ratio table

Current Proposed FSR	Proposed FSR
0.5	0.5
0.8	1.0
1.0	1.0
1.3	1.5
1.8	2.0
2.0	2.0
2.25	2.5
3.0	3.0
3.7	3.5
4.5	4.5

It is recommended that the simplified Floor Space Ratio framework shown in Table 6 be adopted, and that the draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan is amended, as appropriate.

The draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan specifies maximum floor space ratios for residential and business zones within the City Centre and surrounds. However a maximum floor space ratio does not apply to residential areas in the LGA outside of this locality. For consistency it is suggested that Council either consider the desirability of applying floor space ratios to residential zones across the LGA, and then determine to apply them to all localities or preferably delete the floor space ratio provisions that apply to residential areas in the City Centre and surrounds. An important consideration is that a range of other controls, such as site coverage, building height, setbacks car parking, landscaping and open space etc., apply to residential development and that a floor space ratio control may be unnecessary.

It is recommended that Council review the application of maximum floorspace ratio controls to residential development throughout the LGA and amend the draft Coffs Harbour Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (draft LEP 2011) accordingly.

10.3 *Active Street Frontages*

Section 4.2 of the City Centre Development Control Plan specifies street frontage treatments. Specific street frontages are categorised as requiring an “active street frontage”, or needing to “address the street”. Buildings along defined street frontages are required by the DCP to address the street as a

minimum, although they may have a more intense interaction with the street in the form of an active street frontage if they wish. The proposed B6 Enterprise Corridor zoned land along the Pacific Highway between Coffs Creek and the Bray Street is categorised as “street address required”. This is supported by this Review. However, Section 2.3 of the draft City Centre Development Control Plan refers to the locality as an “active street frontage”. This is inconsistent, and Section 2.3 should be amended to refer to “street address” which is an appropriate minimum requirement for this locality.

It is recommended that Section 2.3 of the draft City Centre Development Control Plan is amended to be consistent with Section 4.6 in relation to a requirement that development in the Gateway precinct “address the street”.

Section 4.2 shows the Pacific Highway frontage of Park Beach Plaza as having a minimum requirement of an active street frontage. It is not appropriate for Park Beach Plaza to be required to have an active street frontage to the Pacific Highway because of the nature of the Highway at that location and the importance of defining Park Beach Plaza separately to that of the City Centre CBD. A requirement to address the Pacific Highway is an appropriate minimum requirement for Park Beach Plaza. Park Beach Plaza should still be required to develop an active street frontage on the streets along its southern frontage.

It is recommended that Section 4.2 of the draft City Centre Development Control Plan is amended to show the Pacific Highway frontage of Park Beach Plaza as having a minimum requirement of “a street address”.

10.4 Design Excellence and Bonus Provisions

The draft City Centre Local Environmental Plan contains a clause (6.4) which aims to improve the visual amenity of the City Centre and surrounds. The clause is shown at the end of this Section, and has three inter-related parts, as follows.

Firstly, the clause requires the consent authority (usually Council) to have regard to a wide range of design related matters when considering whether a development application exhibits “design excellence”. That part of the clause (Subclauses 6.4 (1) - 6.4(3)) applies to all development applications involving the erection of a building or external alterations to an existing building

Secondly, the clause (Subclauses 6.4 (4) - 6.4(6)) requires a design competition to be held for developments applications that meet certain criteria, such as having a height over 28m, or where the applicant has chosen to have such as competition.

Thirdly, the clause (Subclause 6.4 (7)-6.4(8)) permits an additional 10% additional height or floor space ratio beyond the maximum that would otherwise apply to the site if the development is the outcome of a design competition and the concurrence of the Director General of the Department is obtained.

The aim of this clause is supported by this Review. As Coffs Harbour matures as a regional centre and development intensifies, it is very important that design quality is maintained and improved. This is critical to Coffs Harbour maintaining its market position as a desirable tourism destination. A high quality urban environment will also assist in attracting long term incoming investment to broaden the City’s economy and create much needed jobs.

