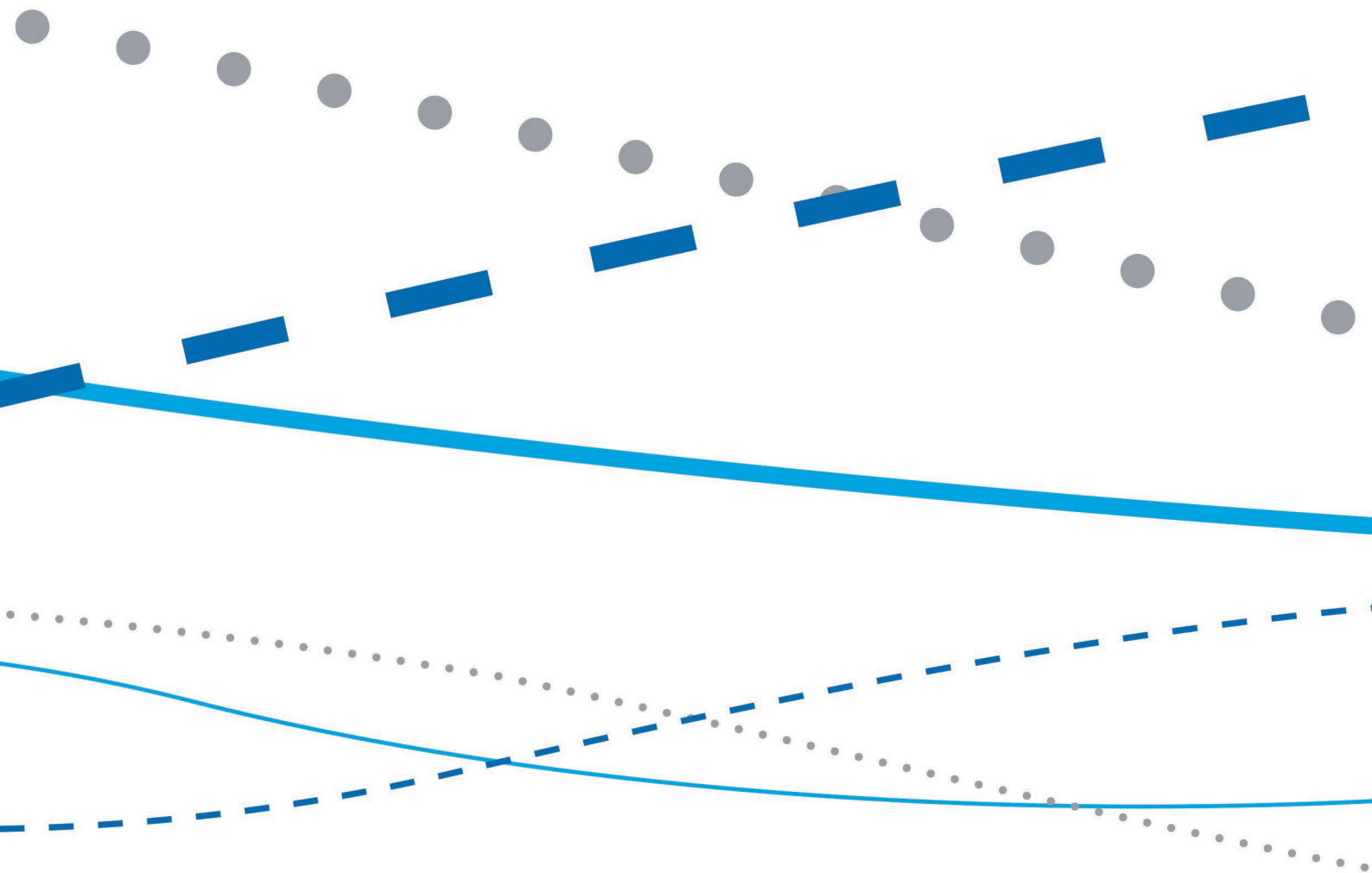




# **The Whitsunday Planning Scheme Affordable Housing Consultation**

## **Submission Analysis Report**

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Date: November 2022



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## 1.0 Executive Summary

Between 25 July 2022 to 31 October 2022 Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) consulted with the community on Affordable Housing options. Possible amendments to the Whitsunday Planning Scheme 2017 could encourage housing diversity, promote affordable rentals and encourage home ownership options for the community.

The consultation period was advertised online on the corporate website Yoursay Whitsunday, Facebook page and newspaper public notices. During consultation, Council surveyed residents online, received phone enquiries and was invited to present at the Bowen Collinsville Enterprise Monthly Meeting.

A total of **39** submissions were received, including 32 survey responses and 7 general submissions.

It is noted that this number of submissions is a small percentage of the Whitsunday population and may not reflect the general opinion of the local community.

The options suggested by Council were:

- Question 1. Reduce lot sizes within residential zones
- Question 2. Reduce assessment levels for residential housing products
- Question 3. Introduce density benchmarks (dual occupancy/multiple dwellings) to allow for more dwellings on a lot
- Question 4. Increase the floor areas for secondary dwellings (Granny Flats)
- Question 5. Introduce diversity Benchmarks for new subdivisions
- Question 6. Introduce a Medium density residential zone
- Question 7. Encourage Mixed use accommodation (accommodation/shops)

**Following consultation, the amendments recommended for further consideration and development are in 2 amendment packages:**

### **Amendment Package 1**

- To reduce the minimum lot size for dual occupancies (currently 800m<sup>2</sup> - suggest 600 m<sup>2</sup>).
- To increase the floor areas for secondary dwellings (granny flats) (currently 100m<sup>2</sup> Total Use Area).

Council can decide to make an amendment to the Planning Scheme to introduce these changes immediately, in accordance with the Minister's Guidelines and Rules.

Potential impacts on neighbours will be fully explored in the amendment package to be reported back to Council prior to commencement of the formal amendment process.

### **Amendment Package 2**

- Introduce a Medium density residential zone.
- Encourage Mixed use accommodation and commercial on same site.

*Note: Amendment Package 2 may require additional supporting information, in accordance with the State Planning Policy Guidance. An Economic and Population Study and Land Supply Analysis may be required to support any major amendments. These projects are budgeted in this budget year.*

For a detailed review of the Submission Analysis Report, see **Attachment 1**.

### Options Not Supported

Submissions did not support reduced lot sizes in Low density residential zone (600m<sup>2</sup>), Low medium density residential zone (450m<sup>2</sup>) or Rural residential zone (4000m<sup>2</sup>), therefore changes to these lot sizes is not being recommended.

There is no clear support for reductions in assessment levels for residential products and therefore this is not recommended.

There were equal arguments for and against the 'Introduce diversity requirements for subdivisions (promote mix of sizes and dual occupancy sites)' and so this amendment is not recommended.

Other general comments were received with one positive comment to encourage older people to retire to the region with associated medical care. Economic Development would be interested in developing such a plan for Council and the community.

WRC will report back to the community to close the loop and demonstrate how the feedback was taken into consideration and advise on the next steps in drafting amendments to the Planning Scheme.

## 2.0 Background

The Whitsunday Planning Scheme came to life on 3 July 2017 and has been amended four times to address various issues and remain compliant with the Planning Act 2016, the Planning Regulation 2017 and the State Planning Policy with subsequent guidance.

## 3.0 Overview of the Consultation

The consultation process occurred from 25 July 2022 to 31 October 2022, utilising Council's Online Engagement Portal. The consultation period occurred in accordance with legislated requirements in the *Ministers Guidelines and Rules 2020*, including advertisements in newspaper public notices, public notice at Council offices, online on the corporate website Yoursay Whitsunday, Facebook page and direct email to interested stakeholders.

Consultation included six Facebook posts, which received a very high level of reach, including:

- Post impressions - 67,225 - The number of times a post was on screen.
- Post reach - 18,850 - The number of people who saw posts at least once.
- Link clicks – 602 - The number of times people engaged with a link in a post

The Online Engagement Portal Yoursay Whitsunday received 127 visitors during the consultation period.

## 4.0 Submission Analysis

Consultation analysis has separated the answers from each survey question and submitter comments.

### Question 1 - Reduce Lot Sizes

#### What are your thoughts on minimum lot sizes?

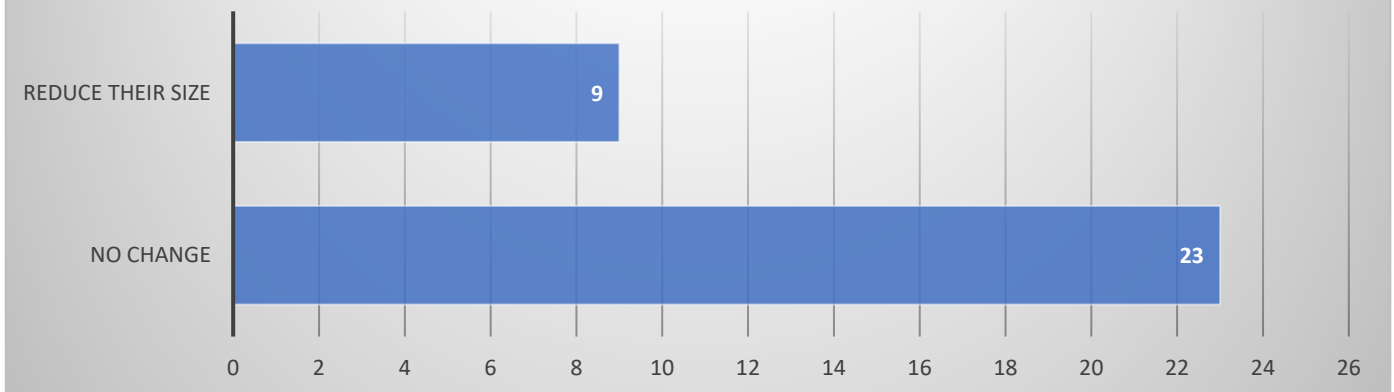
(Current Minimum Lot Sizes in Planning Scheme:

Low Density Residential – 600m<sup>2</sup>

Low-Medium Residential – 450m<sup>2</sup>

Rural Residential – 4000m<sup>2</sup> (no town water or sewer connection)

## What are your thoughts on minimum lot sizes?



### General Comments by Submitters

- Concern for the smaller size of lots.
- Narrow streets are rabbit warrens and vehicular movements are restricted in these areas.
- Smaller lots are not appealing.
- Do not have smaller lots, have high density housing.
- Licence the amount of short term accommodation licences.
- Reduce rural residential sizes.
- Current sizes are quite small, no need to go smaller.
- Reduce infrastructure charges on new lots.
- Make it easier and more attractive to subdivide.
- Families want bigger blocks, and they should be able to access them.
- Current minimums are too small.
- Needs more land lease communities or MHE's (manufactured home estates).
- Approve MHE (manufactured home estates) in Brampton Drive and Lodge Road Bowen.
- Some lots are already too small considering the size of town and the amount of land.
- Minimum is too small, and streets are too narrow.
- There is no proof reduced lot sizes will be sold at lower prices.
- Any further increase in density is an unreasonable reduction of amenity for residents with little or no financial benefit.
- Wider roads would be needed for smaller lots, to accommodate cars trailers and boats that would not be able to be stored on-site.
- Open up more land to build on, also put essential infrastructure in to take the strain away from other areas.
- Hydeaway Bay has a subdivision with not a single house on it, likely due to no infrastructure in the area.
- Stop pandering to blow ins and developers, you will destroy this unique piece of paradise.

### Conclusion

Most of the response and general comments are to leave the minimum lots size as is, therefore, no change is recommended.

## Question 2 - Reduce Assessment Levels for Residential House Products

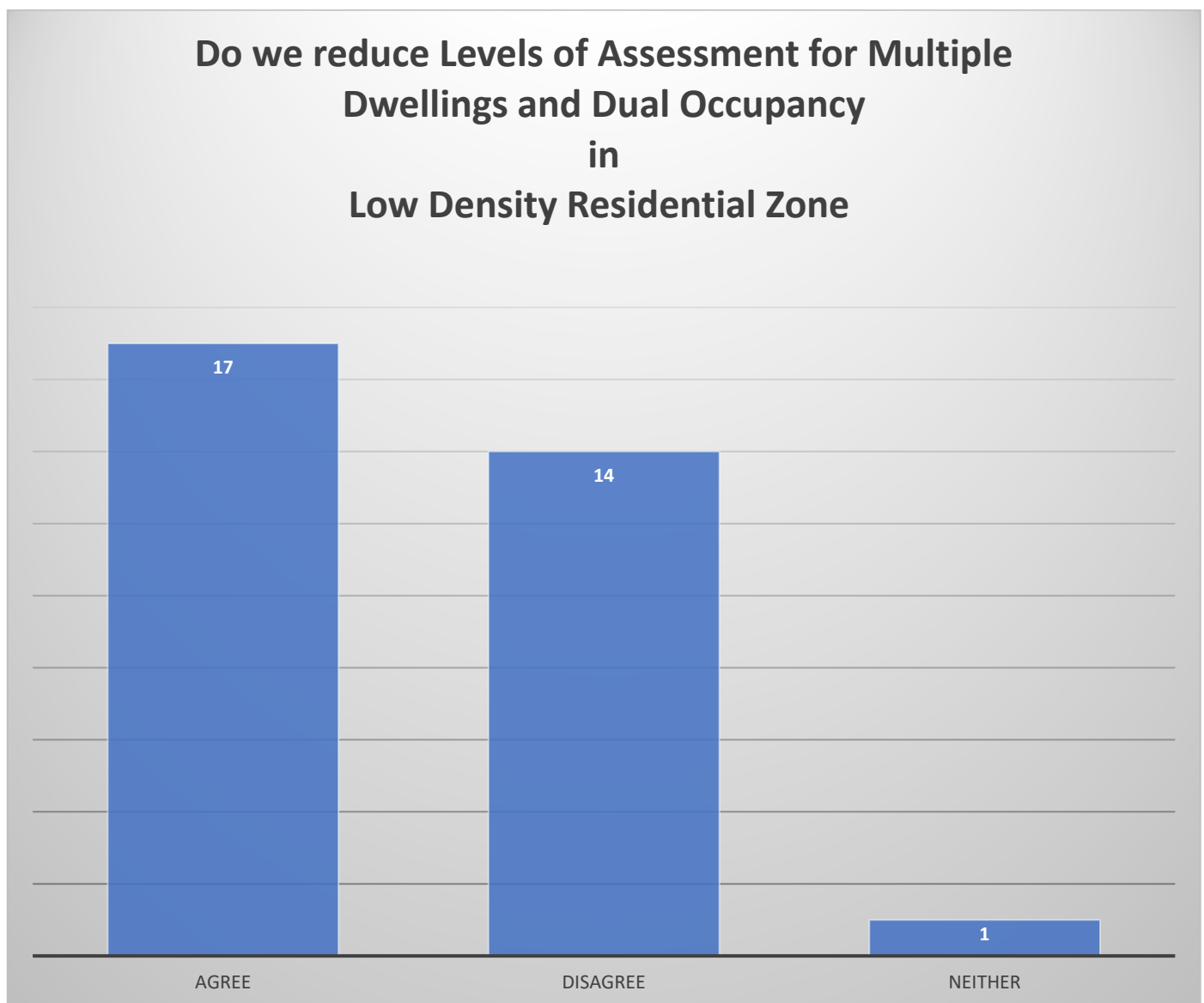
The Levels of Assessment for Multiple Dwellings and Dual Occupancy within the residential zonings could be reduced in certain circumstances to encourage development.

### Part A

**Do you Agree or Disagree in the below levels of assessment being lowered within the Low Density Residential Zone?**

**Dual Occupancy Development** – Currently Impact Assessment **lowered** to Accepted development, if the requirements aren't met a Code Assessable application is required.

**Multiple Dwellings Development** – Currently Impact Assessment **lowered** to Code Assessment, if the requirements aren't met an Impact Assessable application is required.



### **General Comments by Submitters**

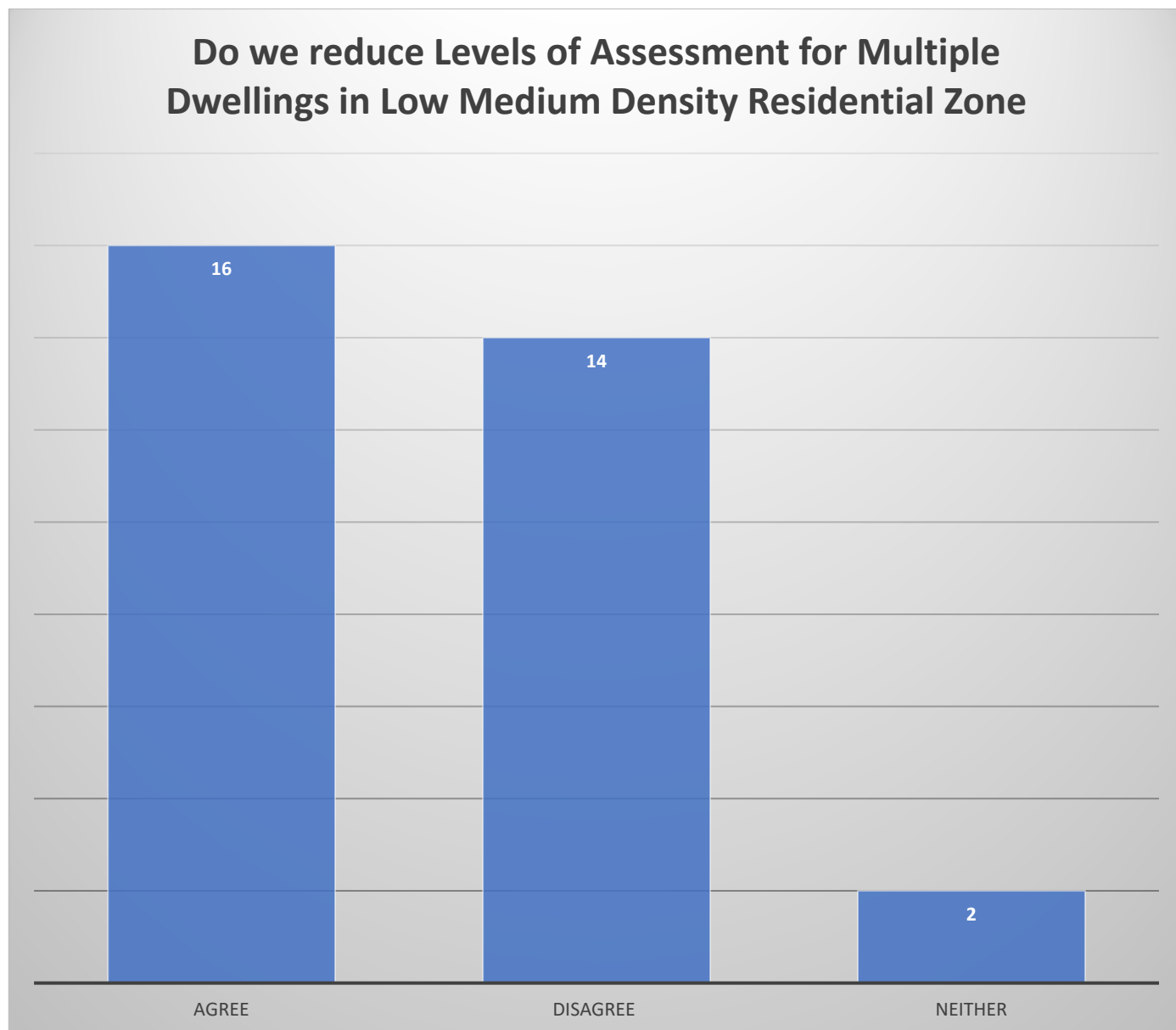
None made.

## **Part B**

**Do you Agree or Disagree in the below levels of assessment being lowered within the Low Medium Density Residential Zone?**

*Dual Occupancy Application - No change to current levels.*

*Multiple Dwellings Development – Code Assessment **lowered** to Accepted development, if the requirements aren't met a Code Assessable application is required.*



### **General Comments by Submitters**

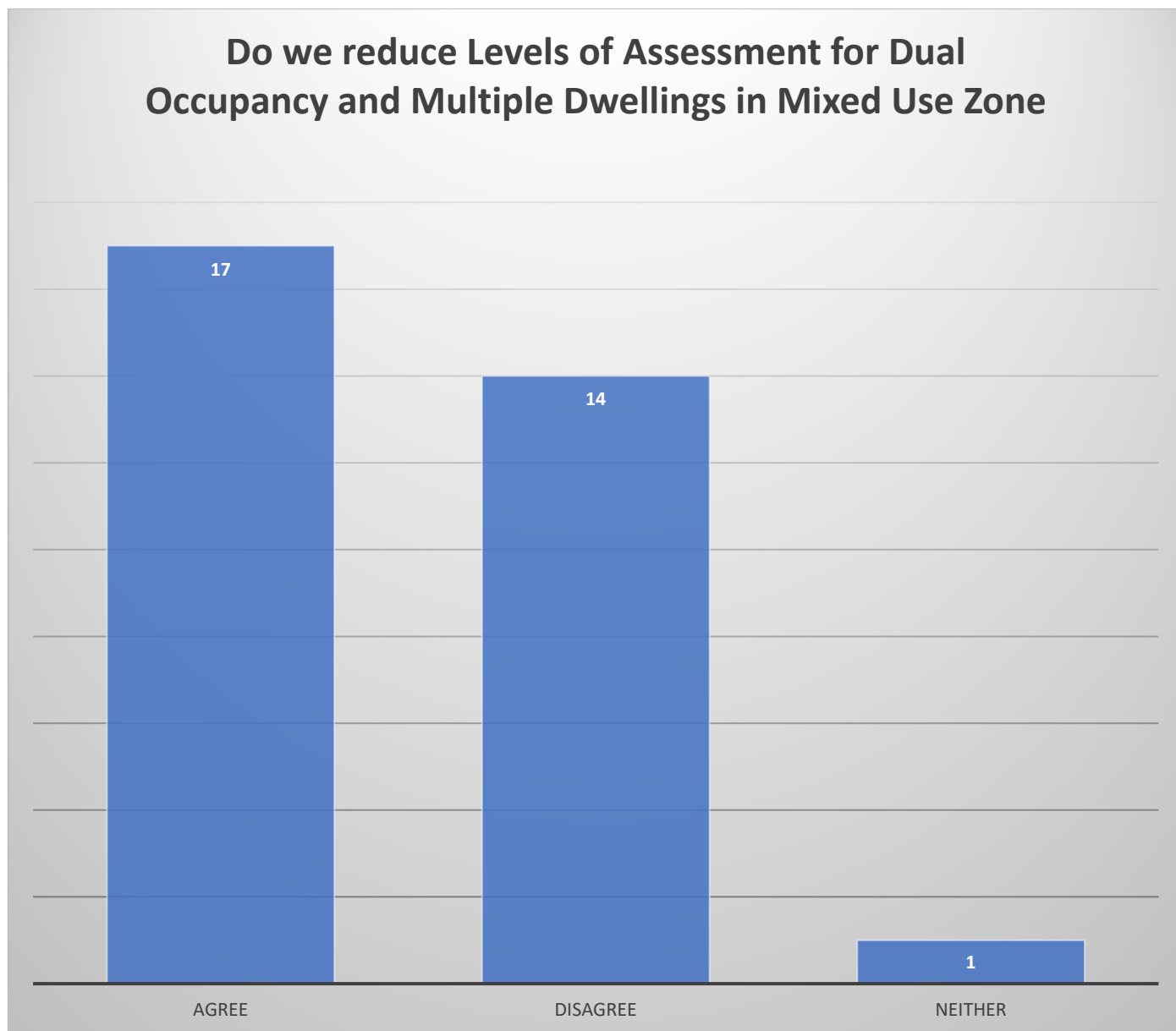
None made.

## **Part C**

**Do you Agree or Disagree in the below levels of assessment being lowered within the Mixed Use Zone?**

*Dual Occupancy Application - No change to current levels.*

*Multiple Dwellings Application – Code Assessment lowered to Accepted development, if the requirements aren't met a Code Assessable application is required.*



### **General Comments by Submitters**

- surrounding residents deserve a say and the appropriate impact assessment when development may directly affect their lives.

### **Conclusion**

There is not a clear way forward with this option. Clear assessment benchmarks would be required to ensure favourable development is encouraged. No change is recommended.



## Question 3 - Introduce Density Benchmarks for Dual Occupancy and Multiple Dwellings

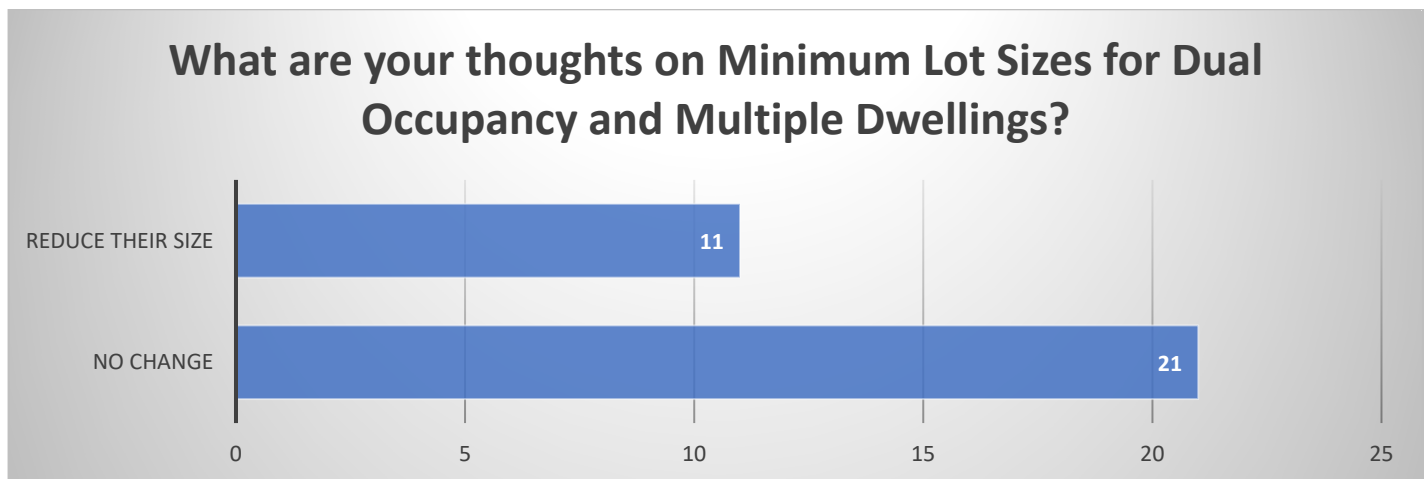
**What are your thoughts on required Minimum lot sizes for the development of Dual Occupancy and Multiple Dwellings?**

*Current Planning Scheme requirements:*

*A Dual Occupancy has a minimum lot size of 800m<sup>2</sup>.*

*A Multiple Dwelling has a minimum lot size of 800m<sup>2</sup> or 600m<sup>2</sup> within Airlie Beach Local Plan.*

*No density requirements (i.e., one unit per 250m<sup>2</sup> minimum).*



### General Comments by Submitters

- Smaller developments are achievable by mum & dad style investors.
- The product goes into the local rental market.
- Target smaller local developers.
- Opens more lots for use.
- Dual occupancy will work if owners live onsite.
- Dual occupancy could be vertical units.
- Multiple lot sizes should be bigger than dual occupancy lots.
- BCE supports lower sizes for dual occupancy lots.
- Current minimums are too small.
- Unless adequate infrastructure is in place this creates parking hazards in high density small sized blocks that cannot accommodate for all vehicles, trailers etc in what is often very narrow streets.
- Also need to ensure the sewerage and water infrastructure can perform as required under these high density situations. Currently the sewerage system along Mt Nutt road, Bowen often cannot meet demand and there is potential for two high density housing subdivisions in that area.
- Water supply is an issue in Tynwald Ave, Bowen and again there is potential for some high density housing in both Tynwald Ave and Panorama Place.
- Council should allow Dual Occupancy (One Title with 2x dwellings on any lot above 450sqm).
- Approve MHE (manufactured home estates) to meet the demands, meet affordable demands for Bowen community.
- Minimum lot sizes are too small and adds to other problems like poor air flow, and lack of parking.
- We do not live in the southeast corner there is plenty of land in the north.
- Low density zones are that for a reason, proper planning would vary zoning in appropriately serviced locations, not the outcomes of the low density zone code to allow ad-hoc development.

- Open up more land to build on, also put essential infrastructure in to take the strain away from other areas.
- Hydeaway Bay has a subdivision with not a single house on it, likely due to no infrastructure in the area.

### Officer Comments

The graph identifies that there is no strong support for a reduction in lot size for Dual Occupancy and Multiple Dwellings. However, the comments generally supported reduced lot sized for Dual Occupancy but not Multiple Dwelling.

### Conclusion

Council to consider a reduced lot size for Dual Occupancies (e.g. down to 600m<sup>2</sup>), subject to appropriate design and amenity requirements.

## Question 4 - Secondary dwellings (Granny Flats)

### Part A

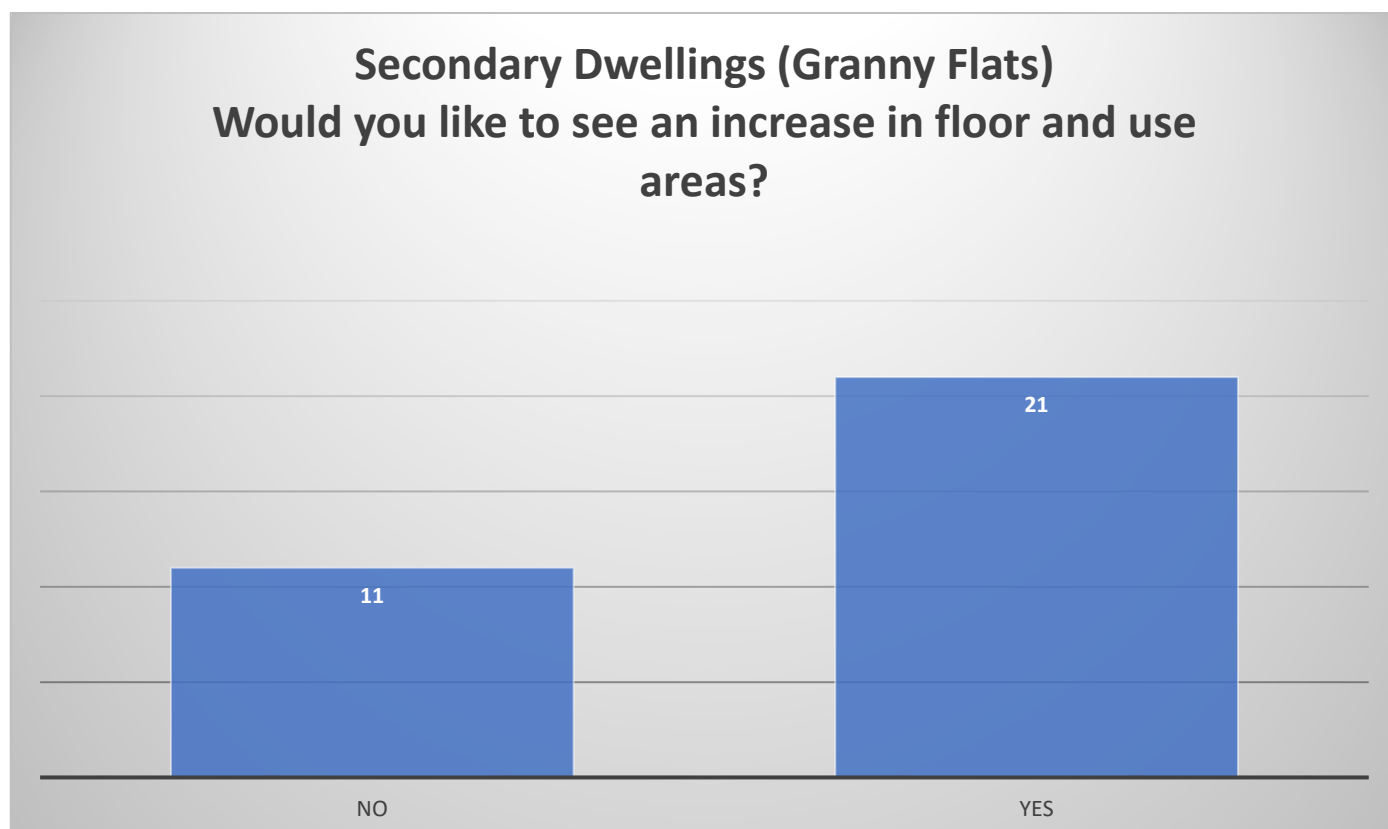
#### Would you like to see an increase in the floor and total use areas of Granny Flats?

Current Planning Scheme requirements:

*A secondary dwelling has a maximum Gross Floor Area of 70m<sup>2</sup> and a Total Use Area of 100m<sup>2</sup>.*

*Gross Floor Area includes indoor spaces only, while Total Use Area includes indoor and outdoor spaces, such as decks, verandahs and patios but not car parking areas.*

*Increasing the Gross Floor Area and Total Use Area for secondary dwellings (e.g., granny flats) may make constructing them more appealing for homeowners.*



## **Part B**

**If yes to the above, what maximum area would you want for Gross Floor Area (GFA)?**

Maximum area	Count
n/a	14
80m2	1
90m2	3
100m2	4
120m2	3
130m2	1
150m2	1
180m2	1
200m2	1
Depends on size of lot/block - up to 30% of block	1

**If yes to the above, what maximum Total Use Area (TUA) would you want?**

Maximum Area	Count
n/a	15
100m2	1
110m2	2
120m2	2
130m2	1
150m2	4
180m2	1
200m2	1
250m2	1
450m2	1
Depends on size of lot/block - up to 40% of block	1

## **General Comments by Submitters**

- Would accommodate two separate households of the same family.
- Increasing size sounds interesting.
- Council should have a fast track program to cut down on red tape for this type of dwelling. Delays with approvals can make projects unviable and add to issues being faced with affordability.
- Must be subject to height limits.
- Must have carparking for each bedroom.
- Can be rented out for income.
- Must be compatible design with the primary dwelling.
- With the costs of building, the size of the dwelling needs to be worth the investment.
- This would give people the option of having two generations living more comfortably on one block.
- More affordable homes to meet the supply.
- There must be room for visitor parking.
- Waive or reduce building application and approval fees
- A minimum lot size of 800m<sup>2</sup> should be required for a larger secondary dwelling.
- Open more land up.

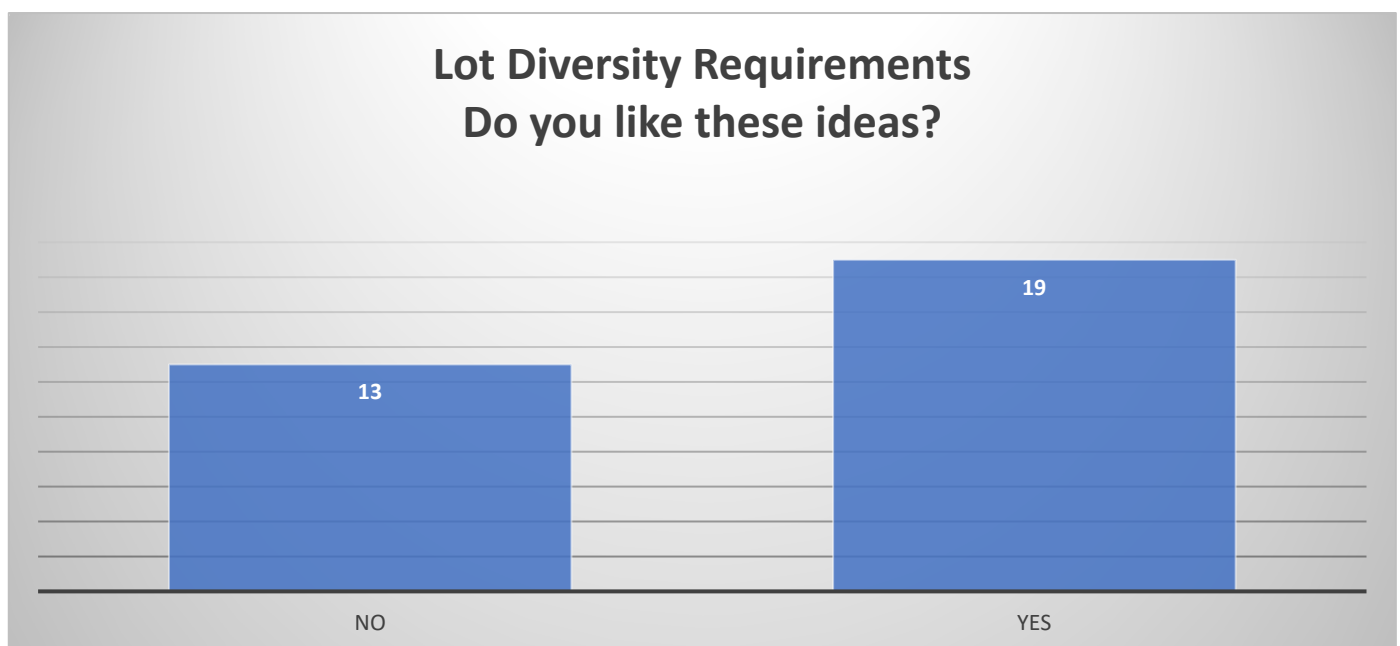
## Conclusion

It is recommended that Council consider this option particularly considering the recent State Government amendments to relax the definition of secondary dwellings allowing them to be rented out to any person/s, not just family.

The recommendation would entail an increase in both Gross Floor Area (GFA) and Total Usable Area (TUA) for secondary dwellings.

## Question - 5 Diversity Benchmarks

**Council could potentially introduce requirements for large sub-division development that some lots be higher density (certain lots must have multiple dwellings, dual occupancies and/or smaller lots) allowing for a variety of housing types throughout the suburbs, which can be rented or sold at different prices, increasing housing options for the community.**



## General Comments by Submitters

- This appears to be a push towards higher density housing.
- We are having growth further outside town and making sizes smaller would make more affordable and better access to both towns.
- Work with landowners to ensure that all fees are within an acceptable range, Council delays in approving projects have deterred many from investing in the region.
- Investment needs to be attractive to developers to take the risk.
- Excessive Council contributions.
- Council needs to do better to make development attractive.
- Diversity should be subject to building height and provision made for public transport.
- Please ensure footpaths are funded by developers.
- Make development for units cheaper than houses.
- When you purchase in an area its often to do with the number of neighbours nearby.
- It often creates parking and noise complaints that lead to neighbour disputes etc.
- Approve more DA's quicker.
- MHE (manufactured home estates) is the best product for Bowen.

- We have plenty of land in the north, it is not the southeast corner.
- More split levels and higher rises but only with considerations for parking.
- It's not the Gold Coast, stop cramming more and more people in.

## Conclusion

There are multiple responses against smaller lot sizes, so that should be contemplated when considering diversity. Diversity of lot sizes can also ensure that each subdivision has a range of lot sizes, to allow for each threshold of what a person/s could afford. However there is little direction provided due to the similar volume of 'for' and 'against'.

No change is recommended, although this can be encouraged at pre-lodgement meetings if supported.

## Question 6 - Medium Density Residential Zone

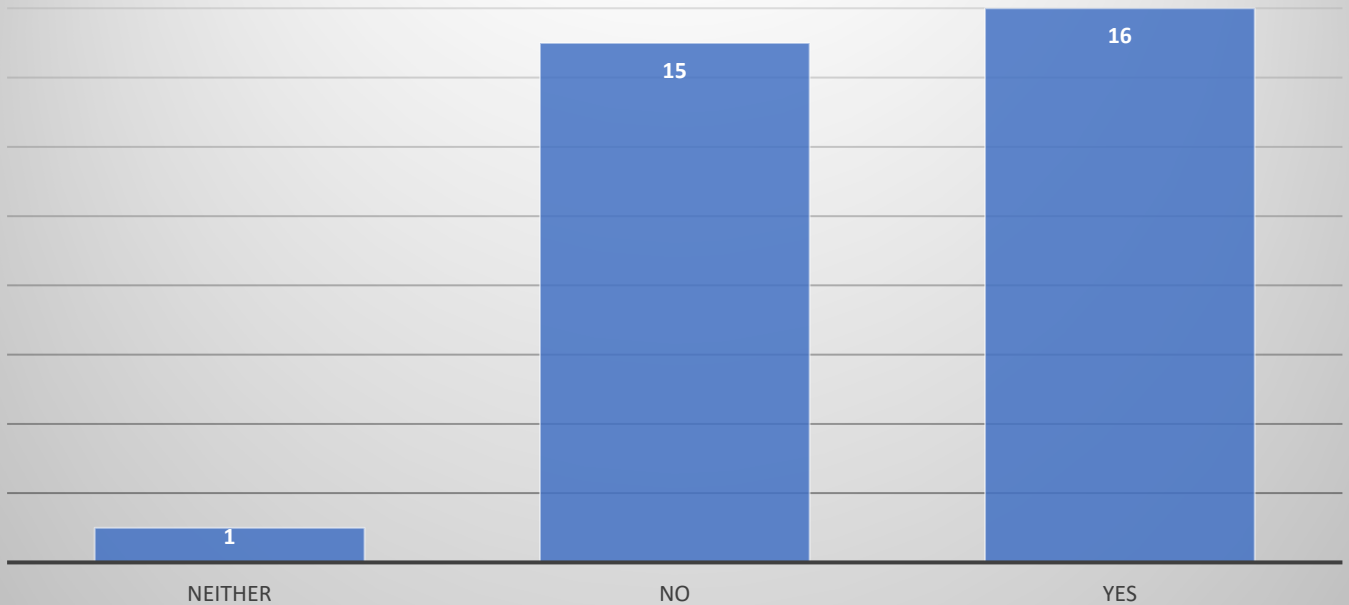
Council is putting forth the idea of a new Zone, a Medium Density Residential Zone, to facilitate higher density residential development centred around existing business areas and public transport throughout the region.

**Would you support increased building heights, low to medium rise (2 to 4 storeys or 10 to 15 metres)?**



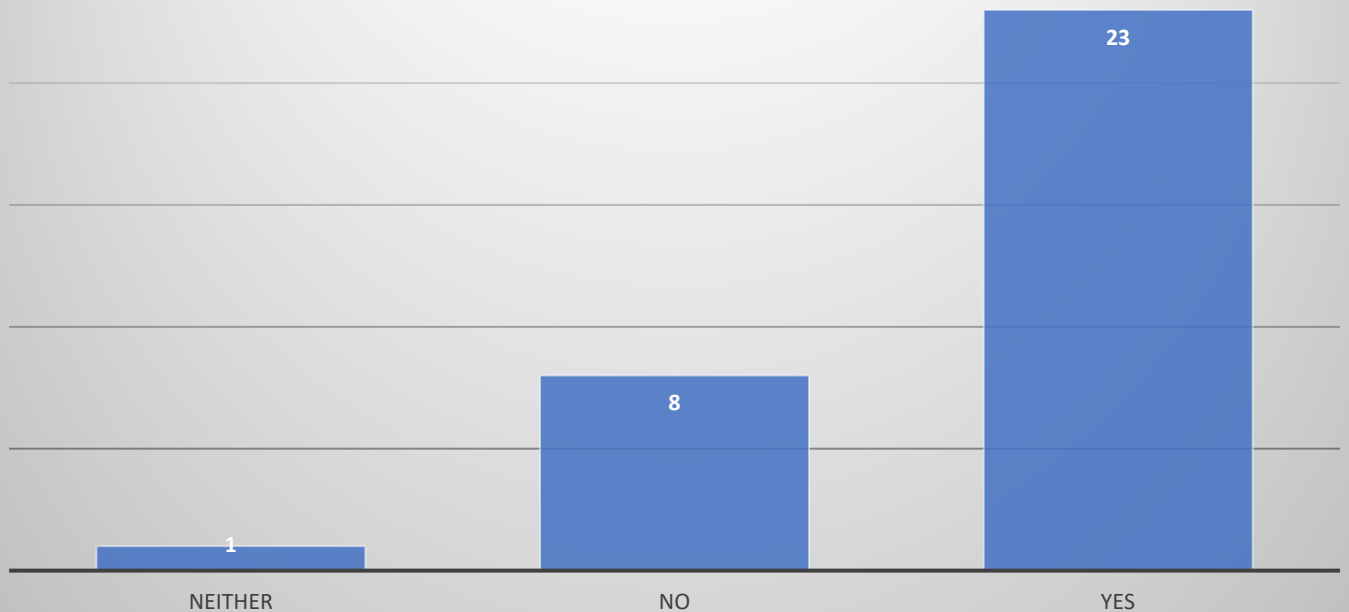
**Would you support an increase in site cover (e.g., 50% to 70%)?**

### Count of Increase site cover (e.g. 50% to 70%)?



**Would you support having a diversity of accommodation types (multiple dwellings, dual occupancies and/or smaller lots) within this zone?**

### Have diversity of accommodation types (multiple dwellings, dual occupancies and/or smaller lots)?



### General Comments by Submitters

- Bad examples in the survey with historical buildings.
- Council is not supporting the best outcome for the region, only the best commercial outcome.
- Do not see how higher and more denser buildings will address housing affordability, as it will be bought by investors who will raise rents or Airbnb them.
- No Trojan horse to allow high rise, current 12 m height should be maintained.
- Site cover depends on context, no concrete jungle.
- All developments should have space for a community garden or space for grass under your feet, places for people to congregate, children to play.
- People need their own yards for exercise, pets storage and play.
- This is a diverse shire and what may work in some areas would not be seen as beneficial in others.
- I do not think multi story in Bowen, Collinsville would meet a need however in Airlie it may.
- More land lease communities to reduce the costs.
- MHE (manufactured home estates) good for Bowen.
- Again, we have plenty of land, it is not the southeast corner.
- Parking off the road must be mandatory, e.g. underground spaces
- High rises will be the beginning of the end.

## Conclusion

It is recommended that no change occur given the resulting data, with any encouragement for a diversity of accommodation types occurring at pre-lodgement discussions. The introduction of the medium density zone can be further considered as part of future work on the Airlie Beach to Proserpine Growth Strategy implementation.

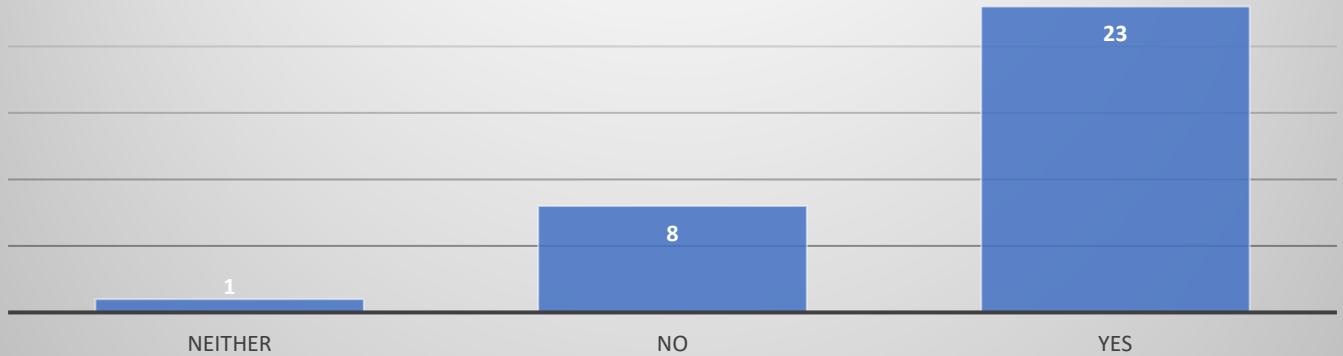
## Question 7 - Mixed Use Accommodation

Council wishes to encourage accommodation over commercial developments in Mixed Use Zones near existing commercial centres and thus increase housing diversity.

Example - Multiple Dwellings up top and shops on the bottom level (3 stories/12 metres)

**Do you support this type of development?**

## Encouraging accommodation over commercial developments in Mixed Use Zones. Do you support this type of development?



### General Comments by Submitters

- Would help provide accommodation for short term workers to support business.
- I do not support this type of development.
- Building heights maintained at 12m, consideration given to what type of commercial space, offices would be ok, but food shops etc would not.
- I would not want to live over a shop or commercial building.
- This is the future, so are land lease communities.
- We need this.
- These types of projects have huge problems with car parking space.

### Conclusion

In response to submissions, and the general comments, it is recommended that Council commence a change to encourage accommodation over commercial development in a Mixed-Use zone.

## 5.0 Other Submissions

Other general comments:

- Emergency housing is not addressed.
- Empty accommodation being reduced across the region.
- More flexible attitudes towards zonings uses to accommodate development so innovative categories can be delivered to the community and deliver affordable housing.
- Annual licencing for short term accommodation.
- Infrastructure incentives.
- To encourage aged accommodation within the region.
- To reduce building application fees.
- Easier development requirements.
- Parking off the road must be mandatory, e.g. underground spaces

These submissions have been addressed in **Attachment 1**.



## 6.0 Recommendations

Following consultation, the amendments recommended for further consideration and development are in 2 amendment packages:

### Amendment Package 1

- To reduce the minimum lot size for dual occupancies (currently 800m<sup>2</sup>).
- To increase the floor areas for secondary dwellings (granny flats) (currently 100m<sup>2</sup>).

Council can decide to make an amendment to the Planning Scheme to introduce these changes immediately.

Potential impacts on neighbours will be fully explored in the amendment package.

### Amendment Package 2

- Introduce a Medium density residential zone.
- Encourage Mixed use accommodation and commercial on same site.

*Note: Amendment Package 2 may require additional supporting information, in accordance with the State Planning Policy Guidance. An Economic and Population Study and Land Supply Analysis must be completed to support any major amendments, these projects are budgeted in this budget year. Upon completion, Council can decide to make a Major Amendment.*

Submissions did not support reduced lot sizes in Low density residential zone (600m<sup>2</sup>), Low medium density residential zone (450m<sup>2</sup>) or Rural residential zone (4000m<sup>2</sup>), therefore changes to these lot sizes is not being recommended.

There is no clear way forward for reductions in assessment levels for residential products and therefore this is not recommended.

There were equal arguments for and against the 'Introduce diversity requirements for subdivisions (promote mix of sizes and dual occupancy sites)' and so this amendment is not recommended.

It is also recommended that Council write to provide all submitters with a copy of the Submission Analysis Report and publish this document on the website.

## 7.0 Next Steps

Council is required to decide to amend the Planning Scheme before any work can commence on written changes to the Planning Scheme, in accordance with the State Requirements of the *Ministers Guidelines and Rules*.

# Attachment 1 – Submissions and Submission Responses

Council responses in [Blue](#)

Submission No	Written Feedback	Summary
1	<p>Thank you for taking my call this afternoon to discuss the subject of "Affordable Housing".</p> <p>Our Group has been involved in innovative development projects in Queensland for the past 40 years.</p> <p>Currently we are also assisting Port Vila City Council in Vanuatu with the master planning of a "Green Village" consisting over 300 low-cost dwellings.</p> <p>We are interested in working with your Council to deliver any or all of the following types developments in the Whitsunday region subject to us being able to find suitable development sites for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Eco Tourist Resort of up to 100 cottages</li> <li>* Themed Food Village with mix-use of retail business ((downstairs) and residential (upstairs).</li> <li>* Affordable residential rental accommodation up to 100 houses. No subdivision required.</li> <li>* Micro-Farming Community on rural land up to 50 acres.</li> </ul> <p>In all cases, if required, we can provide infrastructure services including soil stabilization internal roads, drinking water, solar power, and special compost toilet.</p> <p>The purpose of this email is to ascertain if your Council would be prepared to adopt a practical and flexible attitude towards the zoning uses to accommodate these types of developments so that these innovative categories can be delivered to Whitsunday community and at the same time generating affordable housing, visitors &amp; tourists traffic, and also creating local employment and small business opportunities.</p> <p>A copy our introduction brochure is attached. You may be kind enough to copy this email to the Chairman of the Planning Committee for his information.</p> <p><a href="#">Council is interested in innovative ideas but must also balance the community's expectations, environmental, social and economic development needs. Innovative approaches to housing generally require a higher level of scrutiny until they can be proven to ensure that they meet the required standards and community expectations.</a></p> <p><a href="#">The proposed amendments are expected help in the delivery of affordable housing for residents in the medium to long term.</a></p>	Positive Development Opportunities
2	Answered Survey Questions, with no additional comments.	
3	See <b>Attachment 2</b> .	Development Incentives

4	<p>Annual Licensing for short term accommodation. Annual fees would allow council to employ an ordinance officer to enforce the laws created by council for the use of short term rentals, as our local police force are so understaffed that your rules can't be enforced. Annual fees can be easily estimated based on land values as our rates are.</p> <p><a href="#">A local law for short-term accommodation is currently being prepared by Council to address these issues.</a></p>	Local Law for Short-Term Accommodation
5	<p>For granny flats/tiny homes, waive or reduce building application &amp; approval fees.</p> <p>People should be allowed to build a granny flat/tiny home on their existing block/parcel of land so that they can begin to enjoy what they have purchased and not be paying rent and a mortgage, reduced/no fees would make this very enticing. They can live in the granny flat/tiny home whilst they have their main home built, and then once the main home is built, rent out their tiny home/granny flat - as a condition of their approval their tiny home has to be for personal use or permanent rental, it cannot be an air bnb. Enabling something like this to happen, would free up an already existing home (as they will be in a granny flat/tiny home on their land) as well as create another rental home (for a very under serviced market) in the long run.</p> <p><a href="#">The Whitsunday Planning Scheme has Accepted Development controls for secondary dwellings (granny flats) under the Dwelling House Code:</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">1. Only one secondary dwelling is established in association with a dwelling house.</a></li> <li><a href="#">2. A secondary dwelling has a maximum GFA of 70m<sup>2</sup> and a TUA of 100m<sup>2</sup>, excluding car parking areas.</a></li> <li><a href="#">3. A minimum of one on site car parking space is provided to service the secondary dwelling.</a></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Compliance with these controls mean the development is 'Accepted', with no development application being required and so no planning application fees. If the proposed secondary dwelling exceeds any of these requirements, it will trigger a Code Assessable Application to Council.</a></p> <p><a href="#">On 26 September 2022, State Government amended the Planning Regulation, allowing granny flats to be rented out to anyone.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Council does not currently assess building approvals, building applications are assessed by private certifiers who set their own fees, which Council has no control over.</a></p>	Secondary Dwellings
6 - 25	Answered Survey Questions, with no additional comments.	
26	<p>I was not able to make my point.</p> <p>Your survey restricted me by enforcing an answer to every question. Two Points</p> <p>1. Emergency housing especially in a family split up where one partner and children may be in physical danger does not seem to be addressed.</p> <p><a href="#">Emergency and Social Housing is governed and provided by the Queensland State Government. Council assists the State wherever</a></p>	Emergency Housing Vacant Housing

	<p>possible and also advocates for additional Social and Emergency Housing in our region but does not control this.</p> <p>2. What about empty accommodation. In the last census there were many vacant houses on the night of the census. Can this be reduced?</p> <p>The Planning Scheme is unable to affect the occupancy rates of accommodation activities, the use of a property is up to the individual landholder.</p> <p>Although, as a separate exercise Council will advocate for a higher occupancy rate of vacant dwellings.</p>	
<b>27-35</b>	Answered Survey Questions, with no additional comments.	
<b>36</b>	<p>Council should continue, improve and intensify its advocacy to the State Government for more affordable community housing for those in real and desperate need. Council should not make any permanent amendment of the planning scheme for what is most probably a temporary imbalance due to COVID.</p> <p>Lot Sizes</p> <p>While Council claim "Reduced infrastructure charges are unlikely to be passed on to the prospective purchaser and therefore would not materially affect housing affordability." There is no proof reduced lot sizes would be sold at lower prices, especially in an inflated market.</p> <p>The Valley Drive subdivision, Shute Harbour Rd end, behind the vet clinic had approval in 2015 for 15 building lots, the 2017 planning scheme allowed smaller lots, small enough to now allow 19 in the same area as 15 previously (21% increase in density). Any further increase in density is an unreasonable reduction of amenity for residents at little or no financial benefit.</p> <p>Proper planning would require wider roads amongst smaller, narrower lots for all the cars, trailers and boats that would not be able to be stored on-site. Meaning there would be little if any net increase in density, unless usability and safety of the roads is reduced.</p> <p>Land cost is only a small portion of the overall expenditure of a finished dwelling, we already had a density increase with the 2017 planning scheme, any further reduction in lots sizes would negatively affect the amenity of the community while being more likely to increase developer profit margins, than provide affordable housing.</p> <p>Assessment Levels</p> <p>DA 20191165 shows to me a clear breach of ROL code AO1.3 and 1.4 (at a minimum) and was still processed as code assessable and approved under delegation. It appears that our planning department cannot be trusted to self-assess benchmark compliance and surrounding residents deserve a say and the appropriate impact assessment when development may directly affect their lives.</p> <p>Density Benchmarks for Multiple Dwellings and Dual Occupancy</p> <p>Low density zones are that for a reason, proper planning would vary zoning in appropriately serviced locations, not the outcomes of the low density zone code to allow ad-hoc development.</p> <p>Secondary Dwellings</p>	Misc

	<p>AOs appear to carry little if any weight in our current code/impact assessments. If larger self-assessable secondary dwellings are to be allowed, a larger lot size should be required. Council states “the median lot size of low density residential land is 1239m<sup>2</sup>”. Therefore a minimum lot size of 800m<sup>2</sup> should be required for a larger secondary dwelling.</p> <p>Consultants have pointed out that none of the above measures will actually fix the issues with housing affordability.</p> <p><i>To the extent that there may be latent unsatisfied demand for affordable housing in this SA2, lack of suitably zoned land is not the cause. The causes are of a national rather than local nature and include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>high costs of infrastructure;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>high costs of construction;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a long period of low interest rates forcing up the market prices of residential accommodation;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a long period of low wages growth, depressing the ability of owners and renters to afford residential accommodation;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a widening gap between the costs of housing and the prices the lower socio-economic groups can afford;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a low unemployment rate causing a shortage of skilled labour in the construction industry;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a residential building sector in turmoil due to diminishing margins on fixed price housing building contracts;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>the lack of financial incentives for the private sector to deliver affordable house,</i></li> <li>➤ <i>a public sector that has been tardy in its’ development and management of social housing</i></li> </ul> <p>The extract from the ‘Response to Information Request for DA 20220715’ responds to an argument of need of residential land, and does not actually mention the targeted ideas of Council to assist in Affordable Housing options for the community. The list identifies causes outside of Council’s control.</p> <p>Consultants have also shown that smaller lots increase the costs to residents by requiring external storage facilities that would negatively offset the extremely small, if any, cost savings of supplying little lots.</p> <p><i>Norling self-storage needs analysis</i></p> <p>This is due to a number of factors, including smaller dwellings and lot sizes</p> <p>Developers only develop to look for profit, if the numbers don’t add up, we don’t get more housing. The appropriate short term fix is to reduce infrastructure charges on medium density dwelling developments for a necessary period of time.</p> <p>Council’s current Local Government Infrastructure Plan is not financially sustainable without State or Federal grants, therefore a reduction in infrastructure charges is not being considered at this time.</p>	
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	<p>If any pricing benefit was gained by these proposed Planning Scheme Amendments, the loss of liveability and amenity for the community would be far more detrimental to the Whitsunday lifestyle.</p> <p>Comments throughout have been added into the Submission Analysis General Comments Section.</p> <p>Thank you for your submission against Housing Affordability, the Whitsunday community has identified the need for affordable housing solutions. Council will consider your comments and endeavour to secure affordable housing for everyone, so that all people can enjoy living in the Whitsundays.</p>	
<b>37</b>	<b>Attachment 3</b>	<b>Misc</b>
<b>38-39</b>	Answered Survey Questions, with no additional comments.	



## Attachment 2.

### Submission Number 3

Bowen Collinsville Enterprise Inc (BCE) is the economic development agency for the Bowen and Collinsville area, consisting of key stakeholders within the region. BCE is made up of leaders in each of the represented industries in the area and they meet on a regular basis to discuss emerging issues and develop action plans to assist with economic growth in the region.

To overcome a housing crisis, more houses need to be built.

Motivate Investors, Builders and Developers

- To build houses and units, builders, investors and reputable developers need to work with the Whitsunday Regional Council for a win-win outcome.
- BCE would like to see the Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) consider implementing incentive package for investors, builders and developers to build houses and units.
- BCE believes the WRC should seriously consider incentives, such as reducing headworks charges to attract developers and funding to our regions to build extra housing.
  - Our view, as an example only, is zero lots of \$30,000 in headworks charges is significantly worse than 50 lots of \$20,000 in headworks charges.
- Incentives could be alike to other council incentives, such as:
  - Fraser Coast Regional Council -the overarching description of the incentive they have in place for the location of Hervey Bay, which was approved January 2022 is: "The purpose of this incentive is to provide an incentive for development that reduces the upfront costs of development at sealing of survey plan by delaying the payment of infrastructure charges until such time as the lots provided are on sold or a period of 2 years expires whichever is the sooner. "
  - Moreton Bay Council previously waived developer fees for affordable housing during a housing crisis.
  - Mackay Regional Council has introduced incentives for their new PDA area.
  - The Coffs Harbour City Centre Development Incentive Policy contains opportunities for developers to be exempt from developer contribution charges, if they build residential or tourist accommodation in the city centre. The period of exemption is available until 23 May 2023, or until a maximum cap (incentive allowance) of \$2,500,000 is reached, whichever occurs first. Development being targeted by this policy includes residential projects that contain four or more large units, or tourist accommodation and shop-top housing projects that contain at least one large unit.
  - Rockhampton has incentives with a budget of \$4.1 M to investors to pay 75% of infrastructure charges on approved developments.
  - Bundaberg have had incentives to attract development.
  - Central Highland have had incentives in place.
  - Townsville and Cairns have also had incentives in place to attract development.
- There are numerous regional councils around Queensland and other states that previously or currently offer incentives to attract investors, and developments to achieve an increase in build projects where there was a need.
- These incentives need to be workshopped to design a best fit for our community to attract the development and investors while maintaining a longer-term cost benefit for our region.
- If we do not change status quo, we will just have more of the same which is very limited development and growth.
- A high number of other regional councils are implementing enticement packages to attract development. If the WRC do not do this as well, we will miss out and development will stay stalled.

Recommendation: WRC should complete a review of all regions and benchmark the types of incentives that will work for our region and attract investment while at the same time ensuring ongoing LGIP can be achieved.

Council's current Local Government Infrastructure Plan is not financially sustainable without State or Federal grants, therefore a reduction in infrastructure charges is not being considered at this time.

## Current housing Market

- The current median house price in Bowen is \$355,000 with an approximate 15% growth occurring over the past 12 months. There has been a substantial rise in the number of houses sold in Bowen since 2019, with 273 house sales in 2021 at the median price of \$345,000. In 2022, approximately 135 sales at the median price of \$370,000 have occurred.
- The above statistics support that people want to move to this region, but they can't because the housing is not available.
- Whilst it's positive that house purchases are being made, this substitutes existing residents with new residents.
- This suggests a new subdivision would attract more 'want-to-be' buyers and new buyers to our picturesque region because there will be property available for them to purchase.

Recommendation: 'Free up' subdivision for development.

Council is very encouraging for appropriate development to occur within the region, subject to applicable constraints.

It is noted on 28 September 2022 175 vacant lots were for sale within the Bowen postcode on Realestate.com, 43 vacant lots alone within the former Whitsunday Shores development.

## Residential Aged care opportunity

- There should be higher focus on residential aged care accommodation.
  - This will increase availability of housing, whereby an elderly person may move out of their residential home into an aged care facility.
  - There are around 130 full care positions and 80 aged care residential offerings in Bowen. Total of 150.
  - This is to service a collective population of 897 people over 75 years of age within Bowen and Collinsville. This means the residential aged care offerings in the region only cater for around 16.7% of the elderly demographic (aged 75+).
  - Nationally residential aged care services support on average 30% of those aged 75+
  - This suggests that a real opportunity exists to offer additional aged care services via an expanded aged care facility.
  - Having more aged care residential capacity, will allow the aged to move from current housing and free up house stock for other residents.
  - WRC should look at incentives to attract development in the area of aged care. For example, how to work with getting the project such as Port Denison over the line to create extra aged care units.

Recommendation: WRC to develop a Retirement Age Attraction Strategy

Council will look at an Aged Care Investment Attraction Plan in further detail through Economic Development.

## Lots size opportunities

- An incentive such as reduced headwork charges or council fees would motivate property owners of larger blocks to either complete a subdivision, building a secondary dwelling and/or granny flat.
- There are a number of current residents in the Bowen community that have homes sitting on blocks of land north of 900m<sup>2</sup> whereby they have room to add a granny flat for example. These lots sit in low density residential areas (which a lot of them do), they do not meet the requirements to be able to add a second dwelling. Currently the minimum lot sizes to allow this are 'Low-Medium Density Residential' and have a requirement of a minimum lot size 450m<sup>2</sup> BUT minimum road frontage is 15 metres to be broken into two lots. A standard block has a 20- metre road frontage and usually there is around 4 - 5 metres for side access (this is wide enough for a driveway to access a rear lot). Under the plan you are required to have 15 metres of road frontage for each lot which contradicts the Prut 9 development code that refers to a 5-metre width in item 9.2.3.1 (11) for the second lot to be configured. Better clarification needed for potential developers so it is easy to see if they can work within the council guidelines. Something like a quick reference table.



The Whitsunday Planning Scheme has Accepted Development controls for secondary dwellings (granny flats) under the Dwelling House Code:

1. Only one secondary dwelling is established in association with a dwelling house.
2. A secondary dwelling has a maximum GFA of 70m<sup>2</sup> and a TUA of 100m<sup>2</sup>, excluding car parking areas.
3. A minimum of one on site car parking space is provided to service the secondary dwelling.

Compliance with these controls mean the development is 'Accepted', with no development application being required and so no planning application fees. If the proposed secondary dwelling exceeds any of these requirements, it will trigger a Code Assessable Application to Council.

On 26 September 2022, State Government amended the Planning Regulation, allowing granny flats to be rented out to anyone.

Council does not currently assess building approvals, building applications are assessed by private certifiers who set their own fees, which Council has no control over.

- Duplex Construction - Suggest we reduce the minimum lot size required for the construction of a duplex. This would open up many residential vacant lots in Bowen whereby owners/ investors could maximise returns and construct a duplex that would cater specifically to the rental market OR offer an ageing owner the opportunity to live in one (move out of their big family home and sell it to a family) and then they could rent the other unit for an income in their retirement years. 700m<sup>2</sup> blocks can accommodate a duplex comfortably but currently do not fit the planning model. Increase of site coverage allowance would also assist in this regard. There are very few duplexes that have been built in Bowen in total and there is an appetite to construct such buildings but the constraints around which lots need to be used is too difficult.

This comment has been added into the Submission Analysis General Comments section and will be explored further, should Council elect to pursue the Affordable Housing Planning Scheme Amendment.

- Council building application fees - have increased substantially for any building works down to even a garden shed. Is it necessary that these fees are so high.

Council does not currently assess building approvals, building applications are assessed by private certifiers who set their own fees, which Council has no control over.

- BCE believes the Planning Department needs to be more proactive and build relationships with reputable developers with a focus on economic development to better our region.
- There is a win win outcome with increased rates base to cover reduced costs of headworks.
- This would reduce the initial costs for developers to increase housing and infrastructure in the region.

Recommendation:

1. WRC to provide easy-to-access clarification on splitting large blocks for ease of development
  2. WRC to investigate the reduction of minimum block size for duplex development
  3. WRC review Council building application fees to ascertain fit for purpose
1. Our Development Assessment Planners are available for phone calls or face-to-face meetings to discuss any prospective development anytime from 8am til 5pm 5 days a week and they are happy to sit down and work with homeowners to assist them with any concerns. We also have property reports online that link directly to the different aspects of the Planning Scheme, or we have fact sheets that outline how development occurs.

Tick sheets have been used before for simple one into two developments, however they don't always cover every aspect of development and the Council can be accused of not giving out all the correct information, which is why Council prefers to go over each development with that developer individually.

2. This comment has been added into the Submission Analysis General Comments section and will be explored further, should Council elect to pursue the Affordable Housing Planning Scheme Amendment.

### 3. WRC does not process building application.

#### Stakeholder Testimonials:

"The future growth and success of our regional agriculture industry will be dependent on the ability to meet the demand for labour and accommodation which go hand in hand. It is essential that development settings are geared to support growth in new dwellings, reduce unnecessary red tape and favourably draw in new investment. Achieving this will enable our key industries and community to grow and prosper."

CEO - Bowen Gumlu Growers Association

"A number of other Regional councils are offering incentive package to attract investment in their regions. If we do not do the same, we will be left behind. While I appreciate there are many levers to pull to get building growth, the WRC are limited in what they can do. One area they can act on, is targeted incentive packages to grow our region."

Chairperson - Bowen Collinsville Enterprise

"The labour market is extremely tight at present, when we can attract staff to our region, we find there is a lack of suitable accommodation to rent. Whilst there is no immediate solution, our community does need to come together & develop a plan to meet the demand for affordable housing. If we choose to ignore this, regional growth will stagnate."

CEO - Murroona Gardens

"We are lucky to live in a spectacular region and over the past few years we have witnessed considerable growth in visitor numbers. Incentives to attract the development of new tourism accommodation would support local businesses and regional growth, as well as provide short-term accommodation solutions for industry when required."

Chairperson - Bowen Tourism and Business

"We need to look at options of how to house emergency tenants for short periods if they have been removed from currently rental due houses being sold. Can the spare council land be used for temporary accommodation such as prefab housing to fill this short-term emergency until such times as more longer-term housing becomes available in Bowen."

General Manager - Pilchers Hardware & Recycling

As the tier of government closest to the community, it is the responsibility of Whitsunday Regional Council to assist in overcoming the impacts of the lack of available housing. While WRC can and should lobby State and Federal Governments for incentive packages to assist with the state-wide housing shortage, this should not be the only action that WRC undertake. A shortage of housing results in loss opportunity for economic growth as well as lost revenue in rates collected and overall growth in our community. Bowen Collinsville Enterprise Inc appreciates your consideration of this submission.

Council will continue to lobby State and federal governments to assist with housing affordability in the Whitsundays.

Council thanks you for your submission.

# Attachment 3

## UDIA Submission

### RE: Whitsunday Regional Council Housing Affordability consultation

The Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland Mackay Whitsunday Branch (the Institute) writes to Whitsunday Regional Council (council) to provide comment on the Housing Affordability consultation. The Institute appreciates our ongoing relationship with council and we provide our expertise as the leading professional body for the property industry in Queensland.

The Institute notes the purpose of the Housing Affordability investigation is to present council with options to address housing affordability most effectively. Also, council would like to encourage smaller lot sizes, dual occupancies, multiple dwellings, diversity in subdivisions, higher density zones, and mixed uses (units above shops and offices) to promote affordable rental and home ownership options.

The Institute strongly supports council's action to examine what it can do to address housing affordability in the region. Council is also thoughtfully considering options for increasing housing supply and diversity. The Institute's view is that council can significantly contribute to affordable housing options for the community.

We note that the provided Housing Affordability Study (the study) indicates that further work would be required before some changes could be implemented, however it is our view that as much action as possible should be undertaken in the short term to facilitate additional housing diversity. In particular, we point to the state government's action to permit the renting of secondary dwellings by persons unrelated to the household. This indicates we believe that prompt action can be taken by government, and perhaps should be taken at this time by council. A full housing needs study is desirable but could follow and lead to further later planning scheme change.

We provide some specific comments regarding some elements of the study below.

#### General

The Whitsunday local government area had a median sales price for houses of \$470,000 and \$330,000 for units in the quarter to July. Significantly the median sales for houses was over \$900,000 in the previous 12 months in Airlie Beach, Cannon Valley, and Woodwark. The median land sales price was \$225,000 and around 190 vacant lots are sold annually with the median size of new lots generally between 600 to 1,100 square metres. Census 2021 indicates the council area comprises 12,431 occupied homes being 9,806 separate houses, 1,122 semi-detached homes, and 1,167 apartments. A further 2,438 dwellings are unoccupied. New detached homes are approved at an average 139 per year and generally few attached dwelling types are approved.

The Institute supports council's initiatives to enhance the supply and diversity of housing in the region. The Institute encourages council to particularly promote initiatives that go with the grain of the market, that is options that are economically viable for the market to deliver at this time.

The characteristics of the present market mean that relatively large lots are the key size that buyers presently seek, as well as differing types of holiday accommodation for rent or private use. The Institute considers smaller lots in particular locations can also be well accepted.

In general, the Institute supports all of the particular types of new housing targeted by council but notes only some may be financially achievable in the present economics, feasibility, and market demand character of the region. Housing types such as terraces, multiple dwellings, and dual occupancy are more in keeping with the type of demand in the region. Apartment buildings are not generally viable however should be supported where excellent views are present. The Institute also supports permitting multiple dwellings of low height in estates these maybe less relevant to the present marketplace.

The Institute supports the proposal to enable more housing types to be designated as code assessable as this substantially reduces the cost and uncertainties involved in providing these types of housing to the community for the industry.

#### Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment Options

## Lot Sizes

The Institute supports the proposed reduction in minimum lot sizes salt and peppered within estates (example provided minimum 500 square metres). The Institute recommends that this could go further to a minimum of 400 square metres in general with further smaller lots permitted to be included and recommends allowing for terraces in areas close to services and amenity. Where market demand allows, smaller lots will be more affordable and may well suit smaller households.

## Assessment Levels

The Institute supports the proposed reduction in assessment level in certain zones for desirable housing types, where meeting benchmarks. The cost to proponents of impact assessment versus code assessment is substantial adding to the costs going into housing production. Impact assessment also increases the risk to projects and likelihood of failing to obtain financing for the project.

## Density Benchmarks for Multiple Dwellings and Dual Occupancy

The Institute supports to proposed reduction in density benchmarks for multiple dwellings, such as Multiple Dwelling or Dual Occupancy from minimum 800 square metres lot size in all residential zones to 600 square metres subject to design benchmarks. Well designed dual occupancy proposals can comfortably fit on smaller land areas and can be well suited for corner and other lots.

## Secondary Dwellings

The Institute supports the proposed increase in the maximum floor area for secondary dwellings subject to appropriate benchmarks. This would make them more appealing for some homeowners, support inter-generational living needs, and small scale renting by the household to assist with meeting household costs.

## Planning Scheme Amendment - Second Amendment Package

### Lot Diversity Benchmarks

Introduce lot diversity benchmarks in the Reconfiguration of a Lot Code requiring some lots be higher density (multiple dwellings, dual occupancies, and small lots). The Institute does not support mandatory higher density requirements in general as this could go against the market wishes for housing in the location and consequently render a housing supply proposal unviable. Consideration might however be given to seeking higher density in immediate proximity to centre services.

### Noted

### Medium Density Residential Zone

The Institute supports additional Medium Density Residential Zone areas to enable higher density and diversity of accommodation types. The Institute supports the increase in the medium density residential zone and recommends this be located in areas with higher amenity and good views

### Mixed Use Accommodation

The Institute notes the proposal to introduce benchmarks to Zone Codes to strongly encourage accommodation over commercial developments, including a full review of the Mixed Use Zone Code. However, residential above out of centre retail or commercial activities is a housing type that may struggle to be taken up to a significant extent at this time given the overall higher cost of building more intense and complex developments. An alternate approach is to ensure buildings in the Mixed Use Zone have been designed to accommodate future mixed-use development. This may include allowing reduced street setbacks, large street facing windows and increased ceiling heights at ground level so that the can respond to market demand for commercial development at ground level when required.

## Infrastructure Charges

The study importantly raises the present situation regarding infrastructure charges for trunk infrastructure, as identified in the Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP). Council's forecast is that the infrastructure costs will exceed revenue by almost \$15M in the next 15 years and do not allow for housing supply

incentives to be given through reduced charges. The Institute considers reducing infrastructure charges can stimulate desired innovative new housing and should not be excluded. Consideration might be given to the overall financial situation for council that is enhanced by additional housing. Each new dwelling represents an investment of \$0.5 million in the region (based on current median house and land prices) and results in long term annual rates income.

Council's current Local Government Infrastructure Plan is not financially sustainable without State or Federal grants, therefore a reduction in infrastructure charges is not being considered at this time.

#### UDIA Recommendations

The Institute encourages council to undertake further work in examining options to provide for those unable to obtain housing in the normal market. Consideration could be given to making available local government land holdings at less than market value where affordable housing is provided or other contributions.

The planning scheme presently permits tourist accommodation and council could consider support for additional area of this zoning to encourage investment. Even if new dwellings are used for short term rental the new dwellings may liberate existing homes for others in the community.

The Institute recommends council signal to the market with incentives to encourage housing development. This might take the form of reduced application fees, deferred infrastructure charges payment, one off payment or rate discounts to owner occupiers. Other possible options council might consider include:

- Providing zoning accommodative for seniors housing types
- Improving productivity within the development application and assessment process to reduce the cost of providing new housing. Perhaps including fast tracked development application timeframes and reduced application fees for development types in desired locations
- Considering housing typology options in residential zoned areas for townhouses or terrace houses
- Exploring alternative affordable housing options such as 'tiny homes' and 'Fonzie flats' and areas where they may be appropriate
- Exploring opportunities for relaxation of requirements (e.g. car parking, site cover and setbacks) where the proposal is for affordable housing.

Council will continue to explore options to decrease housing and development costs to encourage affordable housing in the region.

Council has recently resolved to allow infrastructure charges payment plans over a period of up to 3 years, for both commercial and residential development.

The Institute strongly supports council's action to examine what it can do to address housing affordability in the region. The Institute has provided comments from its expertise in market housing provision. We also would welcome the opportunity to work with council to contribute to affordable housing options for the community in the context of present severe housing challenges.

Council thanks UDIA for their support and submission to assist Affordable Housing in the Whitsunday region.