



**Mandurah's Housing Needs  
May 2006  
Discussion Paper**

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# Mandurah's Housing Needs

Discussion Paper for Consultation Forum, 11 May 2006

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## **1. Introduction**

Shelter WA is the peak community body advocating for disadvantaged housing consumers in Western Australia. Shelter WA has been in operation since 1979 and cooperates closely with other State and National bodies working on housing related issues, homelessness and welfare.

Shelter WA works towards the elimination of homelessness and housing related poverty. In particular, Shelter WA aims to ensure that every person has access to housing that is secure and appropriate to their needs, at a price they can afford. Each year, Shelter WA holds community housing forums in a particular area of Western Australia. The aims of these regional forums are to:

- identify and prioritise housing issues for the region in a regional housing analysis,
- develop strategies to respond to issues, and
- establish ongoing links between Shelter WA and local community organisations and their workers, government departments and local government.

Since 1998, Shelter WA has conducted housing forums in Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Busselton, Derby, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Margaret River, Midland and Port Hedland. Reports on all of these forums can be downloaded from [www.shelterwa.org.au](http://www.shelterwa.org.au).

Mandurah has over the recent past undergone rapid population growth. This has resulted in major shifts in housing affordability and economic polarisation. Consequently, requests have been made by stakeholders, particularly the Peel Community Legal Service, to investigate the implications of housing and change.

Over a period from September 2005 – April 2006, Shelter WA has been in consultation with stakeholders in Mandurah regarding housing and social change. For a full list see Appendix 2. In a combination with a desk top analysis, the consultations have revealed a number of housing concerns. These have included:

- community polarisation
- population dislocation
- impact on outlying areas
- lack of diverse affordable housing
- lack of adequate support services to meet demand
- high dependency rates
- overcrowding in Indigenous households
- Small number of Homeswest housing a proportion of the population

This paper is intended as a discussion starter for a community forum to be held in Mandurah on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2006. More information on the forum is available from [www.shelterwa.org.au/housing\\_news.htm](http://www.shelterwa.org.au/housing_news.htm). Shelter WA will use the outcomes of this forum to produce a Final Report on Housing Needs in the City of Mandurah. A further report on the implications of social change and housing in the Peel region will also be developed. As has been the case with previous reports, Shelter WA will promote the findings of this Report with relevant stakeholders in Government and industry.

## 2. Mandurah: Background

### 2.1 Profile

Mandurah is located on the coast approximately 74 kilometres south of Perth. According to the local council web site, the word Mandurah comes from the Aboriginal word 'mandjar' and means "meeting place".<sup>1</sup> As such, Mandurah has developed into a cosmopolitan place with a vibrant arts scene and diverse recreational choices. That Mandurah boasts a high rate of boat ownership with 90 registered boats per 1000 people is indicative of the water based lifestyle enjoyed by residents and visitors.<sup>2</sup> The West Australian rate of boat ownership is 38 boats per 1000 people.

The City of Mandurah is also regarded as the main commercial centre of the Peel region.<sup>3</sup> As such it is acknowledged as the gateway to the South West. It is within easy access to the towns of Pinjarra, Dwellingup and Jarrahdale and the state's forests. On the coast, Dunsborough, Bunbury and the Margaret River wine region are close at hand.

Tourism related industries and the construction sector are the prime sources of employment for the area.<sup>4</sup> The shape of Mandurah's industry is typical of sea change cities throughout Australia.<sup>5</sup> Mining in the Peel Region affects the infrastructure, housing, income and employment choices in Mandurah.

### 2.2 Population

According to the City of Mandurah web site, Mandurah has a population of approximately 54 000.<sup>6</sup> The population has grown rapidly since 1991. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicate that in 1991 the total population of Mandurah was 26 838. The figures rise rapidly to 45 020 in 2001.<sup>7</sup> While projections differ between different population projection analyses, the Western Australian Planning Commission estimates that between 2006 and 2011 the population of Mandurah will increase by 3.6% annually.<sup>8</sup> Further projections indicate that the population of Mandurah will reach 100 000 by 2021.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> City of Mandurah, Available online <<http://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au>>

<sup>2</sup> Peel Development Commission 2005, *The Peel 2020 Project; Where are we now? - an environmental, social, and economic overview of the Peel Region*, Peel Development Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Peel Development Commission, <<http://www.peel.wa.gov.au>>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Time Series Profile Census of Population and Housing, Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110)*, Catalogue No. 2003.0.

<sup>5</sup> National Sea Change Task Force 2006, *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge*, the University of Sydney Planning Research Centre.

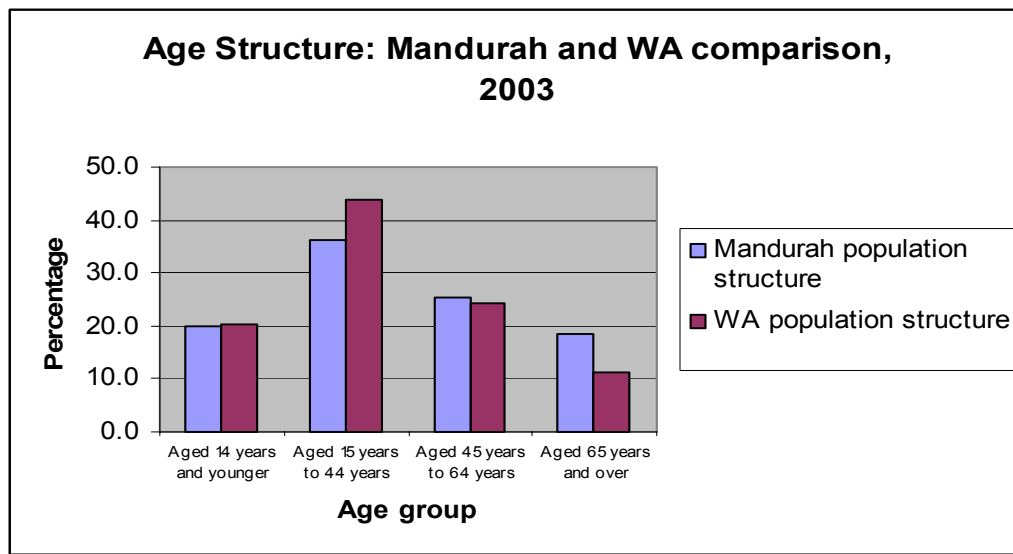
<sup>6</sup> City of Mandurah, Available online <<http://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au>>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Time Series Profile Census of Population and Housing, Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110)*, Catalogue No. 2003.0.

<sup>8</sup> Western Australian Planning Commission, 2006, *Metropolitan Development Program 2005/2006 to 2009/2010*, Western Australian Planning Commission

<sup>9</sup> Western Australian Planning Commission, 2005, *Population Report No.6: Western Australia Tomorrow – Population projections for planning regions 2004 to 2031 and local government area 2004 to 2021*, Western Australian Planning Commission.

Figure One

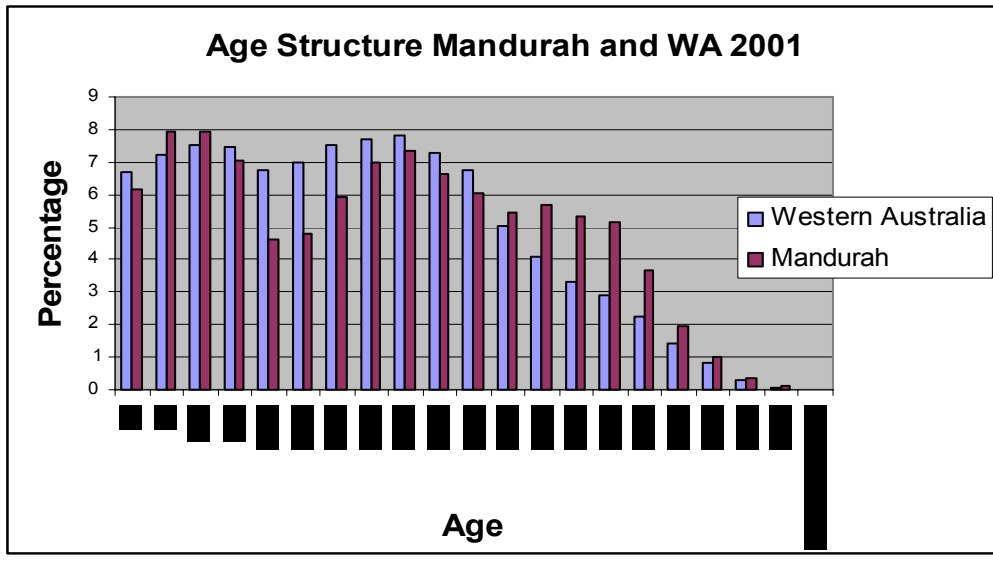


Source data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Regional Profile Mandurah (C) Cat. No. 1379.0.55.001, and Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Regional Profile Western Australia, ABS Cat. No. 1379.0.55.001

Figure 1 shows that the age profile of Mandurah's population differs markedly from that of the rest of Western Australia. The Figure indicates that:

- Despite the sea change phenomenon that the proportion of young people under 15 years of age is comparable to that WA (20.1%, compared to 20.4% for WA),
- That there is a marked decrease in the proportion of people aged 15 to 44 years of age for Mandurah (36.3%, compared to 44% for the rest of the State),
- That the percentage of people over 45 and under 65 is slightly greater in Mandurah than the WA percentage (25.2%, compared to 24.1% for WA)
- The percentage of people aged over 65 years of age are significantly higher in Mandurah than the State percentage (18.3%, compared to 11.4% for WA)
- The median age in Mandurah is 39 as opposed to 34 for WA.

Figure Two

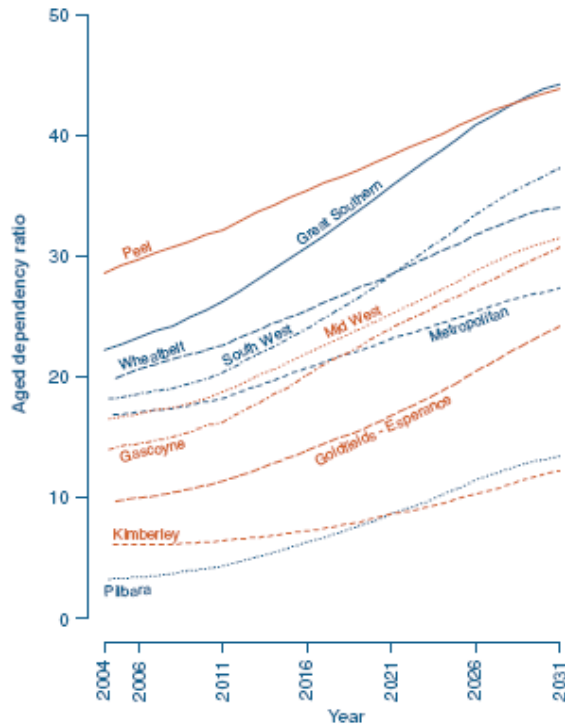


Source data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0 and Australian Bureau of Statistics, Expanded Community Profile Western Australia (State 5), Cat. No. 2003.0, Table T17

A more detailed analysis in Figure 2 reveals that the proportion of people in their twenties steeply declines. Proportionately, numbers increase slowly back up when people are in their thirties and early forties. What then are the implications for employment opportunities, income levels and housing choice when there is an identified population gap in the population? This will be discussed elsewhere in the paper.

The implications for Mandurah is that despite perceptions planning for both young families and seniors is necessary. Consequently, planning for education and health infrastructure is necessary to a sustainable community.

Figure Three



Source data: Western Australian Planning Commission, 2005, *Population Report No. 6, Western Australia Tomorrow: Population projections for planning regions 2004 to 2031 and local government areas 2004 to 2021*, Perth

As indicated in figure 3 the Peel region, and consequently Mandurah, will have the highest regional aged dependency rate for the foreseeable future. This indicates that there is an aging population but also that there is a high proportion of those are on low and fixed incomes. The challenge will be to ensure that there is a diverse housing stock to cater for their needs.

### 2.3 Household Structure

Table One

	1991 Census		1996 Census		2001 Census	
	Mandurah	WA	Mandurah	WA	Mandurah	WA
One family household:						
Couple family with children	50.23%	59.60%	50.12%	55%	44.90%	52.30%
Couple family without children	27.35%	17.20%	25.75%	19%	27.32%	20.10%
One parent family	9.58%	9.30%	10.90%	9.90%	13.10%	11.20%
Other family	0.58%	1%	0.53%	1.10%	0.59%	1.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87.75%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>87.27%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>85.95%</b>	<b>84.60%</b>
Multi-family household	0.83%	1.30%	1.10%	1.80%	1.23%	1.70%
Lone person household	8.67%	7.70%	9.40%	9.40%	10.50%	10.20%
Group household	2.76%	4%	2.20%	3.80%	2.36%	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Time Series Profile Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0, Table T17, and Australian Bureau of Statistics, Expanded Community Profile Western Australia (State 5), Cat. No. 2003.0, Table T17

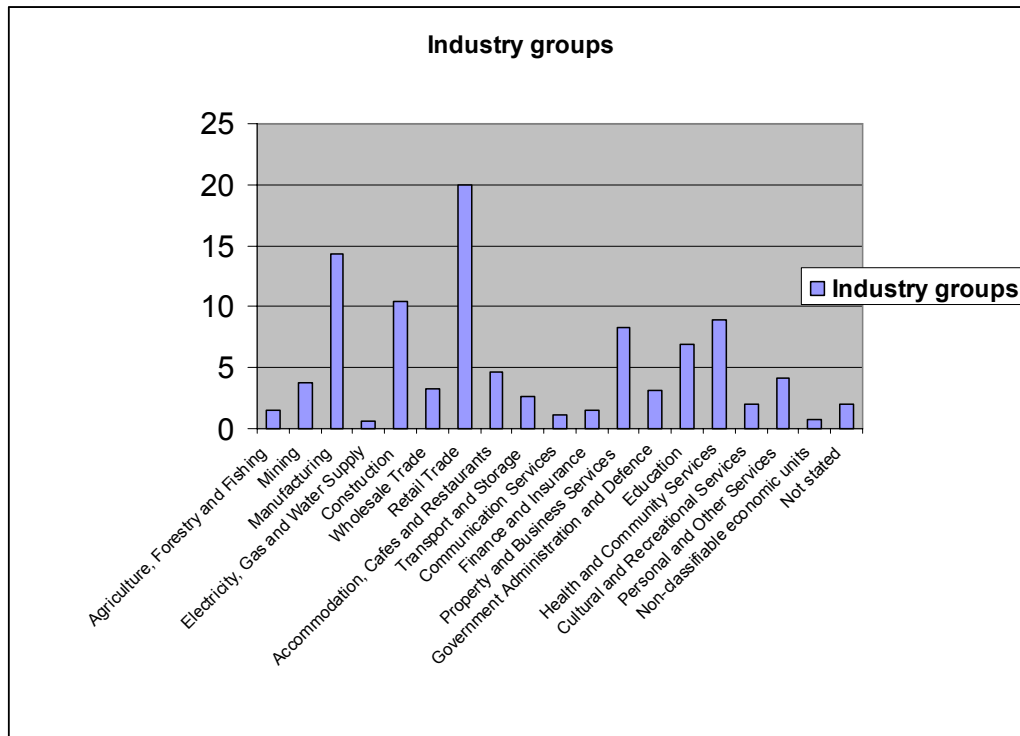
Table 1 shows that Mandurah, inline with the rest of Western Australia, has a declining percentage of couples with children. However, the percentage of families in Mandurah is significantly lower than for the rest of the State, with 44.9% of the population having children as compared to 52.3% of the State in 2001. However, the percentage of couples without children has remained relatively static in Mandurah over the ten year period with slight changes throughout the State.

Of note is the growth in one parent families in Mandurah. While in 1991 Mandurah had proportionately the same number of lone parent families, this has changed in 2001. In Mandurah, not only has the number of lone parent families increased but the increase is proportionately higher than for WA. The number of lone person households has also increased slightly

The data in table 1 confirms the conclusions drawn in Figure 1. That is that there are a large proportion of families that do not have children who live in Mandurah.

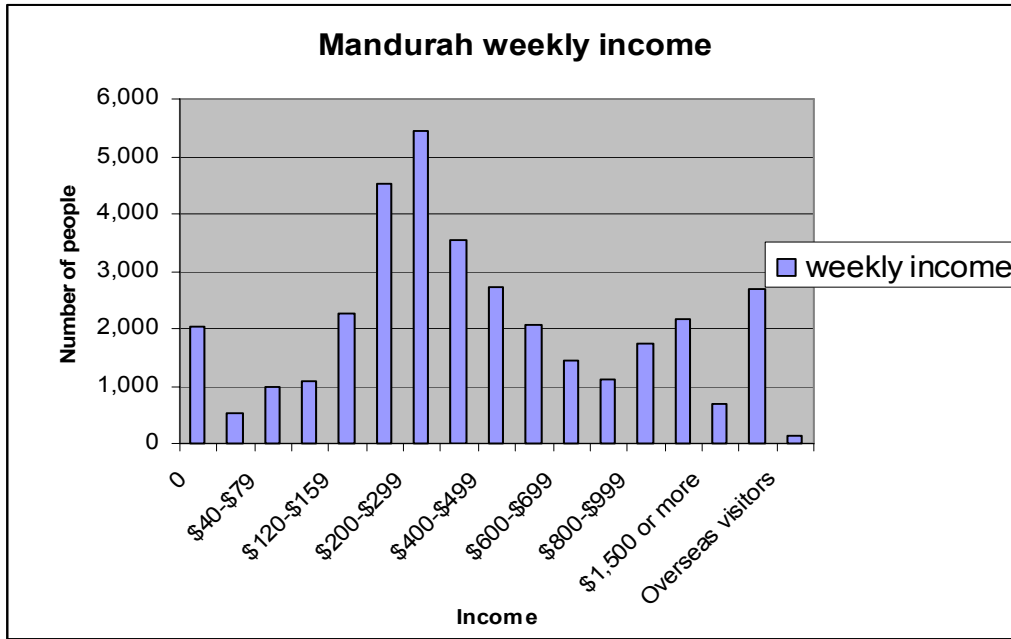
## 2.4 Employment and Income

Figure Four



Source data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Expanded Community Profile 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0

As shown in figure 3 the main industry in Mandurah is retail representing 19.9% of employment. Other key industries are manufacturing (14.27%), construction (10.39%) and health (8.94%). This is inline with tourism and housing growth.



Source data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0

Of note is that the median weekly individual income is \$200-\$299. This is compared to a range of \$300-\$399 for WA. The implications for housing and housing choice are indicated however, by further comparing rental and mortgage costs. For Mandurah median rental costs are the same despite much lower family and individual income levels.

This is to be tempered by analysis of age groups and income. According to the ABS the over 55 age group has a higher percentage of people on an income of \$160-\$299/week than other age brackets. Further 22.5% of individuals are aged over 55 and earning between \$0 and \$299 per week.<sup>10</sup> A comparison with the same age bracket throughout WA shows that 13.78% of individuals are over 55 years of age and are earning between \$0 and \$299/week.<sup>11</sup>

The unemployment rate for Mandurah as of December 2005 was approximately 8% as opposed to the State unemployment rate of 4.7%.<sup>12</sup> Relatively high unemployment rates combined with the high aged dependency rates contributes to the need to consider affordability in housing and maintaining a divers housing stock.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0

<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0 and Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Western Australia (STATE 5)

<sup>12</sup> Peel Development Commission web site, Available from <http://www.peel.wa.gov.au/content/discoverPeel/business/labourForce.cfm> (Accessed on 21.4.06).

**Table Two**

<b>Selected Averages Comparison</b>		
	Western Australia	Mandurah
Median age(b)	34	39
Median monthly housing loan repayments	\$800-\$999	\$600-\$799
Median weekly rent	\$100-\$149	\$100-\$149
Median weekly individual income	\$300-\$399	\$200-\$299
Median weekly family income	\$800-\$999	\$600-\$699
Median weekly household income	\$700-\$799	\$500-\$599
Mean household size	2.6	2.5

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2003.0 and Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Western Australia (STATE 5)

### **2.5 Indigenous People**

According to 2001 Census data, 744 people in the City of Mandurah were identified as Indigenous. Indigenous people comprise 1.7% of Mandurah's population.<sup>13</sup>

Indigenous people, as a population group, tend to be significantly younger than non-Indigenous people, with median ages of 17 and 39 respectively. Over half of Indigenous people in Mandurah were aged under 25, with 45.3% under the age of 15. Indigenous people also tended to live in larger households: on average, Indigenous households contain 3.6 people, compared to 2.5 for non-Indigenous households.

While the non-Indigenous population is considerably older than the Indigenous population, only 1.5% of the Indigenous population is over 65 years of age. This compares with 17.6% of the non-Indigenous population being over 65 years of age.

The majority of Indigenous people (16.3%) were employed in the retail sector. Most Indigenous women were employed in the retail (23.7%) and health and community (16.9%) sectors. The majority of Indigenous men were employed in manufacturing (18.2%) and construction (15.9%) sectors. This compares to the majority (20.1%) of non-Indigenous employment in the retail sector. Most non-Indigenous women were also employed in the retail (26.2%) and health and community (16.6%) sectors. The majority of non-Indigenous men were employed in manufacturing (21.9%) and construction (16.8%) sectors.

It is of note that Indigenous people have an unemployment rate of 34.5% while non-Indigenous people have an unemployment rate of 12.2%.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of occupation most Indigenous people are employed as either trades people (18.3%) or labourers (18.3%). The majority of those Indigenous women employed are intermediate sales or clerical staff (33.9%) and elementary sales and clerical staff (20.75%). The majority of those Indigenous men employed are trades people (25.8%) and labourers (24.7%).

In terms of occupation most non-Indigenous people are employed as either trades people (17.6%) or intermediate sales or clerical staff (14.3%). The majority of those non-Indigenous women employed are intermediate sales or clerical staff (25.3%) and elementary sales and clerical staff (19.9%). The majority of those non-Indigenous

<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census of Population and Housing Mandurah (C) (LGA 55110), Cat. No. 2002.0

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

men employed are trades people (28.7%) and intermediate production and transport workers (17.24%).

Some differences are to be noted with of those Indigenous people employed are working as professional (7%) and managerial staff (2.8%). Of those non-Indigenous people employed are working as professional (12.3%) and managerial staff (5.3%).<sup>15</sup>

In terms of rental 56.3% of Indigenous households rent as opposed to 22.3% of non-Indigenous households. 10% of Indigenous people own their home as compared to non-Indigenous people (41.2%). 30% of Indigenous people are purchasing their home as compared to 31.6% of non-Indigenous people.

## **2.6 Young People**

The move of young people from Mandurah indicates a need for a broader approach to planning for future needs. Some work is being undertaken in Mandurah to broaden learning opportunities through the Pathways to Employment program. However, as discussed further in the report, the limited number of affordable and suitable accommodation is yet to be addressed.

## **2.7 Sea Change: Challenges**

The outline above of Mandurah, population, age and industry is atypical of cities experiencing the Sea Change phenomenon throughout Australia. As outlined by the National Sea Change Task Force the sea change experience is summarised as follows:<sup>16</sup>

- Rapid population growth
- Dual challenges of an aging population and large numbers of young people under 15
- High degree of aged dependency rates
- Population shift is driven by those over 45
- Appeal of lifestyle
- People in their 20's and 30's move away from sea change areas for employment and educational prospects
- Tourism is the main economic driver followed by construction and health
- Retail is the main source of employment
- Higher than average unemployment
- High degree of houses that have absent owners
- Rising crime rates
- Degrees of difficulty encouraging community development due to absent owners
- Urbanisation of coastal tourist destinations
- Reports of people moving back to cities to regain community, family and level of support services
- Rising house prices and rent pushes those on low incomes out of traditional low cost housing
- Loss of diverse housing stock
- Local councils face the challenge of unexpected population growth, lack of infrastructure, lack of support services, lack of funding, impact on the

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> National Sea Change Task Force 2006, *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge*, the University of Sydney Planning Research Centre.

environment and natural resources such as water, impact on the local economy and community

Of note is the further consideration of tourism and the impact on household structure and housing choice. In the period 2003-4 Mandurah received a total of 470 500 domestic tourists. Of these 50% stayed with family and friends. Furthermore, 37% (5, 300) of international tourists also stayed with family and friends. Only 10% of domestic and 25% of international tourists stayed in hotels and motels.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.8 Strategies to April 2006**

As one of the fastest growing areas in Australia, Mandurah has attracted much attention to address the impact of growth and how it can be managed. Documents such as Network City, the Peel Development Commission's Peel Sustainability Strategy and supporting documents and the National Sea Change Task Force report contain much useful information that will have the potential to improve the relationship between development, environmental, social and economic sustainability in a rapidly changing city.

The recommendations contained in the National Sea Change Task Force Report 2 include:

- Obtaining a social impact analysis for developments over 3 three units
- Ensuring that developers make a contribution to affordable housing
- Developing social cohesion strategies
- Developing strategies to manage population growth
- Developing appropriate infrastructure to encourage pedestrian safety, minimise crime, develop community interaction and a sense of place
- Developing strategies to ensure that opportunities for those in their 20's and 30's are encouraged to live, work and obtain training in the sea change city<sup>18</sup>

The report emphasises the key role that local councils have in ensuring that the objective of a sustainable community is achieved. While initiatives can be a partnership between State governments, developers and council, it is to council that people in the community look to for leadership, appropriate strategies and approval of appropriate and planned developments. As noted in the report, often a council by approving inappropriate developments and without a strategy, urbanises the coastal community that existed. As a result, that community changes and loses the integrity and appeal that it had. The challenge therefore to council is to appropriately manage change.

The Peel Development Commission's Peel Sustainability Strategy contains three major documents. Overall they detail the trends in economic, social and environmental changes in the Peel region. The first two documents outline key social trends including rising crime, the need for improved infrastructure, environmental impacts of development with a particular emphasis on water, welfare dependency and the potential for housing stress. The third document is still in its planning phases. This document will outline strategies for the future planning of the region.

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<sup>17</sup> Tourism WA, 2005, Peel Tourism Fact Sheet 2004, Perth.

<sup>18</sup> National Sea Change Task Force 2006, *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge*, the University of Sydney Planning Research Centre.

In December 2005, Shelter WA and the Peel Community Legal Centre, hosted a forum on the *Housing Strategy WA (Draft)*. In this meeting several issues were identified by participants. These included:

- Housing and sustainability;
- Supply of affordable rental housing; and
- Local and regional housing strategies and their capacity to facilitate local housing policy initiatives.

Strategies that were considered at this time included:

- Planning housing in conjunction with infrastructure and social development.
- Planning to meet the needs of diverse community groups including the aged, Indigenous people and single parents.
- Engaging in the community in designing the community in which they live.
- Granting density bonuses for developers who agree to an affordable housing component.
- The State government to work in partnership with developers to increase the supply of Homeswest housing.
- Acknowledge the geographic constraints of the area and plan accordingly.
- Promote the role that Council can play in facilitating affordable housing through its policies and practises.
- Conduct social impact analysis of developments to protect current supply of low cost housing<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Anthony, J. and Pendergast, P. 2005, *Housing Strategy WA: A report on Mandurah forum*, Shelter WA.

### 3. Mandurah Housing Stock and Needs: Statistical Evidence

#### 3.1 Housing Construction

According to the Department of Housing and Works *Housing Snap Shot, 2005*, the number of housing approvals declined in 2004/5 by 29% from its 2003/4 level.<sup>20</sup> However, the number of approvals is still high. In 2003/4, Mandurah had the second highest approval rating (approximately 1900). Mandurah had the 5<sup>th</sup> highest approval rate (1378) of Councils in the Perth and Peel region in 2004/5.

A diverse housing stock is being created with 160 multi-residential approvals in 2004/5. This represented the 5<sup>th</sup> highest approval rating of multi-residential approvals in the Perth Peel region.

#### 3.3 House Prices and Rents Over Time

Table Three

Weekly Household Income Required to Support a Standard Variable Mortgage over 25 years										
	Coodanup	Dawesville	Dudley Park	Falcon	Greenfields	Halls Head	Madora	Mandurah	San Remo	Silver Sands
2 Bedroom Median Price 2005	\$1,245	\$14,049	\$1,114	\$1,671	\$937	\$1,888	\$1,326	\$1,316	\$1,696	\$1,747
3 Bedroom Median Price 2005	\$975	\$1,696	\$1,316	\$1,590	\$1,038	\$1,618	\$1,519	\$1,114	n/a	n/a
4 Bedroom Median Price 2005	\$1,104	\$1,645	\$1,499	\$1,681	\$1,164	\$1,762	\$1,564	\$1,268	\$2,060	\$1,848

Source of data: Department of Land Information and Valuer General, sales data January 2006.

In table 3 the level of income required to pay for a standard variable loan over a 25 year period with a 10% deposit, and an interest rate of 7.25% is calculated based on sales properties in selected suburbs. The level of income required is also based on an assessment of housing stress. That is the level of income required so that one can meet one's mortgage repayments and still cover the cost of living. That is, the level of income required so that the mortgage repayments do not exceed 30% of one's income.

According to the affordability assessment above, only two suburbs meet this criteria, Greenfields and Coodanup. It is to be noted that the higher income required for some suburbs is also due to the size of the land bought. For example, in Coodanup the increase in income for a 2 bedroom house was due to the fact that the land size for some of the properties sold was over 1000m<sup>2</sup>. The income required for a 3 bedroom house in Coodanup was much less as land size was much less. This indicates that properties are being bought for development purposes and prices are rising accordingly.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Housing and Works 2005, *Housing Snap Shot: Perth and Peel Housing Activity Review 2004/5*. Available online <http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au>.

This above is further reflected in the increase in house prices for a median size block in Mandurah. As outlined in table 4, house prices are escalating. As noted elsewhere land is also becoming harder to acquire with land prices per m2 increasing over a five year period, for example, in Coodanup (30.5%), Wannanup (22.7%), Dudley Park (15.5%), Halls Head (9.3%), Greenfields (30.2%).

**Table Four**

<b>House Price Changes Over Time in Mandurah for a median block (prices in the 1000's)</b>				
<b>Suburb</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>12 month change</b>	<b>5 year change</b>
Coodanup	\$168.7	\$218	29.2%	20.7%
Wannanup	\$330	\$380	15.2%	32%
Dudley Park	\$240	\$296	23.3%	18.5%
Halls Head	\$283	\$348	23%	16.2%
Greenfields	\$195	\$230	17.9%	15.9%

*Source of data: The Sunday Times, March 5 2006.*

### **3.4 Housing Stress**

There are two basic components to be considered when measuring affordability, household income and the cost of housing. The most widely accepted benchmark for measuring the extent of affordability problems (housing stress) states that households in the bottom 40% of income groupings should not pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs.<sup>21</sup> Households experiencing housing stress find themselves with insufficient income after meeting their housing costs to purchase the necessities of life and are at increased risk of defaulting on rent and mortgage repayments.

The 2001 Census recorded that the weekly income of Western Australian households at the top of the second income quintile received \$624 per week. The Census also reported that in Mandurah 47.6% of households had incomes that fell below the second income quintile.

In 2001 there were 4,155 rental households and low income households made up 69% of these. Of these low income renters 154 households (5%) were in housing stress. However, it must be stressed the reporting format used by the Census results in under estimation of the extent of housing stress. Further, the Census showed large numbers of households just below the threshold, leaving to these households vulnerable to rental inflation.

Somewhat surprisingly 327 low income households with a mortgage were shown to be experiencing housing, this number equates to 32% of these households. However, unlike renters low income households only accounted for 19% of purchasers.

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<sup>21</sup> The National Housing Strategy (1992): Summary of Papers, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

## **4. Mandurah Housing Stock and Needs: Qualitative Section**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section starts with an overview of issues identified during the preliminary consultations held by Shelter WA in Mandurah from September 2005 - April 2006. These consultations involved 10 people from a range of private, public and community organisations related to housing in Mandurah. A full list is included in Appendix 2.

The various people consulted had different perspectives on housing issues in Mandurah. This section gives an overview of the issues that were perceived to be significant by different organisations. The views expressed in this section are therefore not necessarily those of Shelter WA.

### **4.2 Issues Identified at the Preliminary Consultations in April 2006**

The issues below were identified during preliminary discussions held by Shelter WA's with a range of key stakeholders in Mandurah. The issues have been grouped thematically. All of the issues are relevant for discussion at the Forum.

#### *Loss of affordable housing*

The central Mandurah area was perceived to be the traditional location of affordable housing. Through redevelopment and rezoning it was felt that those affordable housing options had been lost. New developments did not cater for those on low incomes but were instead 'luxury' or holiday accommodation. The consequences were that those people on low fixed incomes were being displaced. It was reported that people were moving to Pinjarra and other areas to afford housing. It was felt that the lack of housing options contributed to the shift in population. This was occurring for those renting and buying houses. In turn growing demand was increasing prices outside of Mandurah.

The reported impact on families on low incomes of moving to outlying areas was two fold. Firstly, people became more dependent upon their cars due to the lack of an adequate bus service. Secondly, the cost of living is higher in those areas as food prices are higher. Therefore, people were travelling to Mandurah to do their shopping and had an increased dependency on their car. Those on low and fixed incomes were consequently then unable to manage budgets.

A consequence of displacement was a reported increase in homelessness particularly amongst youth, single males and Aboriginal families. Aboriginal families were reported as staying with extended families and contributing to overcrowding issues. The high rate of unemployment in Mandurah further added to a complex situation. Further, the absence of boarding house style of accommodation that provided medium term housing had a major impact on youth and single men in particular.

The higher than average age of residents in Mandurah and high aged dependency rates further meant that Seniors are also vulnerable to the loss of affordable housing. Those on low and fixed incomes, it was reported, could not afford that retirement villages and lifestyle choices in Mandurah. While commonwealth support is available it was reported that it was not enough to cover increasing rental costs.

### *Caravan Park Residents*

It was reported that due to domestic violence or evictions and lack of housing choice people in need of affordable housing are living in caravan parks. However, in November people are requested to leave the caravan park to make way for holiday makers who pay a higher overnight rental rate. When people leave caravan parks they go to either Rockingham or Pinjarra. As a consequence those people who are vulnerable and in most need do not have any housing stability.

A further outcome of living in living in caravan parks, people become unable to obtain rental references as payment for caravan parks do not require a lease. Hence people experience difficulty re-entering the private rental market.

### *Support Services*

It was reported that men in crisis, youth and those with mental health issues did not have their accommodation needs met. The closure of Holyoake, shortage of supported accommodation for diverse users, increasing population and lack of funding for support services were putting pressure on support services that were available. The current lack of diverse housing stock was considered to be contributing to the lack of options available. It was suggested that while supported accommodation services was needed for youth and those with mental illness, the lack of unit style accommodation that was affordable limited the availability of support. For those with mental health issues the only option was to be hospitalised. If diverse housing was available than programs for youth such as "YES" could be established.

Most of those consulted expressed the desire to increase the support services available to women in domestic violence. The fact that there was only one refuge to meet the needs of a growing population was considered inadequate. Also discussed was the need for men with children to be able to access support services and priority accommodation. This was considered to be a hidden and unacknowledged need. According to Anglicare Stabilising Homes, men with children in crisis were a growing problem that needed to be addressed.

### *Impact of New Developments*

The impact of new developments within Mandurah as discussed above to increase the pressure on both the existing population and support services. As mentioned in the National Sea Change Task Force, urbanisation and absent owners have an impact on community development. It was reported that perceptions of crime and empty houses made developing a community difficult. It was reported anecdotally, that people are moving back to Perth from Mandurah for family, community and support services.

Major developments such as Amarillo with an expected population of 50-60 000 people were contributing to the sense that support services were not able to participate in the planning process and contribute to meeting future needs. Without future planning and funding, support services could not cope with influxes of major population growth and increasing demand.

The Frasers Mandurah Development was also cited as an opportunity for services to community to be increased and recognise that the increase in people would require extensive community planning. There had been a mixed reaction to the representatives of Frasers. Some had where in the process of negotiating while others had been refused support.

Further it was felt that the ability of Council to negotiate for developers' contribution to affordable housing and the facilitation of support services was limited. Several reasons were cited for this. Some felt that the Council was not historically supportive of negotiating with developers. However, the perception was that Council was now more positive to considering community needs. It was also perceived that Council's initiatives and ability to refuse inappropriate development were hindered by the State government. Some people felt that the developers themselves were unwilling to discuss community development issues and were in a position of to ignore community requests.

### *Homeswest*

Homeswest as of April 2006 had 700 properties in Mandurah and 80 in Pinjarra. Of these the Milligan Foundation lease 60 properties. There were 577 on the waiting list of which 250 are seniors, 250 are families and 100 singles under 55. It is reported that singles under 55 are the current growth area. The waiting time for singles accommodation is 5.5 years. The waiting time for seniors is 4 years.

It was reported by a number of those consulted with that there were no issues with maintenance of properties for tenants in Mandurah. A suggestion was made that an Indigenous person or team be contracted to clean people's yards of rubbish and car bodies. It was stated that this would be a service that would improve the appearance of properties as local people could not afford to have the larger items removed.

The increase in housing prices is causing problems in Mandurah. The private rental market is becoming unaffordable for those on fixed incomes. However, this has not led to an increase in the waiting list. Those on the priority housing list are being assisted with support with bond and fees to obtain private rental. This is as a result of the 4-5 month priority housing waiting list. It was felt by Homeswest that this form of support would be more appropriate than the alternatives such as caravan parks or refuges. However, it was reported elsewhere that the private rental market does not provide people at risk with stability nor the ability to pay future increases in rent. People, therefore remained at risk.

All those consulted agreed that more housing was needed. While the Department of Housing and Works does have a building program, it was foreseen that creating new stock would be difficult. This was due to the lack of available land in Mandurah. It was planned to have a small stock of Homeswest housing in the Amarillo development.

Also those consulted with agreed that the break up of Homeswest housing enclaves was beneficial. It was perceived that this would help to diminish issues of conflict. It was reported that some Aboriginal people did not want to live in Coodanup because of the conditions there.

Discussions with the Winjan Aboriginal Corporation revealed that people were keen to buy their Homeswest properties. However, two factors were inhibiting people. The first was the initial cost of housing. It was reported that one woman had applied to buy her house in Mandurah. However, during the time taken to assess the market value the price of the house had increased and she could no longer afford it. The family ended up moving out of Mandurah to Kellerberrin. Also, there were concerns raised regarding the Right to Buy schemes. It was reported that people were scared to buy their homes given the rapid increase in market value. As the second half of the loan was to be re-assessed at the future, current, market rate, the uncertainty as to what that amount would be was acting as a disincentive to purchase.

Given lack of affordability, lack of development opportunities, what are the future implications for Homeswest and the provision of appropriate and adequate housing? The gaps identified included housing for seniors, singles (both male and female), the development of units to meet the needs of youth, land for future development, the provision of medium term housing including the possibility of boarding houses.

### *Indigenous Housing*

Some of the specific needs of Indigenous people included meeting the needs of their Youth and Seniors. As indicated above the median age of Aboriginal people in Mandurah is 17. Issues that were raised in association to youth included the number of youth and lack of facilities for them and concern about meeting their future housing needs given raising house prices. Given the incidence of domestic violence, refuges for Indigenous women was a further priority.

It was noted at the Winjan Aboriginal Corporation that the skate board had been located at Halls Head. However, this became inaccessible to the large numbers of youth in Coodanup due to distance and major road networks. Therefore they felt that more planning was needed for appropriate infrastructure to be installed. Planning for affordable housing to meet future demand was seen as necessary. Without planning the displacement of Indigenous people would continue and pressure on families would increase. Meeting the diversity of housing requirements would involve both the private and public housing sector. Diversity of housing would include the provision of units to meet the needs of single people. As discussed above, it was felt that housing provision in partnership with support services could be provided.

Another major area of concern was the lack of housing for Indigenous Seniors. They felt that given the young population and overcrowding that Seniors housing would alleviate the pressure felt within families. Land was a key barrier to providing Seniors housing. They felt that a partnership with Council to either provide land directly or as a lobby to developers could achieve their goals.

It was stated that the majority of women in the refuge were Indigenous. However, the current refuge was full and another was required. A request was made for another to be provided as a matter of urgency. It would be preferred if this proposed facility could be for Indigenous women.

### *Council and the Peel Development Commission*

There was a mixed perception as to the City of Mandurah Council. The Mayor was seen as a person with initiative and drive and was achieving good things for the community. Some initiatives included the level of meaningful consultation with Indigenous people and the employment of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer. However, some felt that while Council had a triple bottom line philosophy it was having a hard time enforcing it. Further, other's felt that Council was unwilling or unable to refuse developments due to pressure from developers and the State government.

At the recent National Sea Change Task force Conference the Mayor of Mandurah's presentation noted that West Australian Councils do not have compulsory developer contributions and that State government is responsible for water and sewage infrastructure.<sup>22</sup> In the paper she emphasised that to fill identified gaps Council must work in partnership with all stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes. Those gaps

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<sup>22</sup> Creedy, P. 2006, Mandurah a Hyper-Growth Sea Change City, Available online at [http://www.seachangetaskforce.org.au/Conference2006/CR%20Paddi%20Creedy%20-%20Mandurah.ppt#310.20.Strategies for success](http://www.seachangetaskforce.org.au/Conference2006/CR%20Paddi%20Creedy%20-%20Mandurah.ppt#310.20.Strategies%20for%20success).

would be identified as a result bringing together community, business and government to develop a shared vision.

The Peel Development Commission was seen to be trying to raise the awareness of the diversity of issues in the community. There was a perception, however, that more emphasis on housing and support services was necessary to achieve sustainable community outcomes.

## **5. Summary of Issues and Recommendations**

The need for a diverse housing market in Mandurah has been identified through consultation and a desk top analysis. Housing diversity will underpin the social sustainability of Mandurah. However, due to the rapid changes in population and house prices, diverse housing must also be affordable.

Consequently, it must be recognised that:

1. Mandurah has a higher than average number of welfare dependant residents than WA.
2. That the population of Mandurah is being displaced and potentially polarised between rich and poor
3. Homeswest housing is currently meeting the needs of a small percentage of those on low incomes.
4. Mandurah has a higher unemployment rate than WA
5. Sea Change populations have unique characteristics and issues
6. Following the National Sea Change Task force recommendations have been made to affected Councils for consideration
7. Urbanisation of coastal areas can be a threat to tourism, local community identity and housing diversity and affordability unless appropriate planning processes are in place.
8. That people look to Council for leadership and initiatives to address their concerns.

Initial recommendations for discussion are:

1. Inline with community consultation and the Mayor's National Sea Change Task force Conference (2006) paper, Council should consider the following questions:
  - What are the underlying concerns of its community?
  - How do you know what the underlying concerns are?
  - What strategies can be implemented to address community concerns?
  - What, if any further initiatives are necessary to empower Council and identified strategies so that outcomes can be achieved and ensure that Council is an equal partner with State government and developers? Eg. Incorporating visioning documents within the Town Planning Scheme.
2. Inline with the National Sea Change Task force report 2 (2006):
  - Develop Social Impact Assessments for developments over 3 dwellings
  - Develop an Affordable Housing strategy to meet the needs of those on low incomes

- Develop diverse housing to meet the needs of single parent households, seniors, youth, low income households, Indigenous seniors
  - Develop employment and training opportunities for people aged 20-30
  - Develop comprehensive community development programs to ensure community cohesiveness.
3. Department of Housing and Works to increase the housing stock in Mandurah in partnership with developers, Council and Community Housing providers.
  4. Increase community support services for youth, men, women and families in crisis, mental health consumers, service providers and inline with growing population.
  5. Development of medium term housing for those in transition such as youth, men and women with families in crisis and singles. That medium term housing should consider a wide variety of housing such as caravan parks, boarding and lodging houses and community housing options.
  6. Building an appropriate number of refuges to meet demand.

## **Appendix 1: Case Study for Discussion – Frasers Mandurah Pty Ltd**

### *Background*

As of writing this report the Frasers Mandurah Pty Ltd development was out for community consultation. However, this development presents a unique opportunity to discuss development and social outcomes. The points made below are for discussion only and do not represent the opinion of Shelter WA.

### *Features*

This development is unique as it is using design guidelines to control development rather than the R-Codes. As a result the proposal built form will be comprised of:

- 1250 living units,
- Height will vary from 8 and 6 stories on the estuary through to 4 and 2 stories on the road boundary and
- Housing mix of single units, mixed commercial residential, townhouses and some short stays.<sup>23</sup>

By rezoning the land for urban development and not using the R-Codes the footprint of the development has been reduced to 70%. The cited benefit of not using the R-Codes to control development is the gain of the proposed 30% open space. It was argued that if the land had been zoned residential then 500 building lots would have been formed and only 10% of open space provided. As a consequence much valuable conservation land would have been lost.

### *Outline Development Plan*

The proposed development will be controlled through the Outline Development Plan. The key features of this document are:

- Had input from a design forum
- Concerns raised at the forum included built form, technical details, health related, environmental, the provision of a 'Strata Title Management Plan and Statement' as only a few of the lots will be green titled, use of Liveable Neighbourhoods Draft Operational Policy, traffic and infrastructure
- Community infrastructure outcomes will be negotiated with developers
- Future management and maintenance responsibilities are still to be clarified and ratified between Council and the developers

### *Opportunities*

- Environmental protection provided under legislation
- Smaller ecological footprint
- Diverse housing
- Public open space
- Community infrastructure to be negotiated

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<sup>23</sup> City of Mandurah 2006, Town Planning Scheme No.3 Amendment No. 78.

### *Gaps*

- While there is environmental protection in place, what are the legislative mechanisms to protect stated community outcomes?
- Diverse housing but no affordable housing provision
- Holiday lets may not have full occupancy
- Given the holiday lets, what is the likelihood that other units will not be fully occupied or used for investment purposes?
- What are the implications for community development and cohesion and crime given the potential for unoccupied living units?
- What control mechanisms are in place for Council in a future period to ensure that the liveable neighbourhood principles are in place and that the proposed development does not 'in perception, effect or practice – (become) 'gated communities'".<sup>24</sup>
- What will be the impact on the broader Coodanup community of this development?

### *Discussion*

1. Given the outcomes and recommendations outlined in the National Sea Change Task force report above, what could council have done differently throughout the development application process? Would the outcomes have changed?

For example,

If a social impact analysis had been undertaken would any gaps in services, impact on community and affordability been addressed? If so how?

2. The designation of 'Urban Development', similarly to a redevelopment authority area, allows a developer to maximize the housing yield of the site through unique planning mechanisms. However, unlike a redevelopment authority area, there is no legislative mechanism to address community development.

For example,

A redevelopment authority can, through legislation achieve affordable housing outcomes and can ensure that community mix and sustainability is achieved. If outcomes are not achieved they have the financial capacity to either negotiate or buy back an area from a developer.

What mechanisms can be introduced in Mandurah to ensure community outcomes are achieved and that the issues outlined in the body of this report can be addressed?

3. What recommendations can be drawn from this discussion?

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<sup>24</sup> City of Mandurah 2006, Town Planning Scheme No.3 Amendment No. 78, p10

**Appendix 2: List of Consultations Sept 2005 – April 2006**

Michelle Emmerson-Law, Manager, Peel Community Legal Centre

Gillian Martelli, Manager Community Services, City of Mandurah

Albert Rogers, Co-ordinator, WestAus Crisis and Welfare Services

Lisa Craig, Project Officer, Peel Community Development Group

Stephen Quinn, Acting Regional Manager, Homeswest Mandurah Office

Trisha McGowan, Manger, Pat Thomas Memorial Community House

Alli Mills, Department of Community Development

Rick Muir, Regional Manager, Homeswest Mandurah Office

Harry Nannup, Chair, Winjan Aboriginal Corporation

Jackie Wilson, Family Support Worker, Anglicare Stabilising Homes