

Economic Impact Overview Report

16 POOLE WAY, BUSHLAND
BEACH 4818

SEPTEMBER 2025

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ue urban
economics

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1.0	19 September 2025	Nicholas Hiller	Kerriane Meulman

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Urban Economics was commissioned by Poole Way No. 2 Pty Ltd in conjunction with JFP Urban Consultants to complete an Economic Impact Overview Report exploring need for and impacts of the establishment of a mix of small-scale uses, including a medical centre, pathologist and food and drink outlet.

Subsequent to a pre-lodgement meeting with Townsville City Council officers, meeting minutes recommended the preparation of a brief needs assessment to accompany the development application demonstrating that the proposed uses:

- Would be compatible with surrounding uses
- Be limited in scale
- Support day-to-day needs of the local community
- Not impact on the role and function of the centres hierarchy; and
- Not be more appropriately located in another zone

The Urban Economics team has extensive experience in the preparation of strategic advice and need assessments for a range of retail, health, education, tourism, residential, industrial, commercial and community sectors including demographic analyses, market share analyses, qualitative and quantitative research.

1.2 Study Objectives and Methodology

The key objective of this report is to demonstrate the level of need for the proposed development, whilst noting any potential impacts on nearby centres.

In preparing the brief need and impact assessment for the healthcare and food and drink uses, Urban Economics has completed the following tasks:

- Reviewed the plans for the proposed development
- Reviewed the anticipated operations of the proposed health centre including number of practitioners/staff, consulting rooms
- Undertaken inspections of the site and centres within the surrounding network, noting mix of uses, vacancy rates and land available for future development
- Identified other proposed and approved facilities within the surrounding network
- Reviewed council's centres hierarchy and planning scheme policy – EIA
- Defined a Study Area for investigation and critique
- Estimated population and household growth within the Study Area
- Critiqued the demographic profile of Study Area community and the evolving nature of the community
- Reviewed the health care needs of the Study Area community
- Assessed the demand for health care services
- Assessed the need for the proposed uses
- Provided an overview and commentary as to the impacts of the proposed development in Bushland Beach

2.0 The Subject Site

2.1 16 Poole Way, Bushland Beach

The subject site is located at 16 Poole Way, Bushland Beach and is officially known as Lot 6 on SP333154. The site is 2445sqm in size and located across the road from a recently built car wash and service station and ~250m from Bushland Beach Plaza – a shopping centre that is anchored by Coles and includes other stores such as Cellarbrations and the Bushland Beach Doctors Medical Centre.

Directly to the north of the subject site, there is an application to divide 12 Poole Way into 8 residential lots and other vacant land on Poole Way has also had approvals for childcare and residential development. Parklands to the south of Lionel Turner Drive contribute to the Bushland Beach node, with a number of sporting and recreational clubs and groups utilising the parklands, playgrounds, tennis courts and sporting fields including the North Thuringowa Devils Rugby League Club.

FIGURE 2.1: The Subject Site



Source: Nearmap 12th July 2025

The subject site consolidates small scale non-residential uses around the Bushland Beach Plaza and contributes to the centre as a community hub and meeting place for the Bushland Beach and surrounding community.

2.2 The Proposed Development

The proposed development is to include a medical centre (450sqm), pathologist (30sqm) as well as a food and drink outlet (150sqm) with two dwelling units directly above. 33 total carparks are to provide for medical centre patients, while 4 dedicated spots are to be directly for the café/dining area.

FIGURE 2.2: The Proposed Development



Current plans for the operation of the proposed uses are as follows:

- 10 consulting rooms, with 2 of these to be separate pathology rooms. Not all consulting rooms are to be in use by clinicians, with admin/office uses included in the total room number.
- Total staff including both admin and clinicians to be ~17, with admin staff to be part-time and an expected number of 5-7 staff on a given day
- Half of doctors employed are expected to be part-time or employed at other clinics, so an expected number of 3-5 full-time equivalent GPs

2.3 Planning Framework

Centres Hierarchy

As identified in the Strategic Framework, “A hierarchy of activity centres exists to ensure that the scale and form of development is appropriate to the location, and that the centre plays an appropriate role within the wider city. The hierarchy contributes to an efficient, well-functioning and accessible city.”

The hierarchy of activity centres is as following, with higher levels of development and intensity in higher order centres. The hierarchy is made up of Principal Centre (CBD), major centres, district centres, local centres, neighbourhood centres and specialised centres.

Within Bushland Beach, there is a local and neighbourhood centre, the roles and functions of which are defined in the strategic framework.

3.3.4.1 (26) Local centres are convenience-oriented centres focused on a full-line supermarket and complementary and ancillary activities servicing the needs of surrounding communities. New local centres will be established commensurate with the growth of new communities at Julago, Cosgrove and Mount Low (the latter to be located on Mt Low Parkway, directly opposite North Shore Boulevard)

3.3.4.1 (27) Neighbourhood centres are small-scale centres that provide a limited array of basic, lower order needs including convenience retail, local professional and community services.

The Bushland Beach Local Centre is designated on the Coles-anchored Bushland Beach Plaza, whilst the surrounding land uses including service station, car wash, childcare and sporting fields contribute to the Local Centre in servicing the needs of the surrounding Bushland Beach community. The proposed development on the subject site would consolidate day-to-day and convenience needs around the Local Centre.

Zoning

The subject site is zoned for low density residential uses.

6.2.1 Low Density Residential Zone Code

The low-density residential zone code specifically identifies the desired outcome for any non-residential development

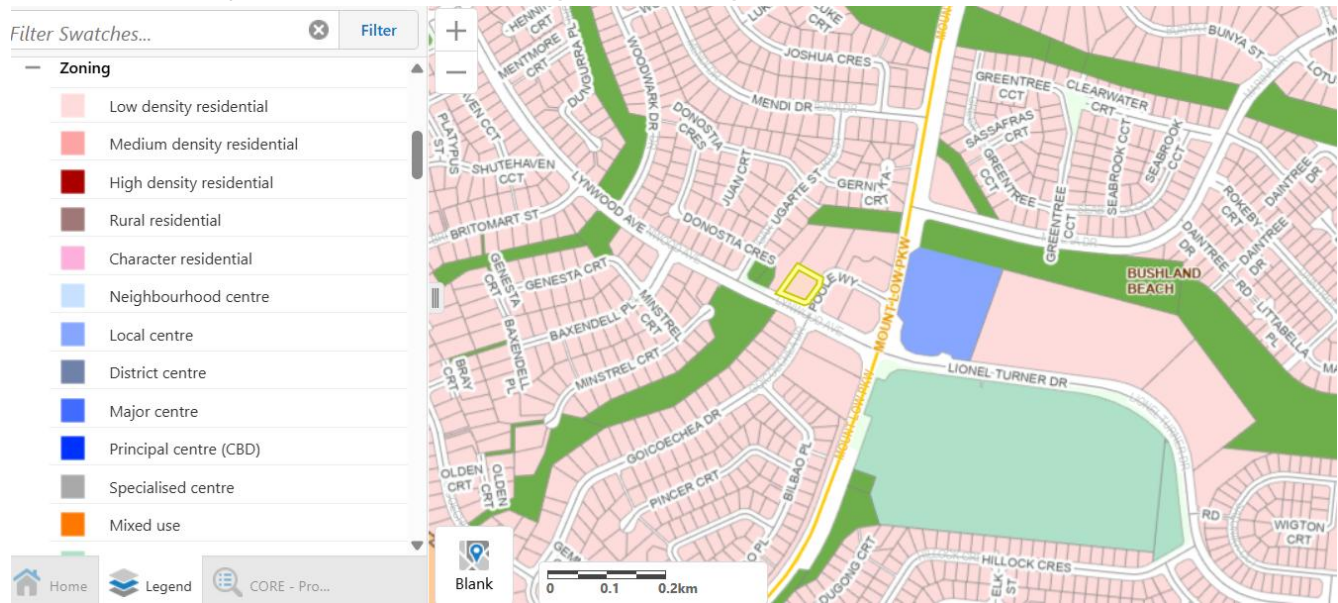
(3)(h) non-residential uses only occur within the zone when they primarily support the day-to-day needs of the immediate residential community, do not unreasonably detract from the residential amenity of the area and are not better located in nearby centre zones;

More specifically, under PO18, non-residential uses are established only where:

a) Compatible with local character and amenity;

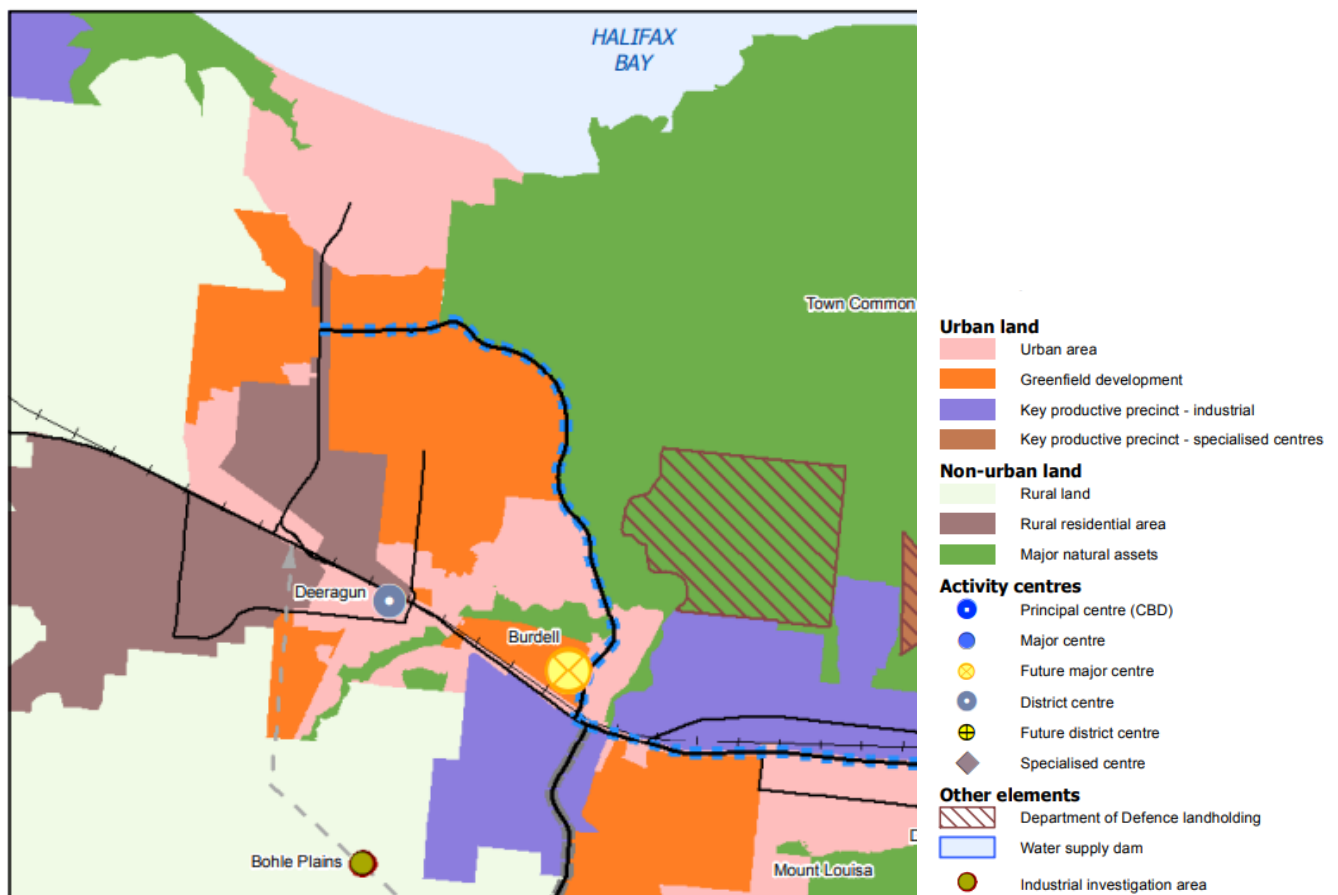
- b) Limited in scale and supporting the day-to-day needs of the local community; and
- c) Not impacting on the role and function of the city's network of centres or more appropriately located in another zone

FIGURE 2.3: Subject Site and Surrounding Land Zoning



Source: Townsville City Council

FIGURE 2.4: Strategic Framework Mapping



3.0 Supply

3.1 Centres Network

Bushland Beach Plaza (Local Centre)

This centre has 4,566sqm of floorspace, anchored by Coles and including other specialty retail stores, including a medical centre, healthsave pharmacy, café, dentist, hairdresser and real estate agent. Urban Economics identified a single vacant tenancy which is estimated to be 183sqm in size. The zoning for the land is a local centre, and currently the existing centre encompasses this land. There is also a small pad site totalling 300sqm at the front of the site that is advertised online as being available for development.

There are also a range of other non-residential uses proximate to the Bushland Beach Plaza such as a car wash, service station and childcare centre that represent a clustering of non-residential uses around the local centre.



Bushland Beach Plaza

Bushland Beach NC (Neighbourhood Centre)

This centre is a small neighbourhood centre which includes local convenience retailers and the Bushland Beach medical centre. Uses include a dentist, hairdresser, beauty clinics, physiotherapist and pool shop. In a separate building is the Bushland Beach Convenience and Takeaway, which functions as a general store and local fast food option. The Bushland Beach Tavern is also located nearby, although not within the centre zone. No vacancies were noted in this centre.



Bushland Beach Neighbourhood Centre

Mount Low (Neighbourhood Centre)

A single property located at 82 Mount Low Pkwy, this property is host to a childcare centre that first received council approval in 2023 and is now operational. The centre has 128 places and is operated by Educating Kids.

Burdell Precinct (North Shore)

Whilst not identified as a centre, the Burdell Precinct (which is zoned as Emerging Community land) is identified by the Townsville Planning Scheme for the delivery of a number of outcomes that are similar to centre-type uses, and there are a number of existing commercial uses similar to those found in other centres – most notably along Main St, which has a Woolworths-anchored shopping precinct. Development is ongoing for an ALDI and Reject Shop anchored shopping centre, which includes Hungry Jacks, Krispy Kreme drive thrus as well as 7-Eleven and Mobil service stations

More notably, there is a dedicated health care services centre that includes a General Practice, Pathologist, Dentist, Radiographer and Vet.

3.2 Local Network of Facilities

GP Clinics

There are two existing medical centres in Bushland Beach, one located within Bushland Beach Plaza and one within the smaller neighbourhood centre approximately 1km from the subject site. These clinics employ 5 and 10 general practitioners, respectively and are both open every weekday as well as on Saturday mornings, but only The Doctors at Bushland Beach offers early evening practice hours for patients.

Further afield, there are two large clinics in the suburbs of Deeragun and Burdell, which may act as alternatives for locals in Bushland Beach commuting to employment areas in Townsville.

Based on the location of the two Bushland Beach clinics, it is likely that they would also treat a significant number of patients from the bordering suburb of Mount Low, which does not have any existing centre or medical facilities and is still relatively detached from the next nearest medical centres and connected to Bushland Beach via the Mount Low Parkway.

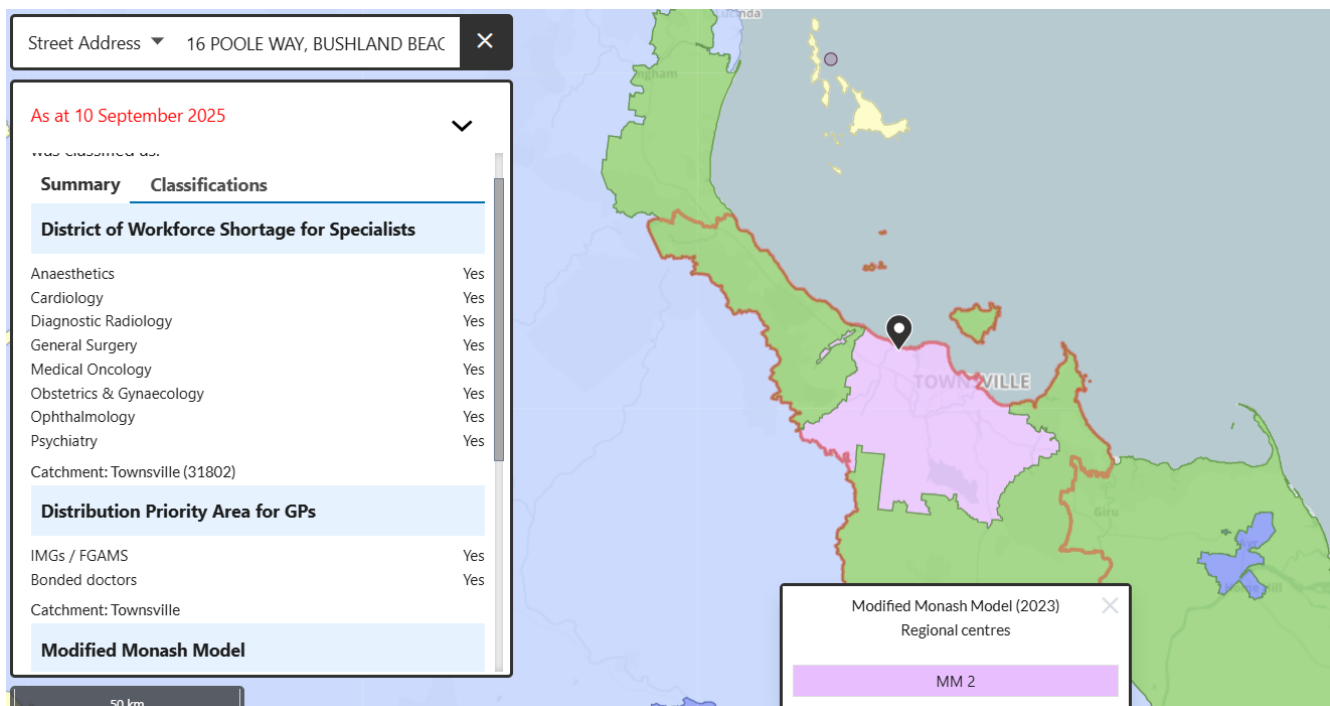
TABLE 3.1: Local Medical Centres

Name	Suburb	Address	GPs	Opening Hours	Distance (km)
The Doctors Bushland Beach	Bushland Beach	267-289 Mount Low Pkwy, Bushland Beach	5	M-F, 8am–6:30pm, Sa 9am-1pm	0.27
Bushland Beach Medical Centre	Bushland Beach	367 Mount Low Pkwy, Bushland Beach	10	M-F, 8am–5pm, Sa 8:30am-12:30pm	1.00
Northern Beaches GP Super Clinic	Deeragun	12 Deeragun Rd, Deeragun	10	M-F, 7am-5:30pm, Sa-Su 8am-1pm	5.53
North Shore General Practice	Burdell	1/50 N Shore Blvd, Burdell	15	M-F, 8am–6pm, Sa 9am-1pm	6.84

Being a regional location, the Bushland Beach area is classified as part of the regional centre zone (MM2) according to the Modified Monash Model, which determines remoteness in the context of the national health workforce, with MM1 representing metropolitan areas and MM7 representing the most remote parts of the country. According to the Federal Health Department those living in MM2 to MM7 areas can find it harder to get medical help and accessing doctors can take longer and cost more.

All areas classified from MM2 to MM7 are also denoted as “Distribution Priority Areas” for GPs – areas of the country which have a shortage of GP services. So too, for all other specialists there is an identified provision shortage in the greater Townsville area, as shown in FIGURE 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1: Health Workforce Locator



Allied Health

There is a limited mix of allied health uses within the Bushland Beach community, largely located in and around the local and neighbourhood centres and listed below. Pathology, physiotherapy, pharmacy and dental practitioners are the uses that are currently present in the suburb, although it is notable that there are no allied health practitioners within Mount Low.

- Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Townsville – Bushland Beach
- 4Cyte Bushland Beach
- Free Movement Physio
- Healthsave Pharmacy
- Dental Precinct Townsville
- Mytoothdoctor Dentist

The 4Cyte pathology is located within the Medical Centre in Bushland Beach Plaza and appears to have only opened recently, while the Sullivan Nicolaides operates separately. It is noted that both these providers are only open for limited hours during the week, 8:30am-1:30pm for 4Cyte and 8am-1pm for Sullivan Nicolaides. This is in contrast to the next nearest pathologist in the North Shore medical centre, which is open from 8:30am-4:30pm on weekdays and from 8-11am on Saturday.

Café/Casual Dining

Currently the only casual dining options within the Bushland Beach community are Hyve Café in Bushland Beach Plaza as well as the Bushland Beach Tavern, both of which offer table service. Other food options such as the Bushland Beach Convenience and Takeaway are fast food takeaway options.

3.3 Proposed and Approved Facilities

369 Mount Low Parkway, Bushland Beach

Located on a low-density zoned vacant lot directly to the north of the neighbourhood centre at Bushland Beach, this proposal is referred to as a “medical centre” in the application and represents four separate tenancies making up ~460sqm of potential medical space. However, given the size of the tenancies of ~100sqm, it is unclear that these will represent any GP clinics and are more likely to be taken up by specialists or allied health providers. Currently the site is vacant and used for car parking.

162 Mount Low Parkway, Mount Low

Urban Economics is aware of a preliminary approval application for a variation request to the planning scheme that would establish a local centre in Mount Low. The preliminary approval documents proposed medical as one of the potential uses on the site, which is located just to the south of the subject site in Mount Low.



369 Mount Low Pkwy



162 Mount Low Pkwy

3.4 Implications

The Bushland Beach Local Centre and surrounding ancillary uses, is the natural hub and community heart of the Bushland Beach community and surrounding communities such as Mount Low, offering a mix of facilities that cater to day-to-day and weekly shopping and service needs. The subject site represents a strategic and logical location to consolidate non-residential uses that support and contribute to the role of the Bushland Beach Local Centre, particularly given the detached and relatively self-contained nature of Bushland Beach.

There are two GP clinics in the Bushland Beach area, also expected to be serving residents of the growing suburb of Mount Low to the south, with the Bushland Beach local centre representing the nearest commercial facility to many residents. The existing clinics together support 15 GPs, offering patients a range of options in terms of their primary healthcare provider, although noting that Doctors at Bushland Beach offers early evening hours for patients.

It is noted that Bushland Beach is a relatively detached residential community, with the current rate of health care provision potentially representing an under-provision as residents are not as easily able to access facilities in nearby suburbs. The adequate provision of services is especially important given the area's role as a future growth community.

The proposed development would introduce the opportunity for visiting specialists and allied health professionals to access consulting rooms in better servicing and supporting the health care needs of the Bushland Beach community.

Furthermore, there is a dearth of casual dining and café options in the local area, with residents restricted to just two local choices, which are only open limited hours of the day. The subject development would provide an additional option for local residents, contributing to the amenity of Bushland Beach and the Bushland Beach Local Centre as a local centre and hub for the Bushland Beach community.

4.0 Study Area Community

4.1 Study Area Definition

Urban Economics has defined a local Study Area which aims to reflect the area that a potential medical centre would draw from based on its location.

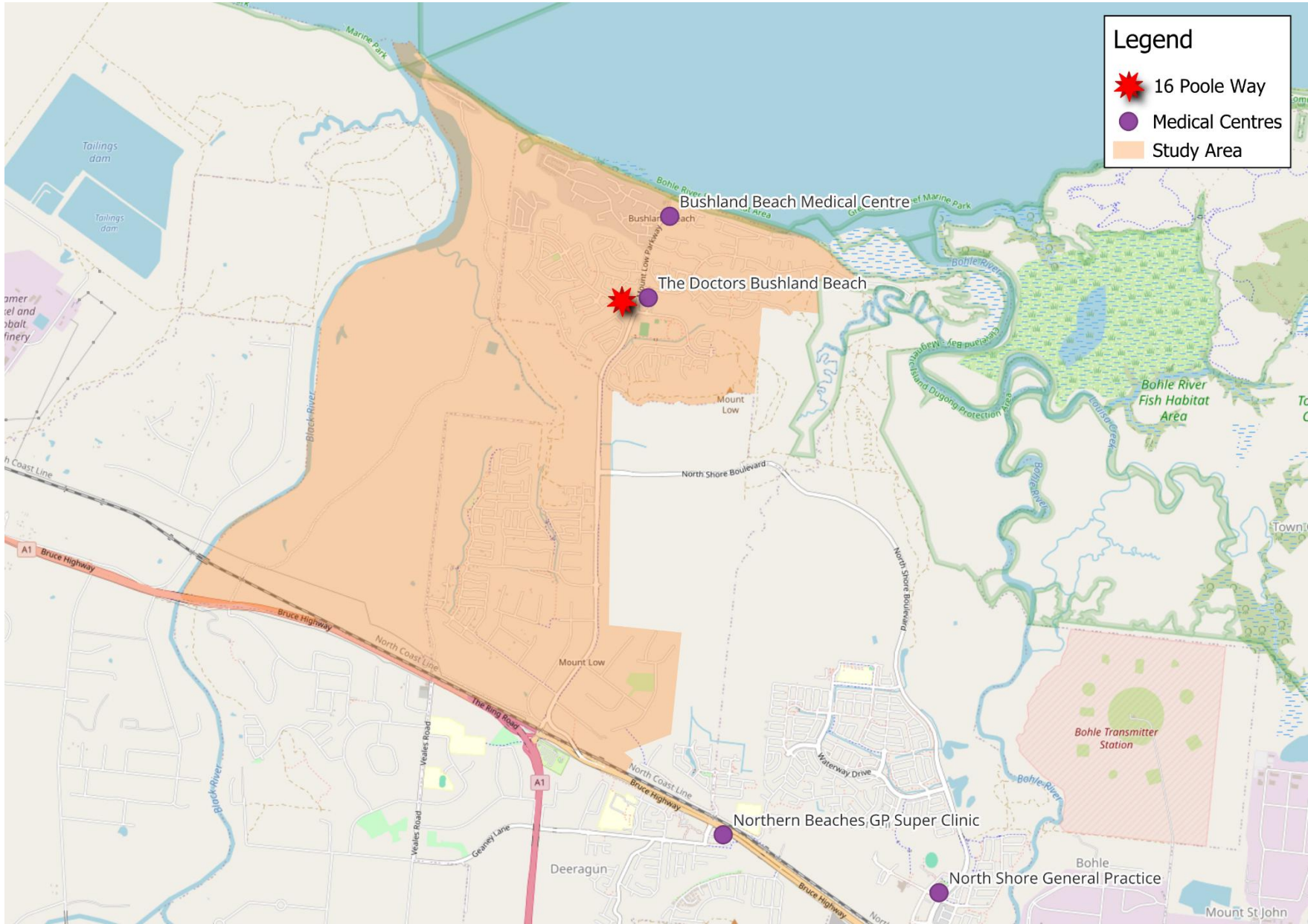
In defining this area, consideration has been given to:

- The local road network
- Statistical Area 1 (SA1) boundaries
- Both natural and engineered features that create actual and perceived boundaries

The Study Area is illustrated in FIGURE 4.1 and highlights the location of the subject site and other relevant medical centres as identified in Chapter 3. It includes the suburbs of Bushland Beach and Mount Low, reflecting the fact that Mount Low residents do not have access to medical or retail facilities within their suburb and that the closest accessible centre is Bushland Beach Plaza.

While being part of the Burdell – Mount Low SA2, the suburb of Burdell and the broader North Shore development have not been included due to their geographical separation and limited road connections to Bushland Beach and Mount Low.

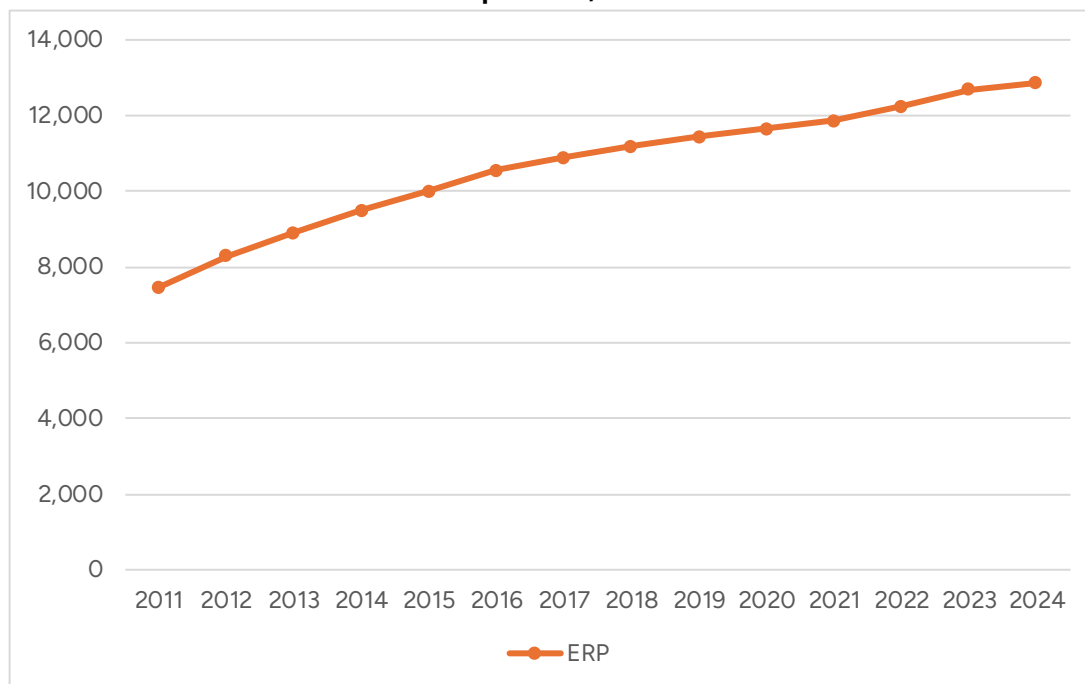
FIGURE 4.1: Study Area



4.2 Population and Household Growth

Since 2011, the population of the defined Study Area has risen from 7,465 to 12,863 at an average annual growth rate of 4.3%. This growth was fastest from 2011 to 2016 where the population grew at ~7% per annum before slowing in the following 5 years and then rebounding in 2021 as regional areas became an attractive option for many homebuyers and interstate migrants.

FIGURE 4.2: Estimated Resident Population, 2011-2024



Source: ABS

Building Approvals in the Study Area have ranged between 150-200 per annum since 2020/21, where there was a significant number, in part a reflection of the federal homebuilder program. Prior to 2021, the Burdell – Mount Low was part of a larger SA2, so it is unclear the proportion of approvals that occurred in the area. However, around 75% of total building approvals across the two SA2s occurred in the area in the last 5 years.

TABLE 4.1: Building Approvals, 2014/15 – 2024/25

	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25
Burdell – Mount Low							301	170	167	126	166
Deeragun – Jensen							86	32	41	29	46
Deeragun	470	298	245	202	131	143					
Total	470	298	245	202	131	143	387	202	208	155	212

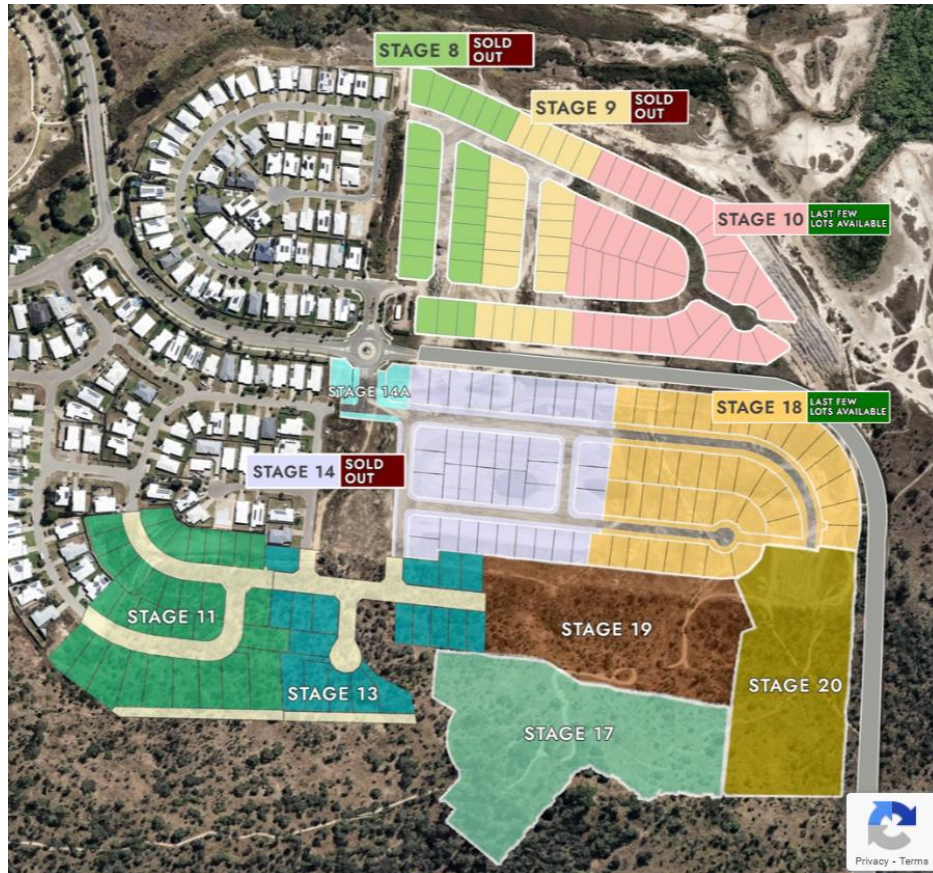
Source: ABS

Residential Estates

Bushland Beach Estate, Bushland Beach

This estate is currently selling Stages 14 and 18, with lots ranging between \$280,000-290,000. Future stages identify 46 lots in Stages 11 and 13, with 3 further identified stages. Stage 8 is sold and now under construction, with landscaping currently underway for remaining sold stages.

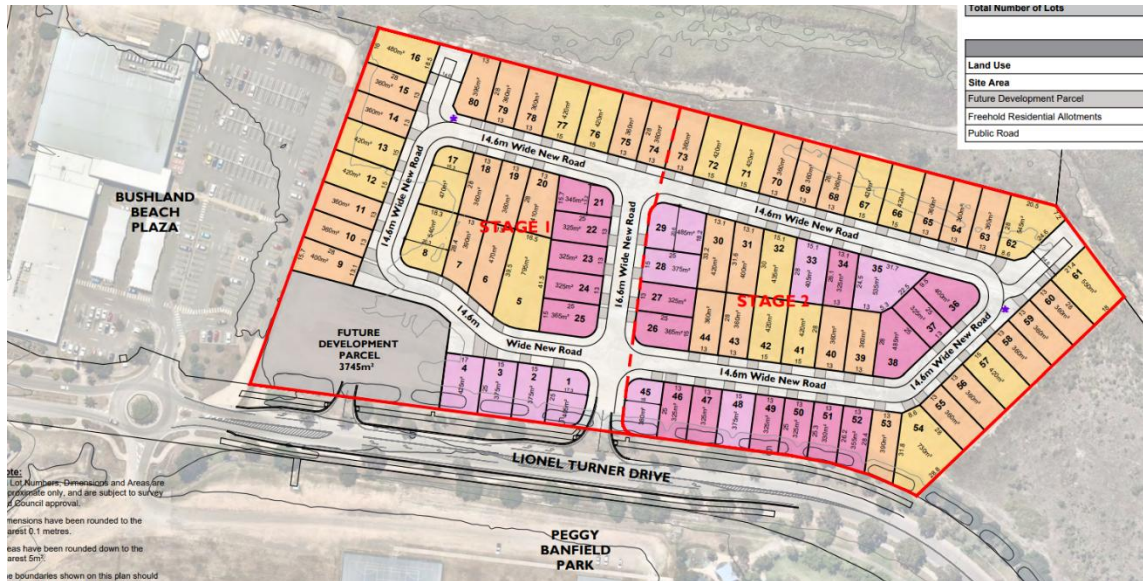
FIGURE 4.3: Full Estate Plans



10-32 Lionel Dr, Bushland Beach

There is currently an existing application to divide this site adjacent to the Bushland Beach Local Centre into 80 housing lots, with a corner site reserved for future development. The housing lots are relatively small for Townsville standards, ranging from 325-420sqm in size. Preliminary earthworks have begun on the site.

FIGURE 4.4: 10-32 Lionel Turner Dr Plans



Sanctum West Estate, Mount Low

A well-established residential estate, Sanctum is currently undergoing its latest land release on the western side of Svensson, selling vacant lots from \$270,000-305,000. Landscaping has begun on early stages of this large-scale development and a variety of lots are available, from traditional detached housing to larger “park residential” lots.

North Shore Blvd, Mount Low

This development received approval in late 2024 and consists of 193 housing lots, ranging in size from 480-770sqm. Development works do not appear to have begun.

North Beach

A residential community in Mount Low currently appearing to be paused, with land cleared but fenced off from being accessed.

Over 50s Community, Svensson Road Mount Low

In March of 2025, Townsville City Council approved the development of a relocatable home park along Svensson Rd which will deliver 350 small lot dwellings along with community facilities such as a gym, pool and community hall.

Projected Population

Urban Economics has projected the future growth of the Study Area community, guided by Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (QGSO) projections prepared at an SA2 level as well as the current status of various residential estates in the local area.

The local area population is forecasted to increase by ~5,650 by the year 2041, as land is gradually developed in the areas surrounding Mount Low and on infill sites within existing suburban areas. Household sizes are relatively high and are expected to continue this trend, reflecting the predominance of large, detached properties in the area that appeal to families with school age children.

TABLE 4.2: Population and Projected Household Growth

AREA	JUNE 2021 (ACT)	Δ P.A.	JUNE 2025 (EST)	Δ P.A.	JUNE 2026 (PROJ)	Δ P.A.	JUNE 2031 (PROJ)	Δ P.A.	JUNE 2036 (PROJ)	Δ P.A.	JUNE 2041 (PROJ)
Population	11,865	2.4%	13,038	1.9%	13,280	2.2%	14,800	2.3%	16,590	2.4%	18,690
Dwellings	4,064	60	4,304	80	4,384	110	4,934	130	5,584	150	6,334
PPH	2.92		3.03		3.03		3.00		2.97		2.95

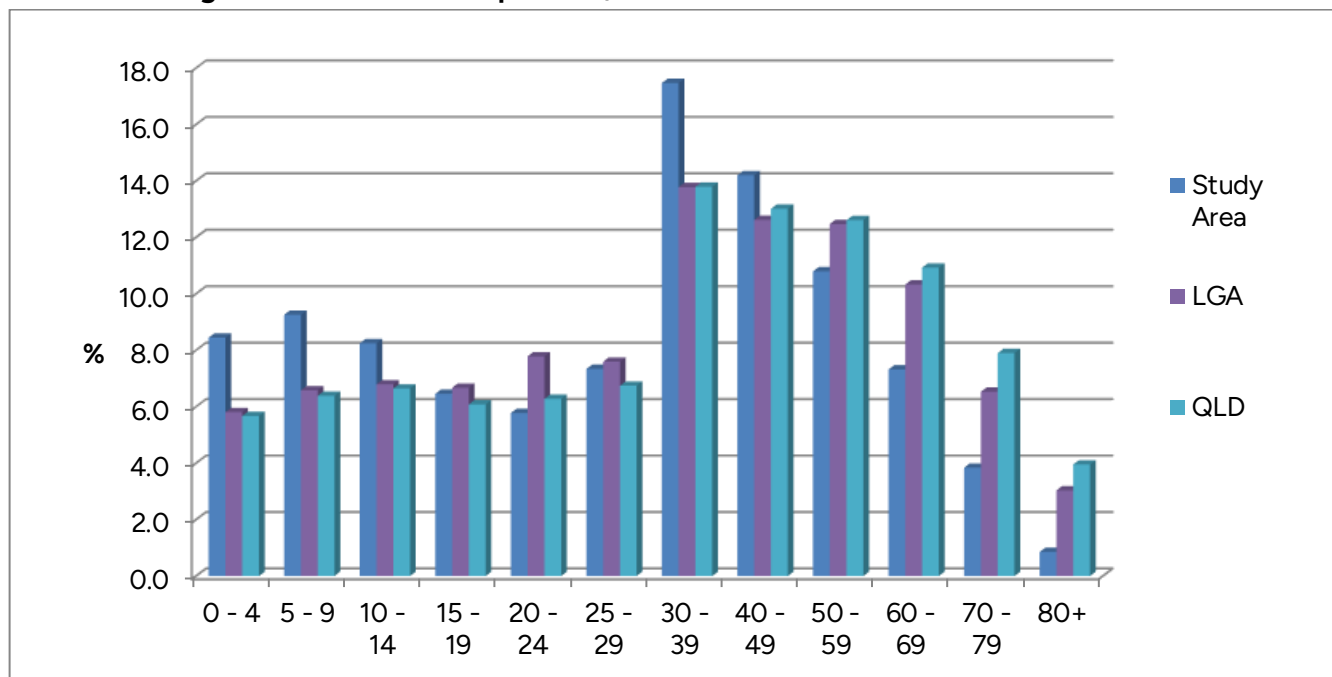
Source: ABS, QGSO

4.3 Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

Key Observations

- Based on the population age structure, the Study Area community is considerably younger than both the Townsville Local Government Area (LGA) and Queensland averages, with 26% of the population aged under 14 compared to 19% (Townsville). Higher proportions of the population aged in their 30s also indicates that the local area has a strong family demographic, reflecting the larger average household sizes.

FIGURE 4.5: Age Structure of the Population, 2021



- The workforce participation rate is much higher than in both Townsville and Queensland, with 78% of the labour force participating in the workforce in 2021. Participation rates for both males and females were both relatively high, which would suggest there are a significant number of dual-income family households in the area. These households would have a need for flexible, accessible medical services that fit in with their work schedules.
- More recent unemployment data figures from March 2025 show that unemployment in the Burdell – Mount Low SA2 is just 1.9%, which is reflected in the higher-than-average household income of \$127,740 – 25% higher than the Townsville average. Higher incomes generally translate into a higher rate of private health coverage and thereby propensity to access medical services.
- Just 0.5% of Study Area dwellings do not have access to a vehicle, reflecting the suburbs of Bushland Beach and Mount Low relative isolation from the remainder of Townsville and lack of public transport services. This also shows the self-contained nature of the suburbs and highlights the need for local services.
- The local housing stock is dominated by detached dwellings, which made up 98.3% of the total occupied stock in 2021, compared with 81% in Townsville and 75% across Queensland. This predominance of a single type of dwelling can make it difficult for downsizers and other non-family households to find appropriate housing within their community.
- 4.6% of the population have a need for assistance as of 2021, representing those with disabilities and unable to complete daily activities. This population would have a high demand for accessible medical care.

TABLE 4.3: Demographic Profile – Study Area, 2011, 2016 and 2021

Demographic	Study Area	LGA	Queensland
Age Profile (%)			
<i>0-14yrs</i>	25.9	19.2	18.7
<i>15-29yrs</i>	19.6	22.0	19.1
<i>30-59yrs</i>	42.5	38.9	39.4
<i>60+yrs</i>	12.0	19.9	22.8
Average Annual Household Income (\$)	127,740	102,980	104,470
Labour Force (%)			
<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	3.3	5.1	5.4
<i>Workforce Participation Rate</i>	78.0	68.9	65.8
Occupation Profile (%)			
<i>Managers/Administrators</i>	11.3	10.1	12.5
<i>Professionals</i>	15.8	19.7	21.4
<i>Technicians & Trade Workers</i>	17.7	14.6	13.7
<i>Community & Personal Service Workers</i>	14.5	16.1	12.3
<i>Clerical & Administrative Workers</i>	13.7	12.3	12.7
<i>Sales Workers</i>	8.6	8.6	8.7
<i>Machine Operators & Drivers</i>	8.4	7.5	6.8
<i>Labourers</i>	8.2	9.3	10.1
<i>Inadequately Described/Not Stated</i>	1.7	1.7	1.9
Industry Profile (%)			
<i>Agriculture, forestry & fishing</i>	0.2	0.7	2.6
<i>Mining</i>	5.0	2.8	2.3
<i>Manufacturing</i>	5.1	4.5	5.7
<i>Electricity, gas, water & waste services</i>	1.7	1.4	1.2
<i>Construction</i>	11.0	8.5	9.1
<i>Wholesale trade</i>	2.7	1.9	2.4
<i>Retail trade</i>	8.5	9.2	9.3
<i>Accommodation & food services</i>	5.9	7.4	7.2
<i>Transport, postal & warehousing</i>	4.6	4.3	4.7
<i>Information media & telecommunications</i>	0.7	0.8	1.0
<i>Financial & insurance services</i>	1.6	1.4	2.6
<i>Rental, hiring & real estate services</i>	1.2	1.4	1.8
<i>Professional, scientific & technical services</i>	3.9	4.5	6.7
<i>Administrative & support services</i>	2.6	2.7	3.4
<i>Public administration & safety</i>	12.4	12.6	6.2
<i>Education & training</i>	8.2	9.4	8.8
<i>Health care & social assistance</i>	15.6	17.5	15.4
<i>Arts & recreation services</i>	0.6	1.3	1.5
<i>Other services</i>	4.4	3.9	3.9
<i>Inadequately described/Not stated</i>	4.0	3.6	4.5
Highest Level of Education (%)			
<i>Post Graduate Degree</i>	2.0	3.5	4.7
<i>Graduate Diploma & Graduate Certificate</i>	2.3	2.0	2.2
<i>Bachelor Degree</i>	11.2	12.7	15.0
<i>Advanced Diploma</i>	9.3	8.2	9.4
<i>Certificate</i>	30.9	24.0	22.1
<i>Not Stated/Inadequately Described</i>	7.4	9.9	9.0
<i>Not Applicable</i>	36.8	39.8	37.5
Home Ownership (%)			
<i>Owned Outright</i>	18.2	24.7	29.1
<i>Mortgage</i>	51.0	35.7	34.4
<i>Rent</i>	30.3	36.6	33.1

<i>Other/Not Stated</i>	0.5	2.9	3.4
Structure of Dwellings (%)			
<i>Separate House</i>	98.3	81.1	74.8
<i>Semi-detached/Row/Terrace/Townhouse</i>	1.5	11.0	11.7
<i>Flat/Unit</i>	0.3	7.0	12.5
<i>Other/Not Stated</i>	0.0	0.9	1.0
Number of Vehicles Per Dwelling (%)			
<i>0</i>	0.5	5.3	5.7
<i>1</i>	21.4	34.4	35.2
<i>2</i>	50.5	39.4	37.5
<i>3</i>	17.5	13.0	12.8
<i>4+</i>	9.3	6.4	7.2
<i>Not Stated</i>	0.9	1.5	1.5
Relationship in Household (%)			
<i>Couple in Registered Marriage/De Facto Relationship</i>	49.4	44.5	46.1
<i>Lone Parent</i>	4.1	5.4	4.9
<i>Child Under 15yr</i>	26.5	19.8	19.0
<i>Dependent Student (15-24yr)</i>	4.9	4.4	4.7
<i>Non-dependent Child</i>	4.9	5.5	5.8
<i>Other in Family Household</i>	2.8	3.7	4.0
<i>Group Household Member</i>	2.0	4.0	3.8
<i>Lone Person</i>	4.0	10.6	9.8
<i>Visitor in Household (from within Australia)</i>	1.5	2.0	1.9
Religious Affiliation (%)			
<i>Buddhism</i>	0.4	0.8	1.4
<i>Christianity</i>	45.2	47.4	45.7
<i>Hinduism</i>	0.0	0.7	1.3
<i>Islam</i>	0.1	0.5	1.2
<i>Judaism</i>	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Other Religions</i>	0.3	0.6	1.0
<i>Secular Beliefs, Other Spiritual Beliefs and No Religious Affiliation</i>	47.3	40.4	41.2
<i>Religious affiliation not stated</i>	7.1	9.5	8.0

Source: ABS

4.4 Health Profile

As expected given its younger population, the Burdell – Mount Low SA2 has a lower proportion of the population suffering from long-term health conditions. The only long term health condition that had a higher incidence in the Burdell – Mount Low SA2 compared to Queensland was mental health, which affected 9.8% of the population.

TABLE 4.4: Long-Term Health Conditions, 2021

	Burdell – Mount Low	Queensland
Arthritis	6.1%	8.8%
Asthma	8.4%	8.5%
Cancer	1.8%	3.1%
Dementia	0.5%	0.7%
Diabetes	2.9%	4.5%
Heart Disease	2.4%	4.2%
Kidney Disease	0.6%	0.9%
Lung Condition	1.2%	2.1%
Mental Health	9.8%	9.6%
Stroke	0.5%	1.0%
Other	7.6%	8.4%
None	63.0%	58.3%
Not Stated	8.6%	8.9%

Source: ABS

According to Torrens University’s PHIDU dataset, 39.9% of the population in the Burdell/Mount Low/Deeragun/Jensen area had private health insurance in the year 2020-21, a comparable rate of coverage found across Queensland and slightly higher than the rate found across regional areas outside of Greater Brisbane.

4.5 Implications

The Bushland Beach and Mount Low communities are forecast for significant future growth in the coming decade, as a number of residential estates continue to develop and provide attractive housing options for local families as well as older residents with the approved addition of an Over-50s community. Indeed, the family demographic is prominent in Mount Low, driving demand in particular for healthcare services used by young children and pregnant mothers especially.

Townsville generally is identified as being a Distribution Priority Area for GPs, acknowledging the shortage of qualified healthcare workers and a clear need for additional practitioners. Forecast population growth and the concentration of young children within the Study Area generates an increasing demand for access to health care services including general practice medical services as well as an array of allied health and specialist health care services, with the Bushland Beach community relatively detached from a comprehensive provision of health support services to meet their day-to-day needs.

5.0 Demand Analysis

Medical

In estimating the demand for additional GPs in the Study Area, Urban Economics has utilised publicly available information to determine the level of demand for the additional facility on the subject site.

As previously outlined, the subject site is within a GP “Distribution Priority Area” which are those regions with a shortage of available medical practitioners, where new entrants are encouraged or directed to practice in order to help fill the shortage, particularly those doctors from overseas.

The Federal Health Department also publishes GP figures by state and territory. In Queensland, there were 8,919 primary care GPs located in Queensland, which translated to 6,178 full-time equivalent (FTE) GPs, indicating that many GPs work part-time or reduced hours.

In estimating the demand for GPs in the Study Area, Urban Economics has used GP Attendance data published by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW) for the Townsville SA3. Other assumptions used in this estimate are as follows:

- A full-time equivalent GP is defined by the Health Department as working 40 hours per week for 46 weeks per year.
- According to the RACGP, the average GP spends 20 minutes on a consultation, and spends 85% of their time on billable appointments, which represents a workload ~4,700 appointments per year. Actual attendances per FTE GP in QLD are ~5,745, indicating that many GPs are currently working more than a full-time workload to make up for shortages.

The TABLE 5.1 below estimates the total GP attendances for the Study Area based on the number of services demanded by age group. In total, Study Area attendances in 2025 are estimated at ~69,700, which would represent a demand for 14.8 FTE GPs. Assuming a similar ratio of registered GPs to full-time GPs, the 15 existing GPs in the Study Area would represent 10.4 FTE GPs and represents an existing gap of 4.4 FTE GPs.

TABLE 5.1: Projected GP Attendance, 2025

	Proportion	Population	Services/100	Est Services
0-24	38.2%	4,978	358	17,823
25-44	31.8%	4,146	485	20,144
45-64	22.0%	2,864	664	19,025
65+	8.1%	1,050	1,205	12,666
Total	100.0%	13,038		69,658
@ 4692 Attendances/FTEGP		GPs Demanded	14.8	

By 2031, population growth will result in a growth in GP attendances to 79,000 which translates into a demand for 16.9 FTE GPs, an additional 6.5 FTE practitioners compared to the current provision rate. This represents a conservative estimate as it does not account for an aging population.

In terms of the demand for pathologists, the addition of a GP clinic will naturally increase the number of referrals for key pathology services such as blood tests and urine samples. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) recently published in 2024 a workforce review, which outlined a general shortage of qualified pathologists in Australia, with Victoria and Queensland the states identified as having the strongest need for new workers.

According to the RCPA, the current provision rate of pathologists per 100,000 of population is 8.1, which at the Study Area population size would represent the provision of 1.1 FTE pathologists, not including all other accompanying staff. While there are already existing pathology services neither is operating in a full-time capacity, and the addition of a medical centre would inevitably increase the need for pathology services as the number of patients treated locally increases.

As outlined in Chapter 3, there is a very limited provision of allied health care services within the Study Area, and noting the following rates of provision in Queensland:

- o Diagnostic Imaging: 5.3/100,000
- o Dentists: 61/100,000
- o Physiotherapists: 96/100,000
- o Chiropractors: 14/100,000
- o Optometrists: 18.5/100,000
- o Psychologists: 135/100,000

For instance, the Study Area could support an additional 2 FTE dentists between 2025 and 2036 and 4 additional physiotherapists over this same period, excluding a current under rate of provision noting that there are some 6 physiotherapists currently operating in the area. The proposed medical centre with specialist and consulting rooms would support the opportunity for allied health professionals and specialists to better cater to the health care needs of the growing Bushland Beach community.

Café/Multiple Dwelling

There are currently limited café and dining options within the catchment area, with only the Hyve Café at Bushland Beach Plaza and the Bushland Beach Tavern offering sit-down dining services.

According to CommBank iQ data, which aggregates spending at an SA1 level in a wide range of different categories, residents in the Study Area spent \$13.6 million instore at Cafés and Restaurants, an average of \$1,055 per person. Assuming an average retail productivity rate of \$8,000 per sqm, this represents a demand for 1,695sqm of café and restaurant space, well above the current offering.

Similarly, the demand for multiple dwelling units is likely to be high, given the predominance of detached dwellings in the Study Area. The two dwellings would be convenient for some elderly or disabled residents, located close to medical services and within walking distance of shops.

6.0 Assessment of Need/Impacts

It is Urban Economics professional opinion that there is a need for the proposed medical centre, pathologist and accompanying food and drink outlet, with the Study Area community generating increasing demand for convenient access to health care services including general practice and allied health services, and that the proposed development will meet local needs for day-to-day services and facilities within a convenient and accessible location.

There is a need for the subject development for the following reasons:

- The Study Area population is currently ~13,000 and anticipated to increase to ~16,600 by 2036. With an increased population, the demand for basic medical services also increases, and the proposed development would contribute to meeting this growing local need.
- Study Area residents generate 69,000 annual GP appointments, forecast to grow to 79,000 by 2031. This generates the need for 15 full-time GPs, which is above the current rate of provision. The current estimated gap requires an additional 5 practitioners, rising to 7 by the year 2031
- There are no appropriate alternative sites or vacancies within centre zones in the Study Area, which would have the capacity to accommodate the proposed medical centre and the range of consulting suites and services proposed to cater to the growing community.
- The local community would benefit from the provision of additional medical services, reducing the need to travel outside the Study Area to access the health and medical care they need in a timely and convenient manner.
- The co-location of a medical centre, consulting rooms with the capacity to attract and support visiting professionals with on-site pathologist also consolidates healthcare uses and reduces the number of trips – especially beneficial for elderly patients.
- The proposed development would also support the health and wellbeing needs of those utilising the recreational and sporting facilities including members of the Thuringowa Devils Rugby League Club by providing a proximate and accessible centre and health care consulting rooms.
- There is a dearth of casual dining facilities in Bushland Beach, with the on-site food and drink outlet improving choice for residents and workers within the Bushland Beach precinct to access takeaway and casual dining. The proposed food and drink outlet would also function as a local meeting place and opportunity for Bushland Beach residents to socialise in a convenient and accessible location.

The proposed development is not expected to have a significant impact on the role of or undermine performance of centres within Bushland Beach, but would contribute to the local and day-to-day service role of the Bushland Beach Local Centre:

- While the proposed development will represent both a second medical centre and pathologist in close proximity to existing services at Bushland Beach Plaza, it is estimated that there is currently an undersupply of medical practitioners to the local population, and therefore the development will instead ease the existing patient load on existing facilities, particularly in light of the significant underlying growth compounding demand for additional health care services.
- Similarly, the addition of a new medical centre inevitably will generate significant referrals for an accompanying pathologist, and the proposed pathology use complements the medical centre by providing a convenient option for referred patients.
- The proposed development would consolidate health care services in a convenient and accessible location around the existing Local Centre, contributing to the role of the Local Centre in meeting the day-to-day service and health care needs of the Bushland Beach community.
- More particularly, the proposed development would not elevate the Local Centre to a higher level in the hierarchy nor undermine the role of Bushland Beach as a Local Centre, by consolidating services that residents expect to have access to close to home and within a location proximate to other activities that meet a localised or day-to-day need.
- The proposed development providing a limited number of uses and a total floorspace of 680sqm, is substantially smaller than the Bushland Beach Plaza and without a major anchor tenant such as Coles and the variety of convenience retailers, focused on a limited role in meeting localised health care needs.

In summary, the proposed medical centre, pathologist, café and multiple dwelling development would deliver much needed GP and pathology services to the local community, increase amenity by providing an additional casual dining option, as well as provide conveniently located housing. The community benefits are realised in the increased ease of seeing a doctor and getting pathology work done, increased ability for socialising at a local café and the convenience of these services close to an existing centre

There are no other sites or premises within the centre zone with the capacity to accommodate the proposed development and its mix of uses, whilst the proposed development would complement the surrounding mix of non-residential uses catering to localised and day-to-day needs, consolidate the role of the Local Centre and contribute to improved choice and accessibility for the Bushland Beach community.

It is recognised that there is another proposal for a health centre in Bushland Beach, also within the Low Density Residential zone. If approved, the nature of the development and its tenancy layout suggest a commercial development likely to incorporate a mix of small-scale allied health care professionals, which would complement and be complemented by the subject development in better supporting the health and wellbeing needs of the Bushland Beach community.

The proposed development is:

- Small in scale and contributes to the local and day-to-day needs of the Bushland Beach community
- Complements and reflects the nature of the surrounding land uses including childcare, car wash and service station as well as the Bushland Beach Plaza in catering to the localised needs of the catchment community in a convenient and accessible location
- Will not have a significant impact on the role, function and performance of the Bushland Beach Neighbourhood or Local Centre, but would consolidate the role of the Bushland Beach Local Centre
- Unable to be accommodated with the existing centres in the surrounding network