

Strategic Planning of Rural Darwin Research Report – August 2015

Between July and August 2015, McGregor Tan Research undertook market research in the Litchfield area to better understand the attitudes of residents. They conducted six focus groups and an eight minute telephone survey of 250 people.

The Litchfield rural area has attracted a number of applications for smaller lot sizes, causing concerns from some residents worried about the impact on their rural lifestyle.

This research was to understand:

- whether a majority or minority of rural residents are concerned about smaller lots affecting their rural lifestyles
- the types of facilities, services and amenities required for the rural areas
- lifestyle and housing choices that would be acceptable to most rural residents.

Here is a summary of the research.

Land use planning

Focus groups and phone surveys showed that there is a low awareness of the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015:

- 29% were familiar with the plan
- 20% had heard of it but did not know much about it
- 51% were not familiar with the plan
- 61% agree the area where they live has changed in the last 10 years
- 70% agree it is inevitable that more people will come to live in the area in the next 10 years
- 75% agree there needs to be stronger land use planning for the rural area.

Many people said that services and facilities lacking in their area -- such as parks, pools and social activities -- were provided elsewhere. They acknowledged that the need to travel was part of the cost of living in the rural area.

Many asked why there was a focus was on developing the rural areas beyond Palmerston, when there was so much land available within Darwin and other urban centres, as well as between Darwin and Palmerston. Some acknowledged Weddell as a place for urban development, and commented on the costs of it being established.

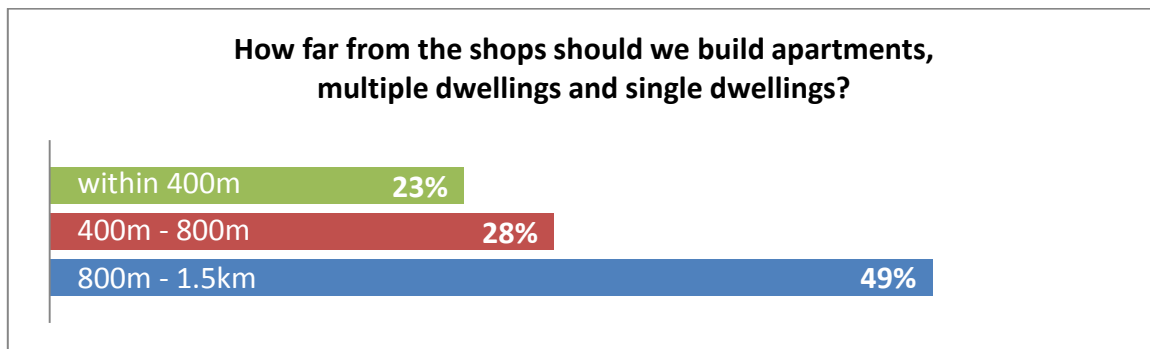
Rural activity centres

Focus groups indicated that apartments, multiple dwellings and single dwellings in rural activity centres could be a reasonable compromise provided the remainder of the rural area was protected. Participants suggested that the highest housing densities should be closest to the shops, decreasing with distance from the centre, with 1 acre blocks at the fringe as a buffer for larger lots.

Phone surveys found:

- 60% would support 1 acre lots as a buffer. 1 acre is the minimum lot size for the Rural Residential (RR) zone everywhere in the NT, except Litchfield where it is 2.5 acres

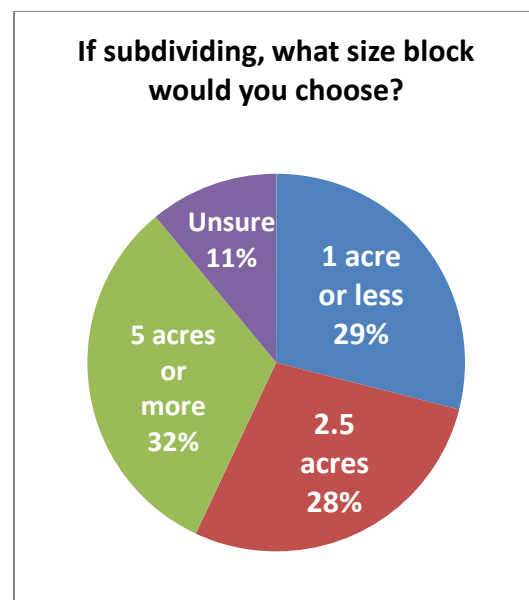
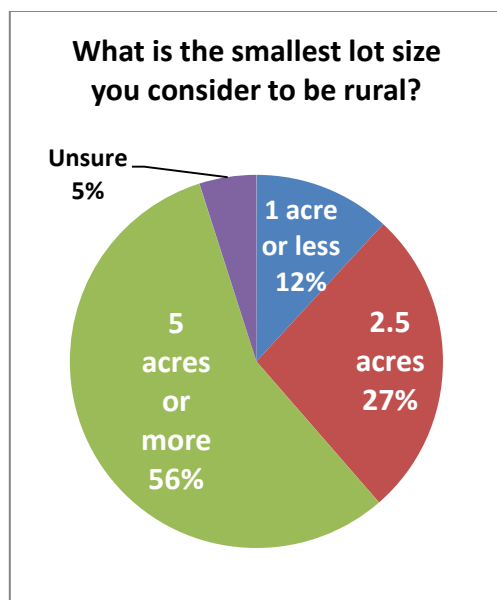
- 57% agree apartments, multiple dwellings and single dwellings are appropriate in Humpty Doo and Coolalinga
- 43% support or would consider apartments, multiple dwellings or single dwellings in Howard Springs and Berry Springs
- most visited centres are Coolalinga (48%), Humpty Doo (27%), Howard Springs (17%) and Berry Springs (5%)
- most important services are supermarkets, fruit/vegetable shops, public transport, medical services and schools



Rural lifestyle

People said they had made a conscious decision to move to the rural area, choosing a quiet and peaceful environment, with 'freedom' and plenty of space, including from neighbours.

While 31% said they might hope to subdivide and sell part of their land at some stage (such as for retirement, to help children or for inheritance reasons), there was little evidence that financial gain was their biggest motivator.



| Acre | m ² | Hectares (ha) |
|------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | 4000 | 0.4 |
| 2.5 | 10000 | 1 |
| 5 | 20000 | 2 |
| 20 | 80000 | 8 |