

THE creation of new jobs on the Tweed has been identified as the shire's biggest issue heading into a new year and a new decade.

An ageing population, coupled with a lack of jobs for the young is already placing major stress on the shire, according to the Tweed Economic Development Corporation (TEDC).

TEDC chief executive officer Tom Senti said the Tweed needed another 25,000 jobs by 2031, when the population was expected to be more than 118,760, with possibly 38 per cent over 65 years old.

"This is the biggest challenge facing the Tweed – it surpasses everything," Mr Senti said.

"2010 should be the beginning of a long-term strategy where the focus at all levels of government ... is on creating a climate and culture which encourages and facilitates the type of investment opportunities which generate and attract employment of the younger generation."

"This is instead of continuing to rely on residential development to drive what is ... a serviced-based economy, which will continue to come under increasing pressure to provide the types of services required to manage an increasing, higher than national average ageing demographic."

Alarming figures show the Tweed has just a 42 per cent job participation rate, and only 19,000 residents have full-time jobs within the shire.

Another 11,000 work outside the shire, bringing the number of people with full-time jobs on the Tweed to about 30,000 of close to 90,000 residents. And almost half of Tweed residents with jobs are on the minimum rate.

It is feared that as a "life-style choice" population-growth region, the Tweed's "demographic imbalance" will continue to get worse.

Tweed Shire Mayor Warren Polglase said a focus needed to be put on attracting employers to the Tweed.

"One of the largest challenges ahead for the Tweed is attempting to promote opportunities for people to get a job," Cr Polglase said.

He said the Tweed Heads CBD Master Plan and revitalisation of Jack Evans Boat Harbour would play a major role in attracting vitally needed major corporate investors to the region.

"It sets up the Tweed Heads CBD as the focal point of the shire, something that has been lacking for a long, long time," he said.

Cr Polglase said the councillors were keen to see a reduction in negativity and more positive contributions from the community.

In 2010 ...

- Tweed Shire's future water supply decision
- Tweed Heads CBD Master Plan completed
- Department of Planning decisions on enormous sub-divisions
- Repco Rally Australia review tabled in parliament
- Jack Evans Boat Harbour boardwalk hoped to be finished
- Construction on the Banora Point (Sexton Hill) Pacific Highway Upgrade
- New Tweed Local Environment Plan
- Money for new police station
- New water processing plant to come online

