

Tweed's main need

Council urged to review land zoning policy to ensure job growth

by Andrew MacDonald

A RADICAL rethink of council land zoning is needed to ensure the Tweed shire can create the jobs needed to prevent the region lagging further behind the rest of the nation.

That was the message from Tweed Economic Development Corporation CEO Tom Senti, pictured, at a public forum held by the Northern Rivers board of Regional Development Australia.

During the 90-minute gathering,



commissioned by his organisation.

According to the data, an additional 25,000 jobs are needed by 2031 to ensure a workplace participation rate of 50 per cent is attained.

which was aimed at identifying major issues faced by the rapidly growing region, Mr Senti presented research

The figure is above the current Tweed WPR of 42 per cent but still well below NSW (62 per cent) and Australian (65 per cent) averages.

Mr Senti attributed the low WPR to a combination of above average unemployment and a high proportion of elderly residents in the area.

Mr Senti said in order to achieve the necessary job growth, council needed to move away from simply rezoning land as residential to accommodate the growing population – which is expected to

double in size to 160,000 by 2031.

“There is a need to embrace planning approaches which encourage the broadening and diversification of local economies adopting a master-planned approach to encourage new investments across a broad base, including the accommodation of commercial office developments,” he said.

By doing so, the region had the potential to encourage larger companies to set up operations and bring jobs to the shire.

Mr Senti's suggestion will be

passed on to the NSW Minister for State and Regional Development Ian McDonald by the Regional Development Australia board during a meeting in March.

During yesterday's meeting at council chambers in Murwillumbah, issues surrounding climate change, ageing infrastructure, the indigenous population, poor public transport and telecommunication infrastructure were also discussed.

● Drop the Tweedy reputation, Page 14