



Rural land ownership change in Byron Shire LGA

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ARC Linkage Project LP170101125

What are the impacts of land ownership change for social
and economic transformations in rural Australia?

Partner: NSW Department of Primary Industries



Department of
Primary Industries

Theme	Research question
1. Agricultural commodities	How do the incidence and characteristics of land-ownership change differ across agricultural-commodity systems and how can this information help policy formulation that seeks to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of the agricultural economy?
2. Corporate agriculture and the 'family farm'	To what extent are declining numbers of farms explained via processes of consolidation, particularly associated with the acquisition of 'family farms' by larger agri-corporate entities?
3. Water sensitivity	How responsive are the incidence and characteristics of land-ownership change to the effects of water scarcity? Do more farms change hands during drought?
4. The effects of planning decisions	How do planning rules relating to the subdivision of rural land affect ownership and land use patterns, with particular reference to: (a) conversion of farm land to non-farm uses; (b) changes in average farm property size, and (c) any correlation between the construction of a dwelling on a property and its use for productive agricultural purposes?
5. The economic impacts of farm subdivision	How does subdivision of farms, if it replaces traditional agriculture with rural residential land-uses, impact on the economies of local towns? How is this related to potential land use conflicts arising from this process, especially in relation to nuisance complaints?

Construct a research-ready database of all land transactions in rural NSW 2004-2019

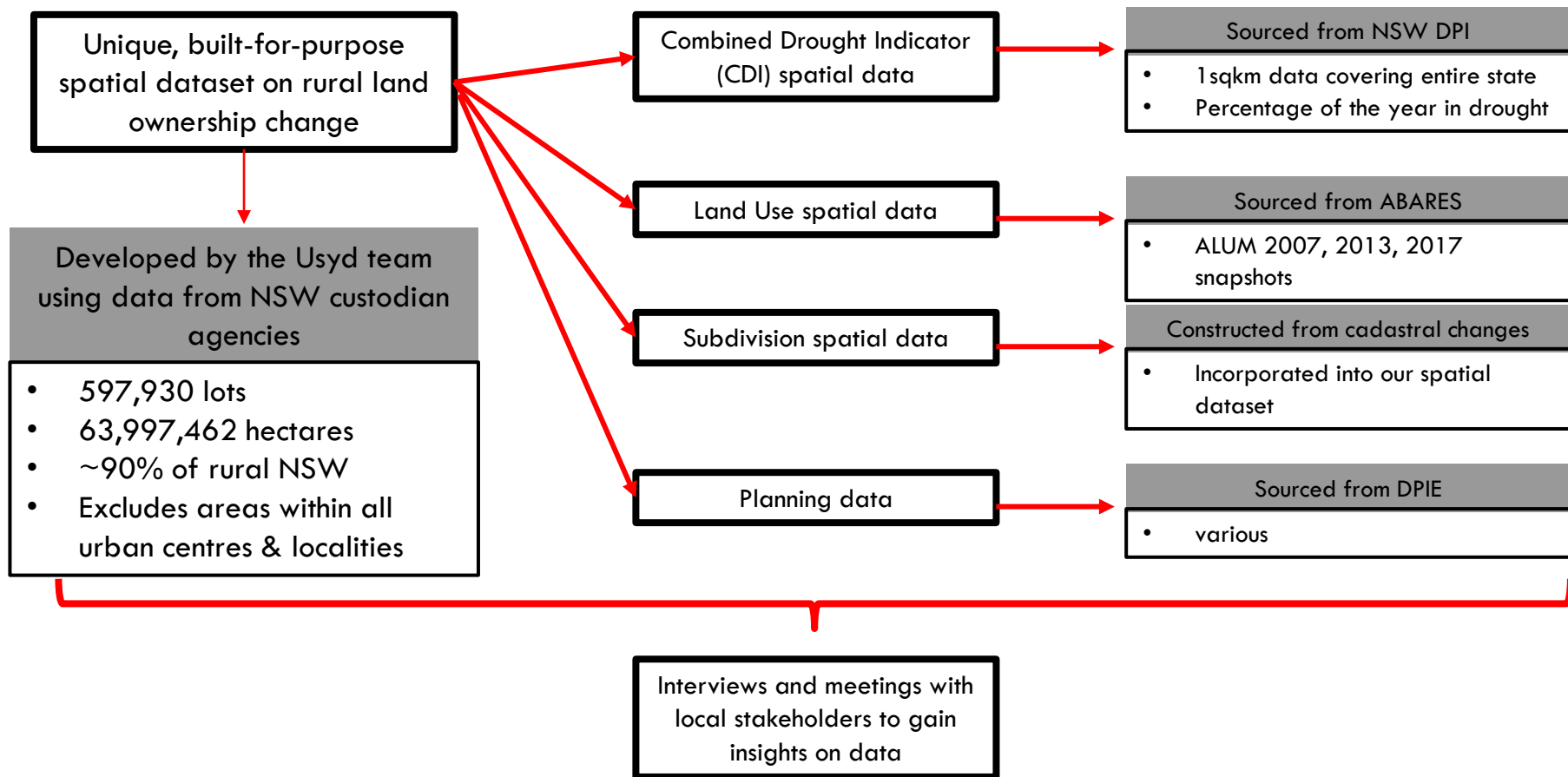
Land ownership and change data	Cadastral spatial data
NSW Land Registry Services	Spatial Services (Department of Finance, Services and Innovation)



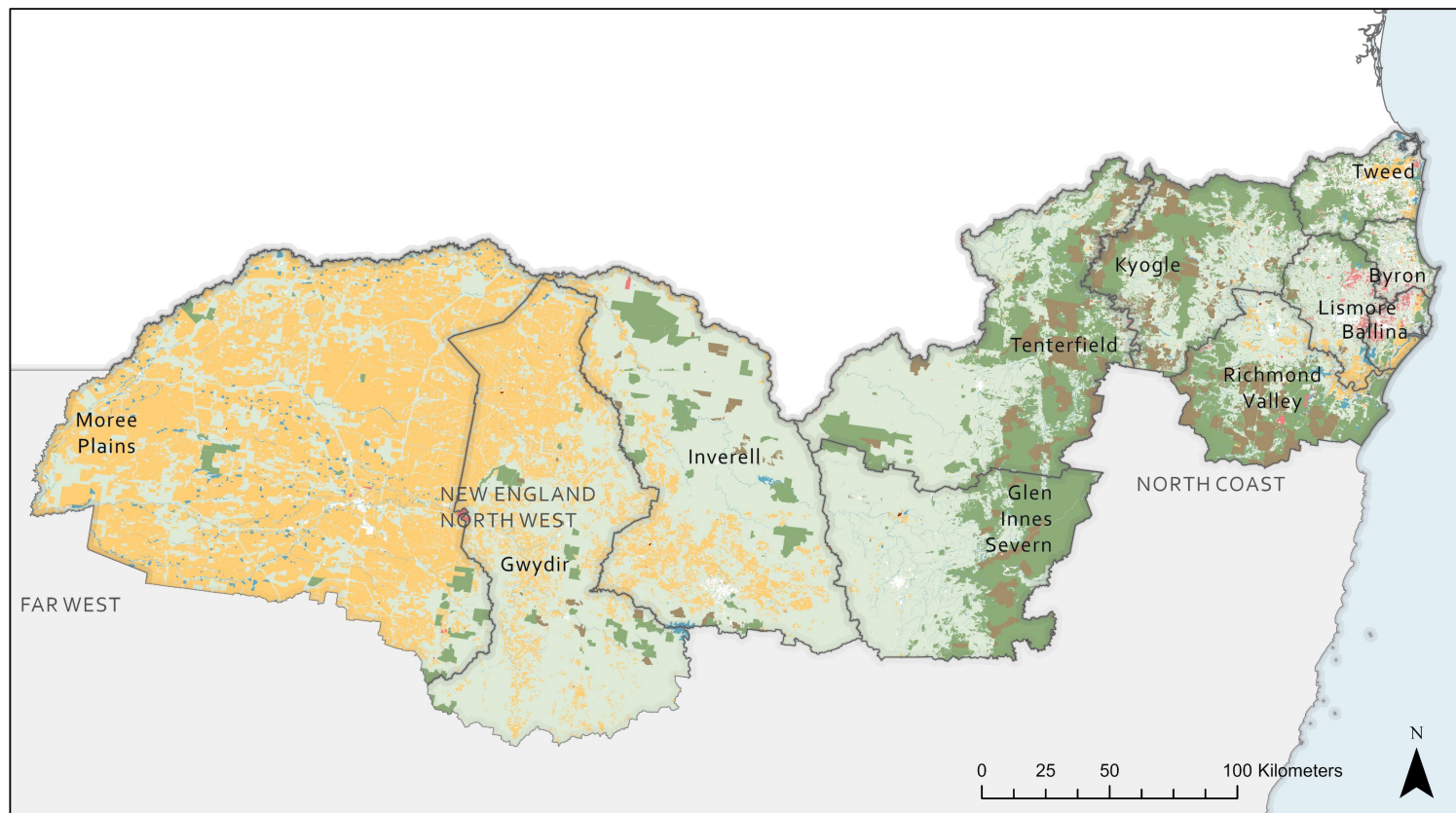
Unique, geo-coded dataset of land transactions in NSW 2004-19

Spatially and temporally analyse this with other datasets such as land use, zoning regulations, etc. to explore patterns and drivers of change.

Data



Northern NSW Transect



Northern NSW Transect Study Area
NSW Land Use 2017 (ALUM)

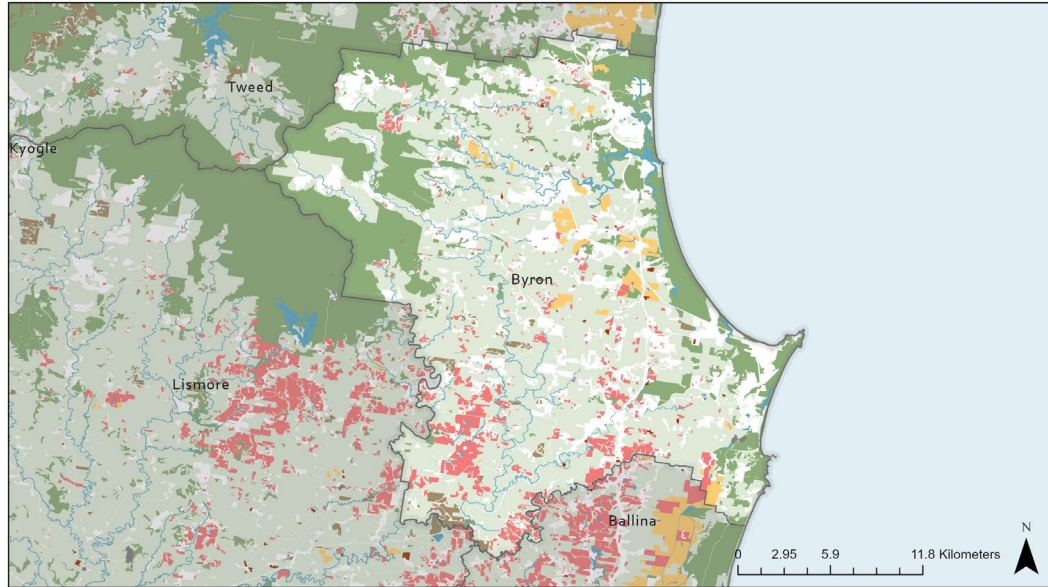
Cropping
Grazing
Horticulture

Intensive Animal Production
Plantations & Forestry
Conservation

Water
Mining
Local Government Area Boundary

2. Overview Byron Shire LGA

Agricultural land uses



Byron LGA

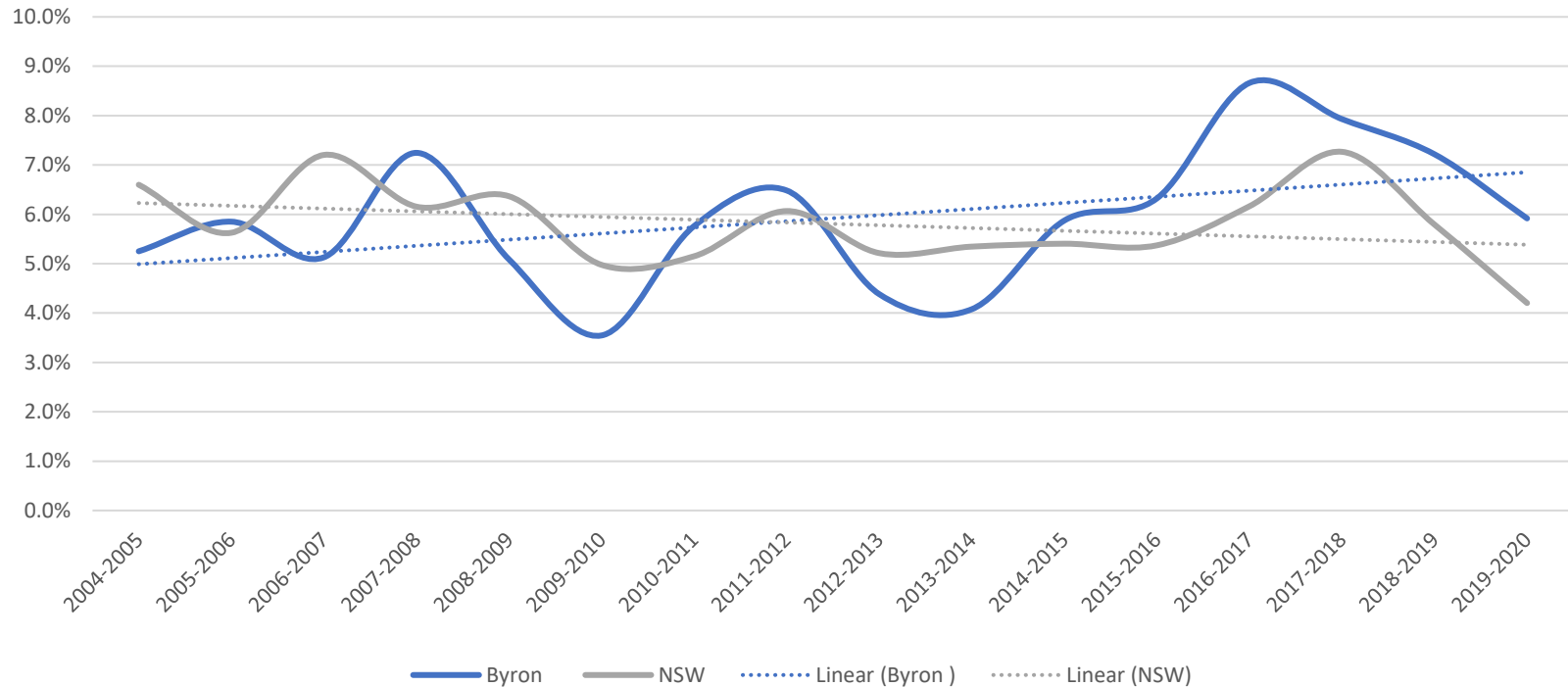
ALUM Map



Primary Agricultural Activity	% of Total Agricultural Land (Area)
Grazing	88%
Cropping	3%
Horticulture	9%

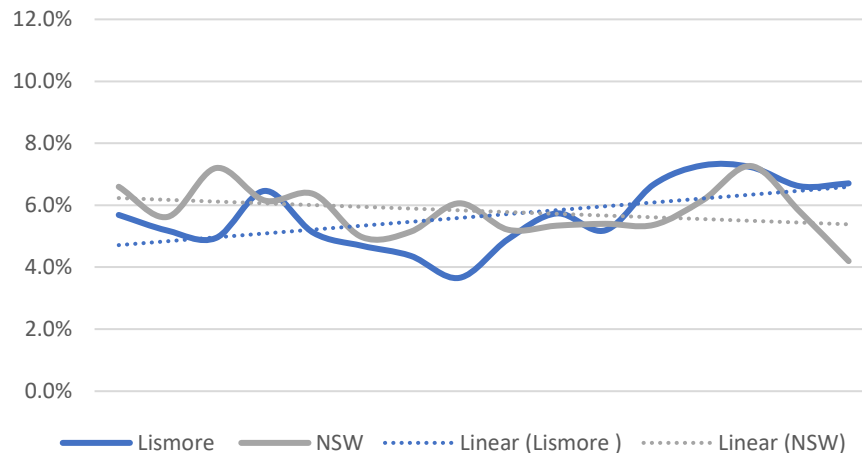
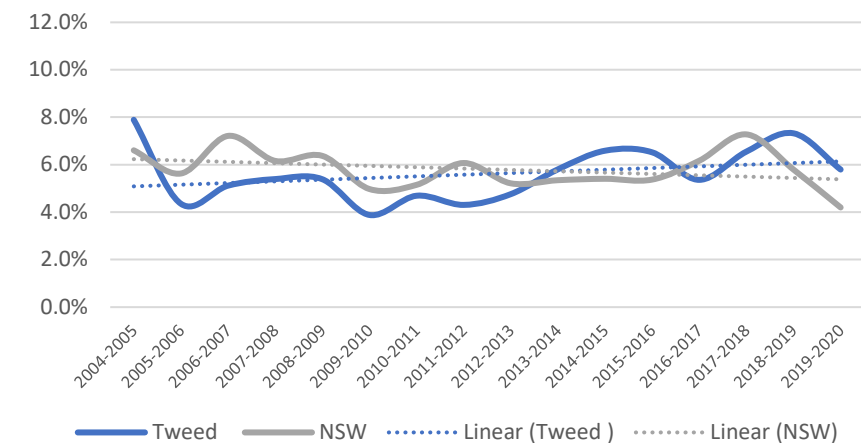
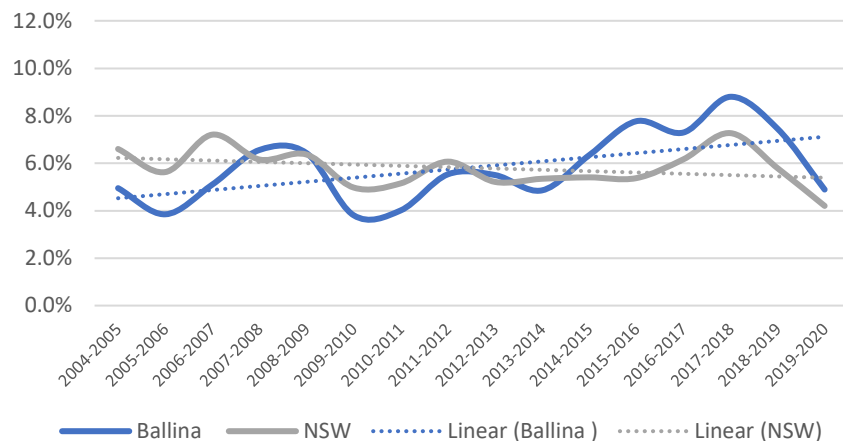
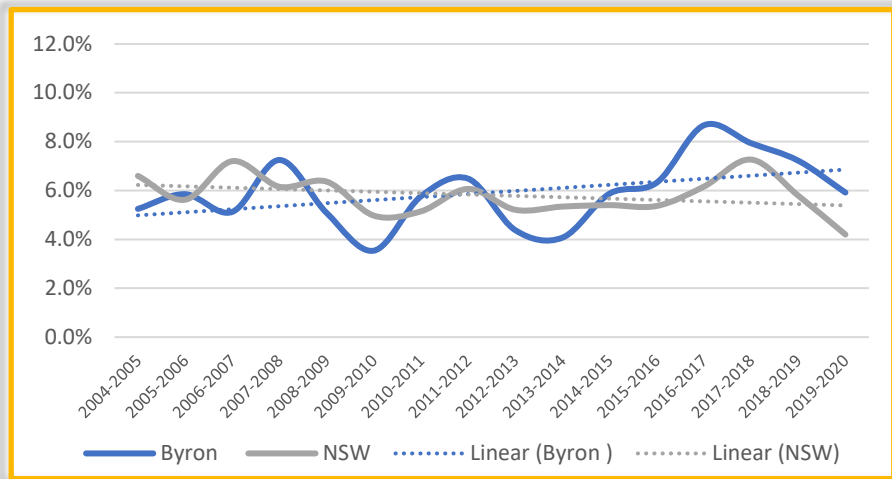
Source: 2017 Australian Land use and Management Classification Version 8

Incidence of land ownership change (% of total area) in Byron LGA

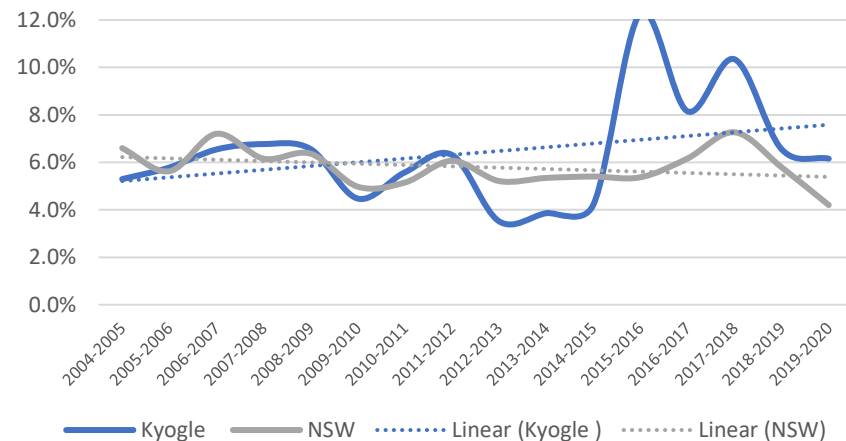
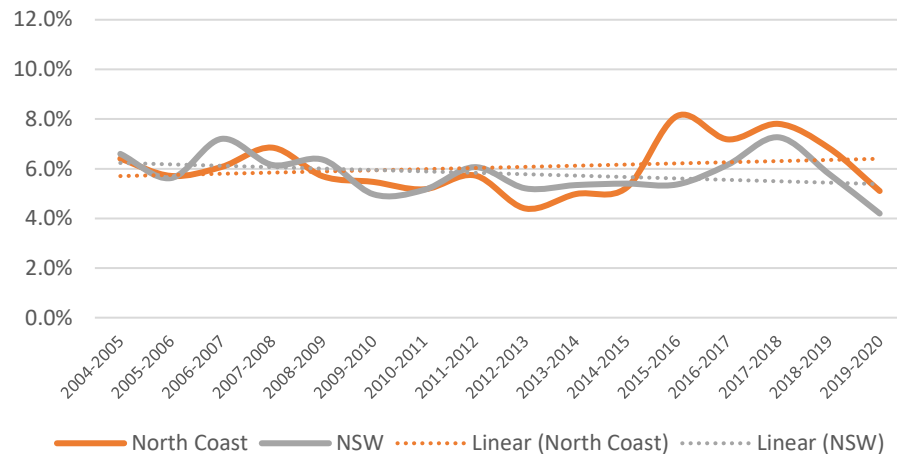
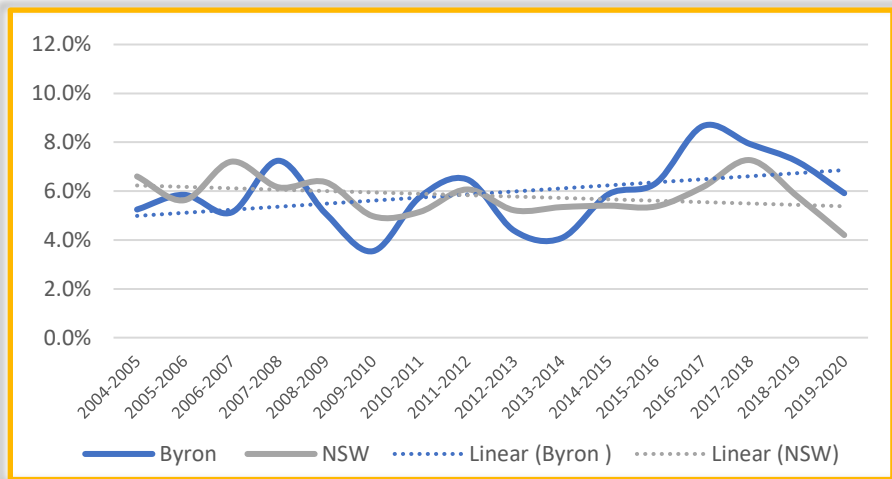


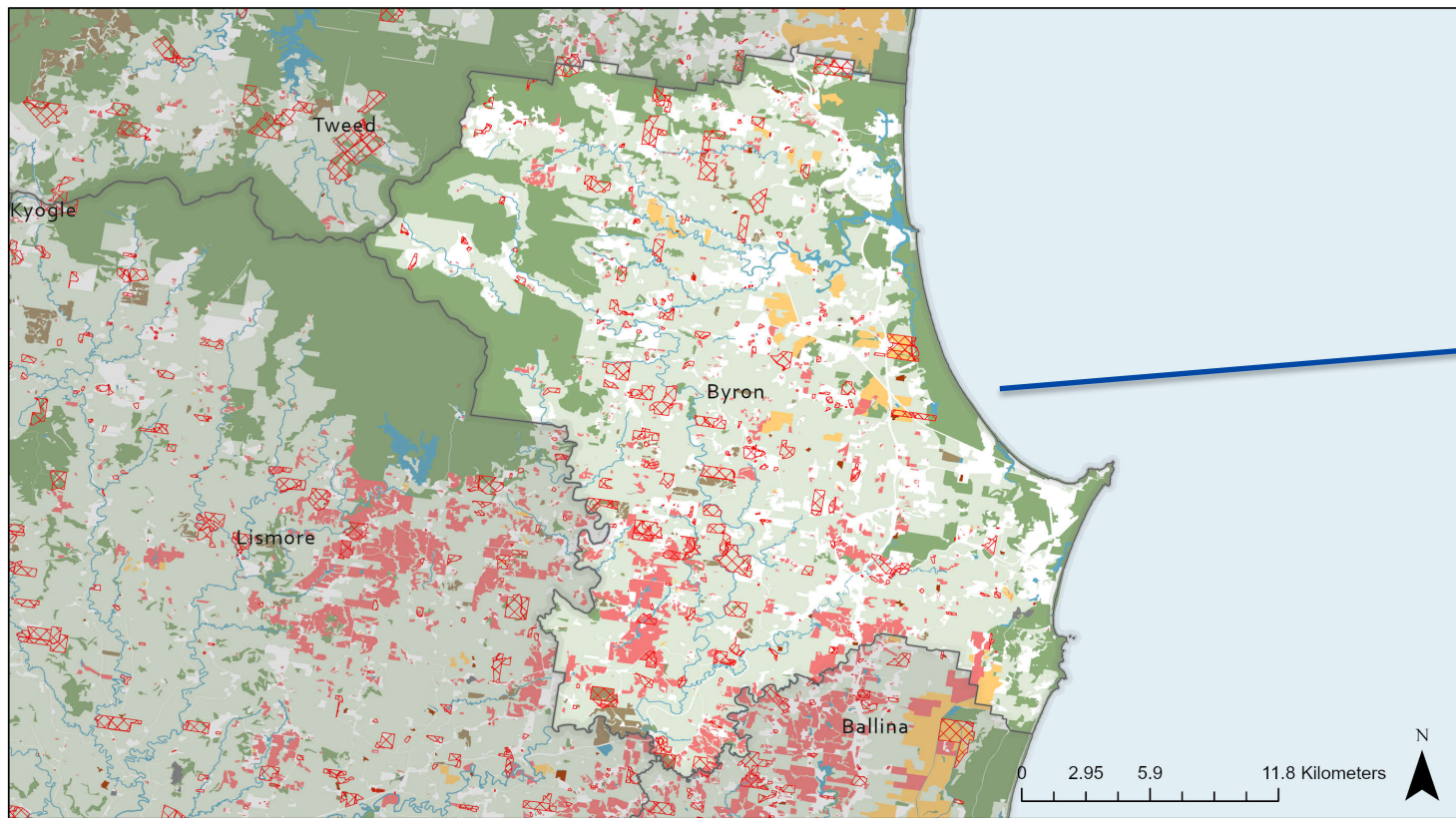
Rate of Change Average for LGA = 5.9%
(North Coast Region 6.1%; NSW 5.8%)

Incidence of land ownership change (% of total area)



Incidence of land ownership change (% of total area)



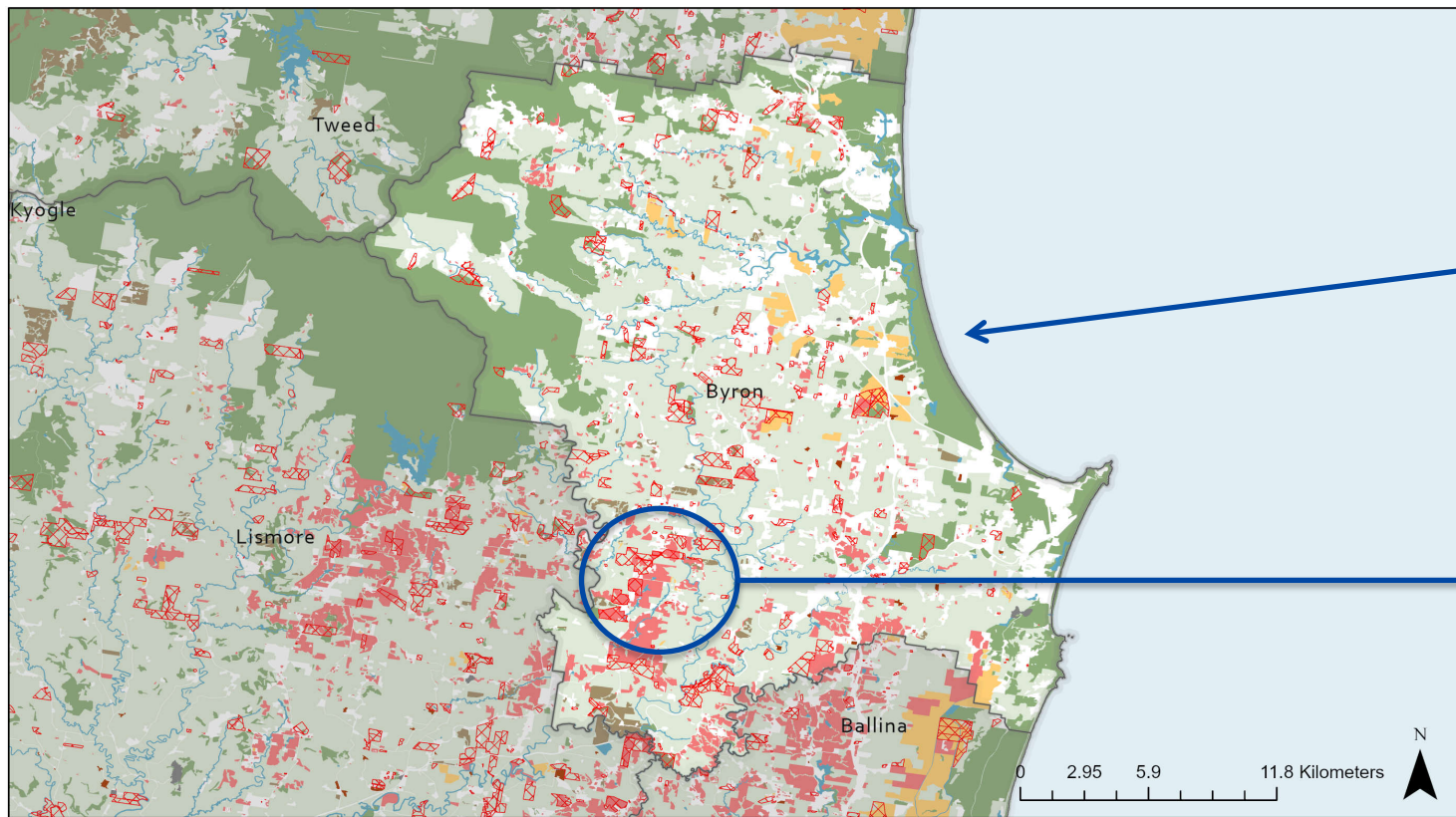


Byron LGA

2007



Multiple types of transactions:
- Mostly individual-to-individual



Multiple types of transactions:
- Mostly individual-to-individual

Cluster of corporate transactions associated with horticulture

Byron LGA

2016



Preliminary findings for Byron Shire LGA

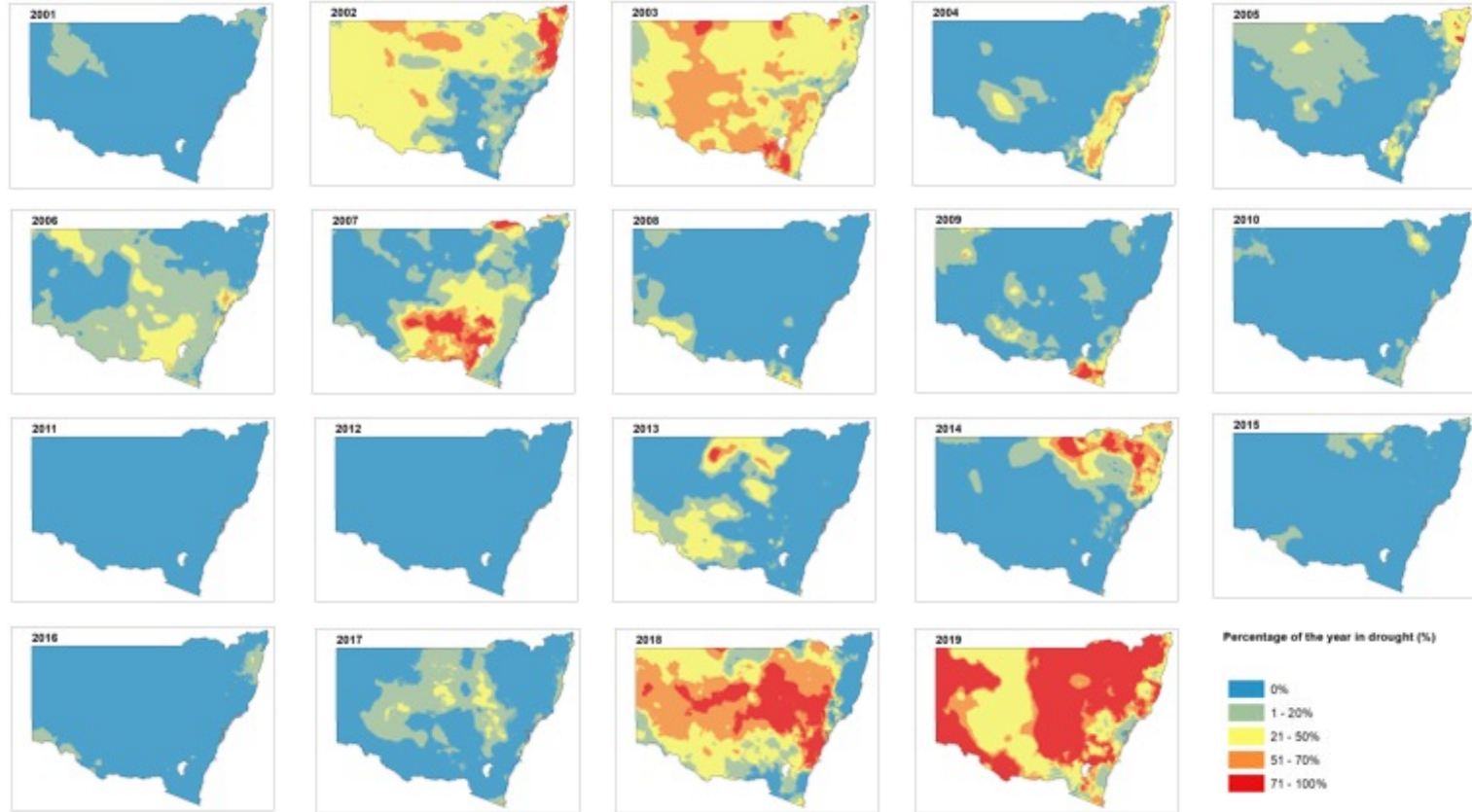
- Consistent churn with some volatility
- Sharp increase in rate of change 2016-2019.
- Compared to state trends, rate of change is increasingly steadily. State-wide we are seeing a recent decline.
- Compared to neighbouring LGAs:
 - Higher than Tweed,
 - Lower than Lismore, Ballina
 - Consistent with upward regional trends

3. Themes for discussion

- 1. Agricultural commodities and drought**
2. Corporatisation of agriculture and the 'family farm'
3. Planning and sub-divisions

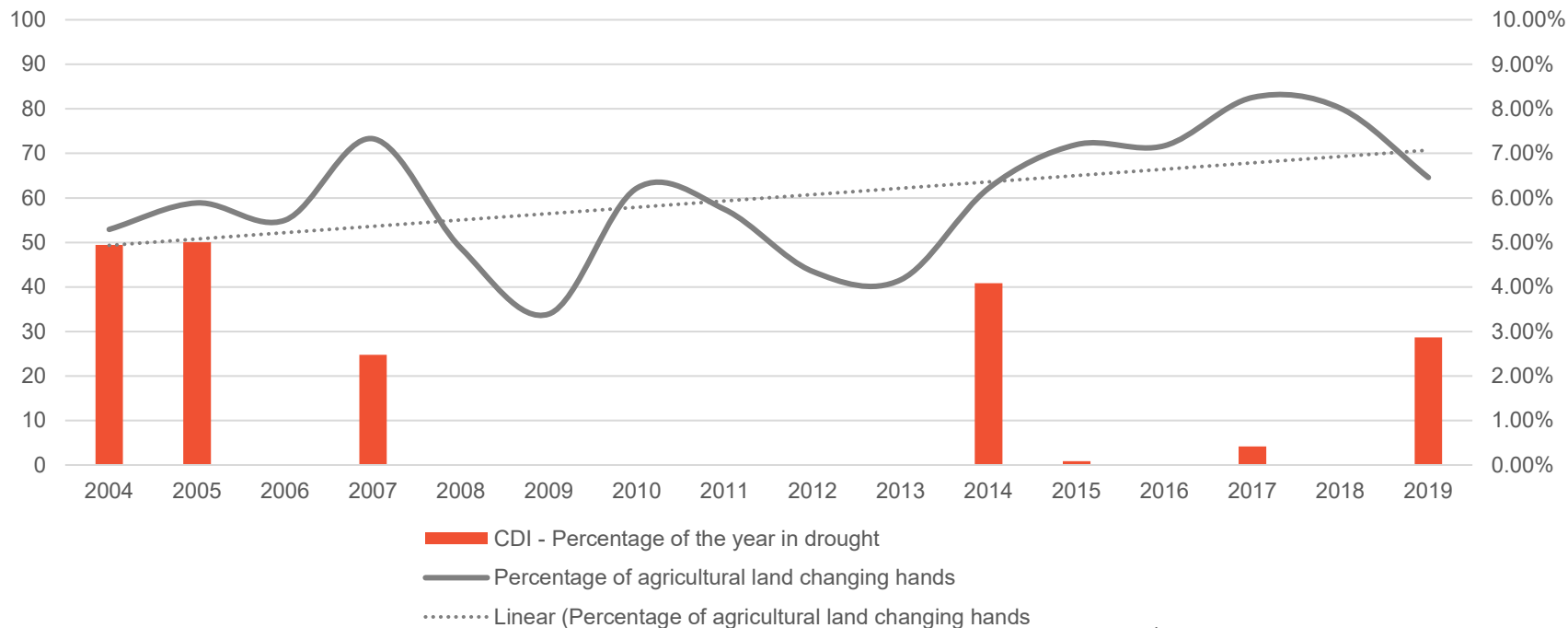
Percentage of the year in drought (2001-19)

NSW DPI Combined Drought Indicator



Drought and agricultural land changing hands

Byron



LGA Average (Agricultural land): 6.1% per year

Theme 1: Agricultural commodities and drought

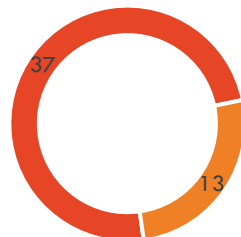
- **The rate of change of agricultural land in the LGA peaked in 2018 (8%) and troughed in 2009 & 2013 (4%)**
 - Moderate upward trend in rate of change for agricultural land, despite drops at the end of each drought.
 - How have the Millennium and 2018-2020 droughts impacted agricultural production in the LGA?
- **By land area, Grazing makes up over 88%, Cropping 3% and Horticulture 9% of the agricultural land in the LGA**
 - What are key themes in the way these sectors are changing?
 - What factors drive investment in these sectors?
 - What other sectors (new/emerging) are shaping sales of agricultural land?

3. Themes for discussion

1. Agricultural commodities and drought
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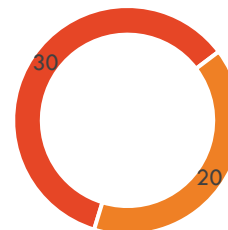
Largest 50 Private Landholders, 2004 & 2019

Breakdown of 2004 Largest 50 Landholders



■ Individual ■ Corporate

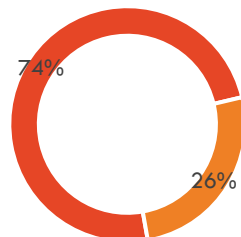
Breakdown of 2019 Largest 50 Landholders



■ Individual ■ Corporate

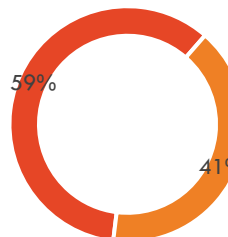
2019 Largest 50
landholders occupy
14% of study area in
Byron

Area % of 2004 Largest 50 Landholders



■ Individual ■ Corporate

Area % of 2019 Largest 50 Landholders



■ Individual ■ Corporate

2004 Largest 50
landholders occupy
14% of study area in
Byron

Profile of the current 15 largest private landholders in Byron

2019 Rank	2019 Area (ha)	Type of owner	Rank in 2004	2004 Area (ha)	Change in holding %	Comment
#1	197	Corporate	-	0	NEW	Developer
#2	186	Individual	Outside Top50	1	18505%	
#3	175	Individual	-	0	NEW	
#4	167	Corporate	-	0	NEW	Developer (Ex-farmland)
#5	165	Corporate	#5	165	0%	Company with strong ties to spiritual movement
#6	164	Individual	#6	164	0%	
#7	158	Individual	-	0	NEW	Founder of international wellness social enterprise
#8	145	Corporate	#10	145	0%	Multiple Occupancy Group
#9	141	Individual	-	0	NEW	
#10	132	Corporate	-	0	NEW	
#11	131	Individual	#13	131	0%	Banana grower
#12	127	Individual	#15	127	0%	
#13	123	Corporate	Outside Top50	16	669%	
#14	122	Individual	#18	122	0%	
#15	121	Individual	#19	121	0%	

Current (2019)

Individual: 9
Corporate: 6

Largest 15 landholders occupy 5.5% of study area within Byron. By area, 41% of this is corporate owned and 59% is individually owned.

Baseline (2004)

Individual: 10
Corporate: 5

Largest 15 landholders occupy 5.8% of study area within Byron. By area, 33% of this is corporate owned and 67% is individually owned.

Theme 2: Corporatisation and family farming

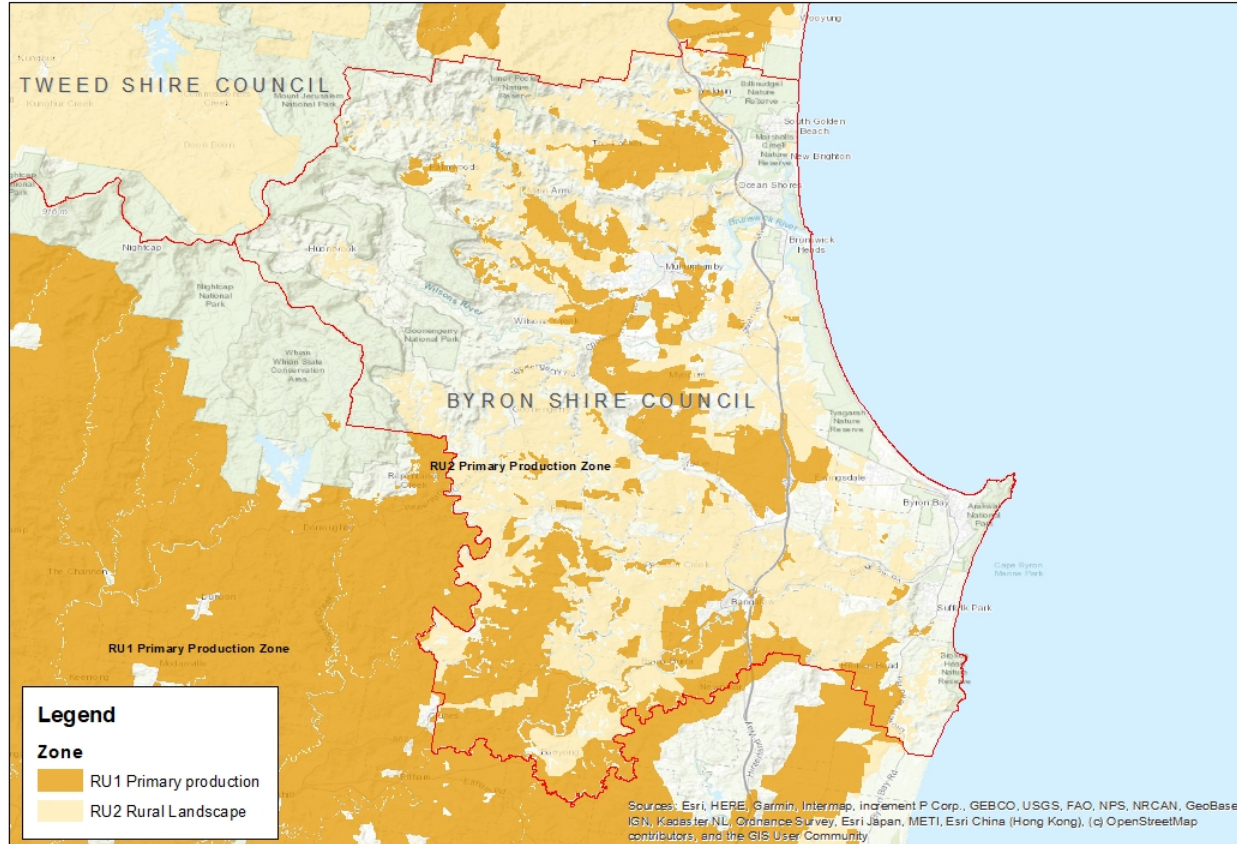
- Small increase in the % of large landholders with corporate names (not necessarily farms).
- Largest holders of land (by aggregation) are getting smaller. Moderate churn of large landholders since 2004 (compared to Tweed).
- No evidence of land aggregation, likely fragmentation.

- **In what ways is the composition of farm ownership changing in Byron Shire?**
 - Individual owners (family farming)
 - Corporate owners (of differing scales)
 - Local or non-local landowners
- **Are different types of farms more likely to be bought or sold?**
 - Ownership structure
 - Size
 - Sector
 - Commodity type

3. Themes for discussion

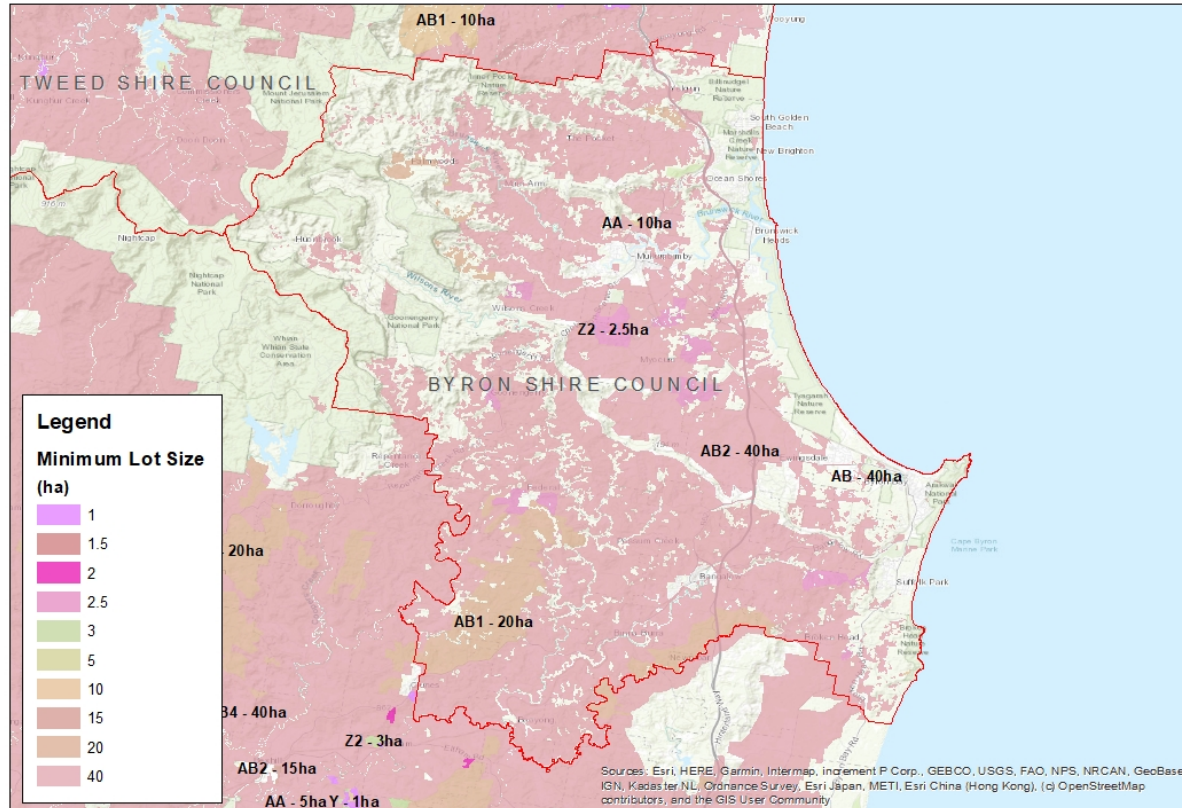
1. Agricultural commodities and drought
2. Corporatisation of agriculture and the 'family farm'
3. **Planning and sub-divisions**

Rural Zoning



- What are the major trends and challenges affecting the protection of agricultural land in the LGA?
- What are the major local planning control changes in the last 16 years affecting the protection of productive land?

Minimum Lot Size (MLS)



- What are the key challenges in achieving the intent of the minimum lot size rules in the LEP?
- Has cl 4.2 of the standard instrument LEP which provides flexibility for the subdivision of rural land achieved its purpose of protecting agricultural land?
- Do you have knowledge of new dwellings being build under this clause that have been sold and converted into solely residential use?

Byron Local Environmental Plan 2014

▀ Part 4 Principal development standards

- 4.1 Minimum subdivision lot size
 - 4.1A Minimum subdivision lot size for strata plan schemes in certain rural and residential zones
 - 4.1AA Minimum subdivision lot size for community title schemes
 - 4.1B Minimum subdivision lot size for multiple occupancy or rural community title developments
 - 4.1C Minimum subdivision lot size for boundary adjustments in certain rural and residential zones
 - 4.1D Exceptions to minimum subdivision lot sizes for certain split zones
 - 4.1E Minimum lot sizes for dual occupancies, manor houses, multi dwelling housing and residential flat buildings
 - 4.1F Exceptions to minimum lot sizes for certain rural subdivisions
- 4.2 Rural subdivision
 - 4.2A Erection of dwelling houses and dual occupancies on land in certain rural zones
 - 4.2B Maximum number of dwelling houses or dual occupancies on multiple occupancy or rural landsharing community developments
 - 4.2C Erection of rural workers' dwellings on land in Zones RU1 and RU2
 - 4.2D Erection of dual occupancies (detached) and secondary dwellings in Zones RU1 and RU2

- What has the impact of subdivision/new dwelling clauses been on:
 - a) the conversion of farmland to non-farm uses
 - b) changes in average farm property size
 - c) construction of new dwellings for non-agricultural purposes

Other questions

1. What are the major trends and planning policy challenges affecting the protection of agricultural land in the LGA, particularly in relation to the sale of rural land for residential and non-agricultural purposes?
2. How did the concessional lots policy affect the fragmentation of rural land in the LGA prior to 2008. Did this change after 2008 with the introduction of the Rural Lands SEPP? Have there been other any major local planning control changes in the last 16 years affecting the protection of productive land?
3. How do the existing LEP zoning and minimum lot size rules (especially flexible subdivision/new dwelling clauses in Part 4 of the LEP such as cl 4.2) affect the following:
 - the conversion of farmland to non-farm uses (especially residential uses)
 - changes in average farm property size
 - construction of new dwellings for non-agricultural purposes.
4. Do you have any data / insights into the construction of new dwellings in RU1 (primary production) land in the LGA that you could share with the Sydney University Research Team?

Thank you!



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