

Population on the rise

THE Burdekin's population is on the way up, with estimates it could increase to 19,310 in the next two decades.

Latest figures released from the Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research have been welcomed by mayor, Lyn McLaughlin who said the predictions will mean greater business and investment confidence for the area.

"We are delighted with the new figures and predictions — it's very positive news for the Burdekin," she said.

JEANETTE GARVEY reports Page 3

"Although it's only low in comparison to regional city centres like Townsville, it's wonderful for us," she said yesterday.

Cr McLaughlin said the statistical data and predictions did not come as too much of a surprise to her.

"I wasn't that shocked as we have seen the number of development and building applications coming through council and this has also been supported by the increases in residential properties in our shire," she said.

The preliminary estimated resident population of the Burdekin at June 30, 2009 was 18,431 people, an increase of 163 people or 0.9 per cent over the year.

This compares with a decrease of 28 people of 0.2 per cent the previous year.

In the year to June 2008, natural increase (births minus deaths) accounted for an increase of 87 people while assumed net migration resulted in a loss of 155 people.

Projections released in 2008 indicate that by 2016, the Burdekin's expected population will be between 17,430 and 18,460 people.

By 2031, this was expected to change to between 16,420 (the lowest range) and 19,310 (the highest range).

The statistics also reveal the Burdekin's population is ageing, with the median age projected to increase by 16 years — from a median age of 40 years in 2006 to a median age of 56 in 2031.

With the median age for Queensland in 2031 projected to be 41 years, the projected figures suggest an older population for the Burdekin.