Building a Capable E-culture:
Community Capacity Building in Non-metropolitan areas

- **Northern Rivers of NSW**
  - Lifestyle area
  - Mix of tourism, administrative, education and primary industries
  - Creative industries: musicians, artists, audio-visual industries
  - Retirement area
- Potentially area of high rates of content development

Creativity, Entrepreneurialism and Early Adoption of New Technologies

<table>
<tr><th>Creative People</th><th>Entrepreneurs</th><th>Early Adopters of New Technologies</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek:
Autonomy/Individuality
Political Openness
Diversity
Meritocracy
… Furthermore creativity flourishes best in an unique kind of social environment: one that is stable enough to allow continuity of effort, yet diverse and broad-minded enough to nourish creativity in all its subversive forms.

Florida (2003)</td>
<td>Prosper in environments that have:
Venture capital availability;
Presence of experienced entrepreneurs;
Technically skilled labour force;
Accessibility of suppliers;
Accessibility of customers and new markets;
Favourable government policies;
Proximity of universities;
Availability of land or facilities;
Accessibility to transportation;
Receptive population;
Availability of supporting services; and
Attractive living conditions.
Bruno and Tybjee (1982)</td>
<td>Are:
Young
Wealthy
Male
Professional
Educated
Operate in large social units (larger families, businesses, friends networks)
Consumers of large amounts of media
Adopt new technologies in technological clusters
Seekers of information
Analytical/not dogmatic
[t]he information-orientation of the new media is a factor in their adoption and use; individuals who wish to complement the[ir] heavy entertainment diet of the conventional media are attracted particularly to the new media

(Rogers 1986)</td>
</tr>
</table>

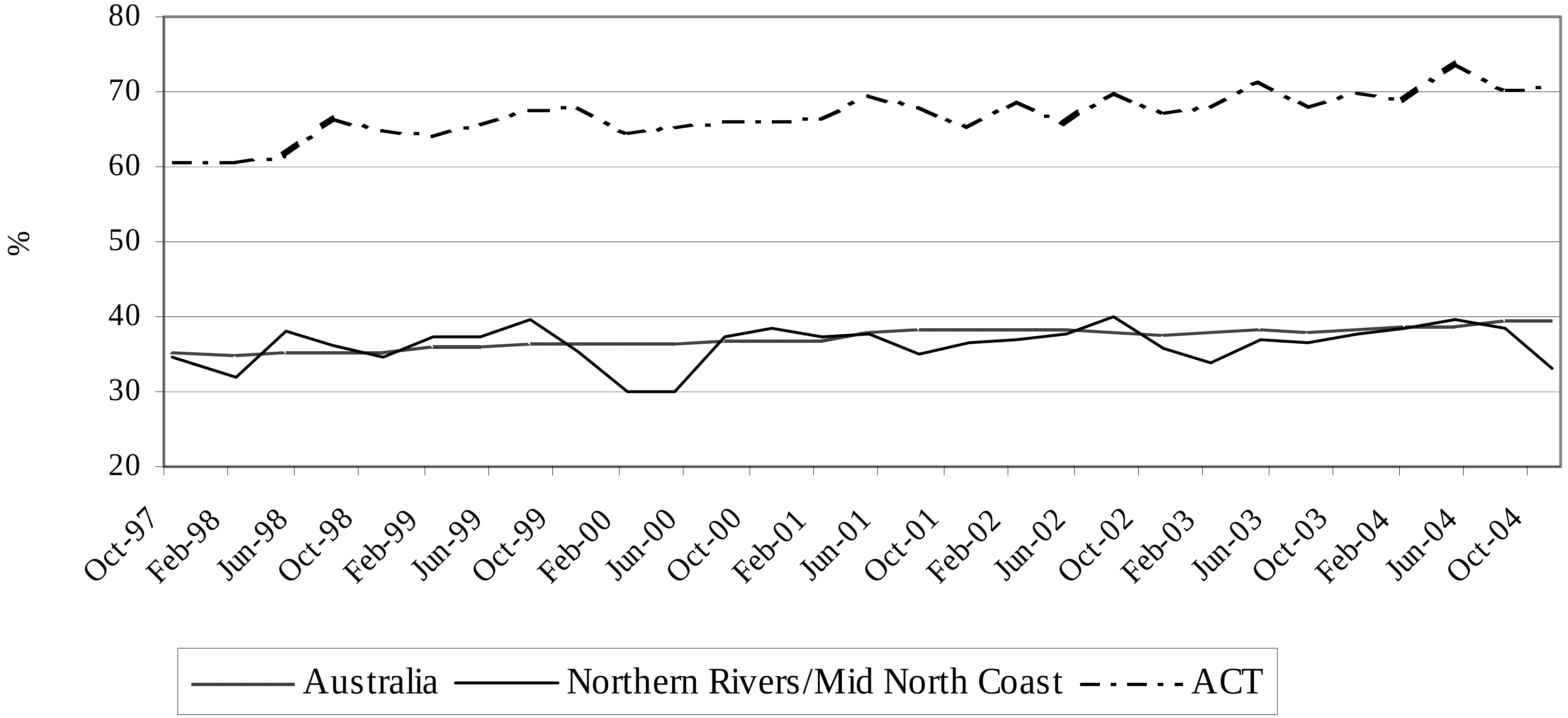
Characteristic	**Northern Rivers, NSW**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Size	9372.3 km^2	2368.0 km^2	7,703,580.5 km^2
Number of Residents	212,119	329,288	18,927,350
Population Density – Average no. people per square kilometre	22.6	140.0	2.5
Median Weekly Earnings	$200-299	$600-699	$400-499
Proportion of Residents who have completed Secondary School (Year 12)	28.4%	56.0%	37.7%
Proportion of Families with Dependent Children or Students	62.0%	66.8%	62.7%
Proportion of Residents over 65	17.9%	8.3%	12.6%
Proportion of Residents who are Australian Indigenous Peoples	1.5 %	1.1%	1.2%
Proportion of Residents born Overseas	11.0%	21.4%	21.6%
Proportion of Residents who use the Internet (from location)	31.0%	56.9%	38.9%
Proportion of Households with a computer	35.5%	56.7%	42.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2001 Basic Community Profiles.

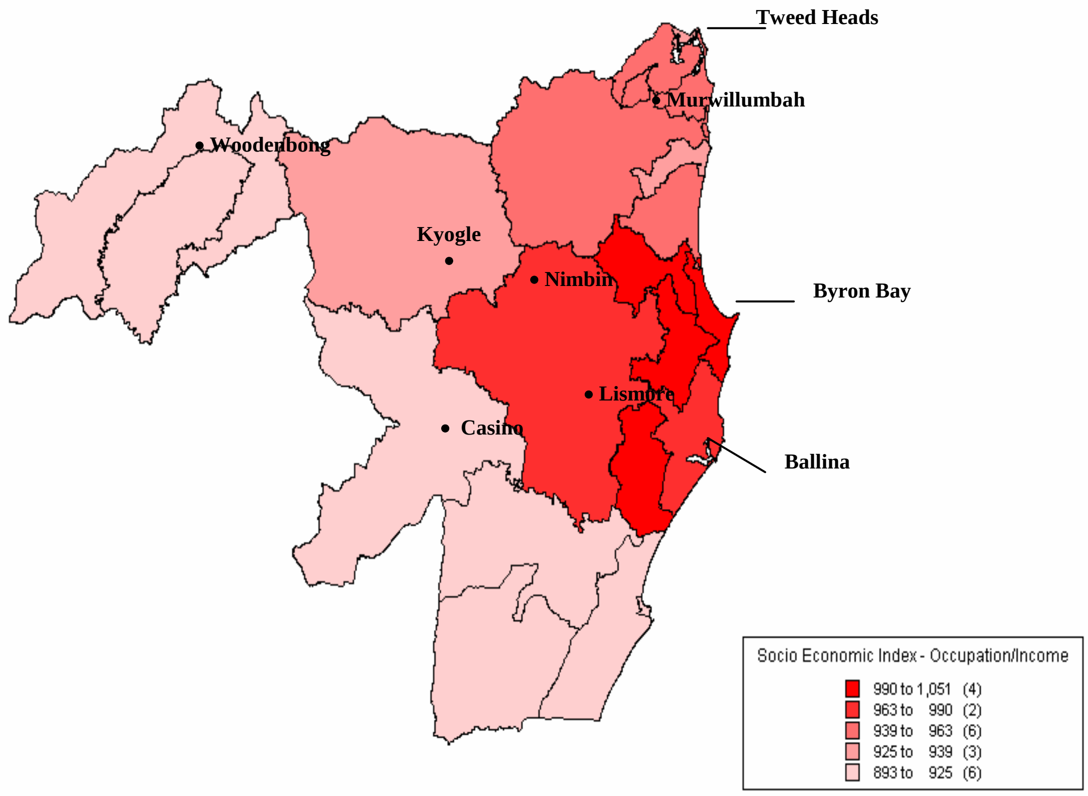
Richmond-Tweed: Percentage of Workforce by Employment Sector

Year	**Primary** (Farms/Forestry/Fisheries)	**Secondary** (Factory work/Manufacturing)	**Tertiary** (Services – Health/Education/Tourism)
1933	46.7	7.5	40.3
1947	43.8	10.7	39.8
1954	38.9	12.3	48.7
1961	34.5	12.5	53.0
1986	12.8	9.6	74.4
1991	9.7	9.7	72.2

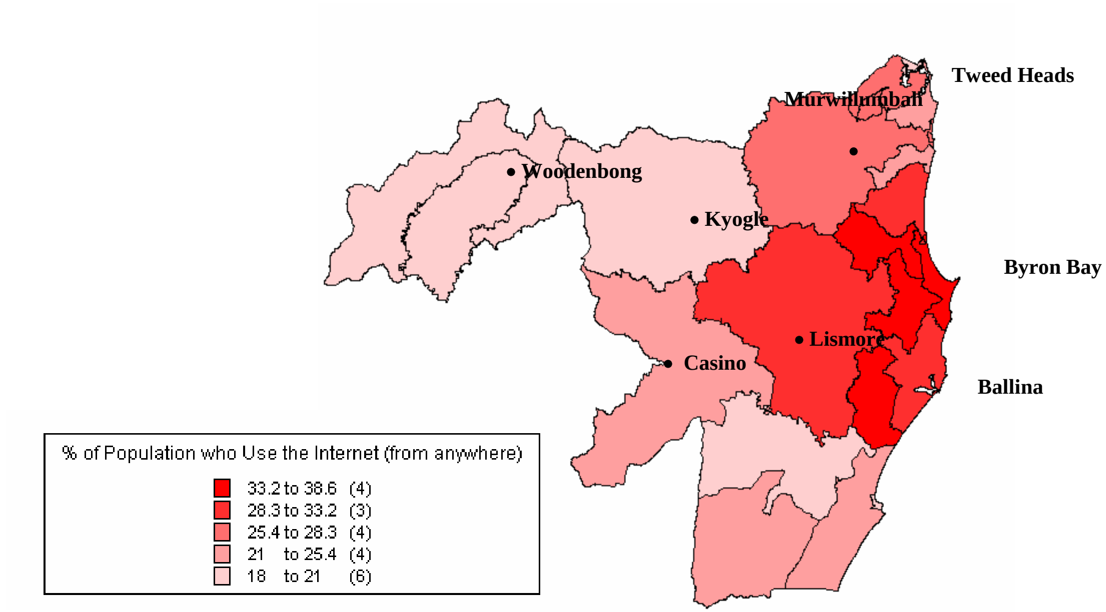
Source: Leo, A. (1998). *Submission to the Senate Inquiry on Jobs for the Regions: A report on the inquiry into regional employment and unemployment*. Canberra: Parliament of Australia: Senate.



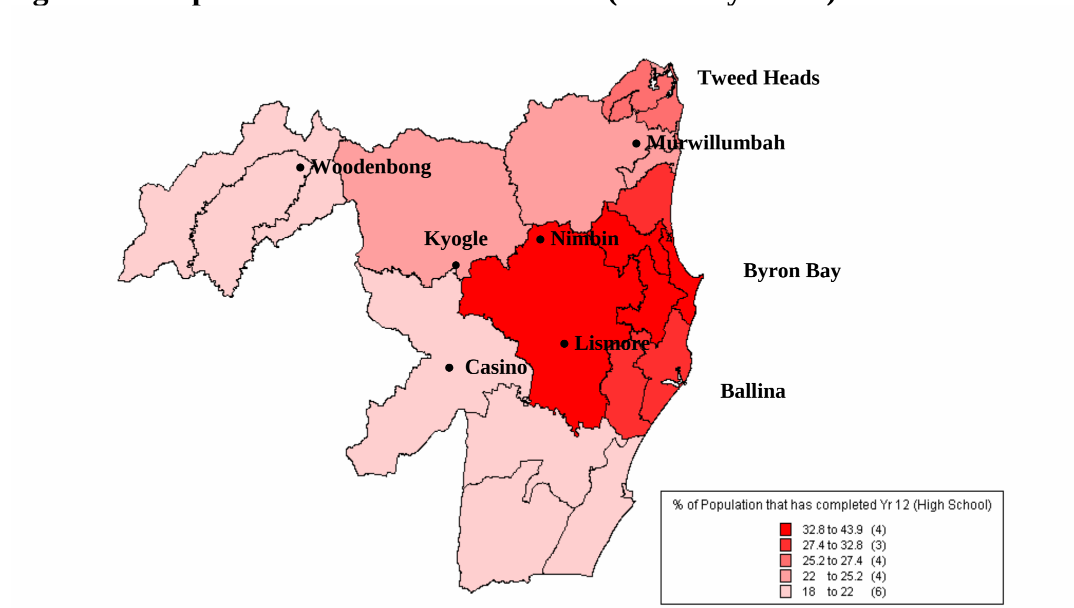
Knowledge-based Workers as a Percentage of Workforce 1997 - 2004
Source: ABS Labour Force Australia. Cat No. 6291.0.55.001



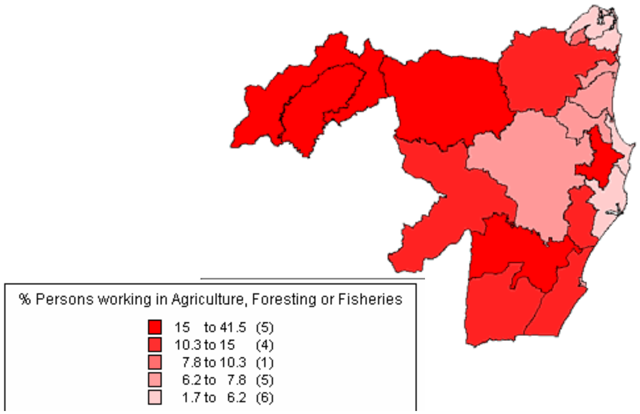
Occupation/Income Socio Economic Index (ABS)



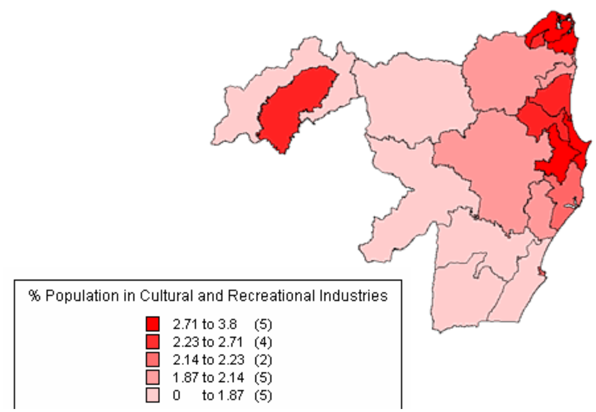
Percentage of the Population who Use the Internet (from anywhere)



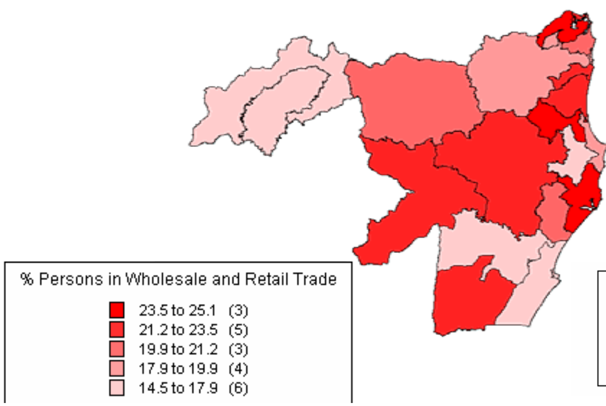
Proportion of Population that has completed Secondary School (Year 12)



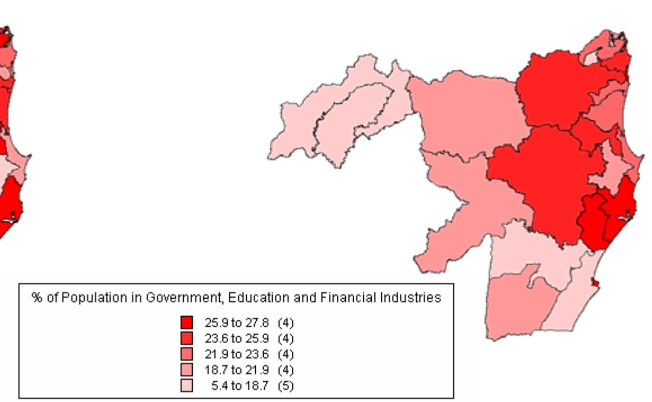
% Population in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing



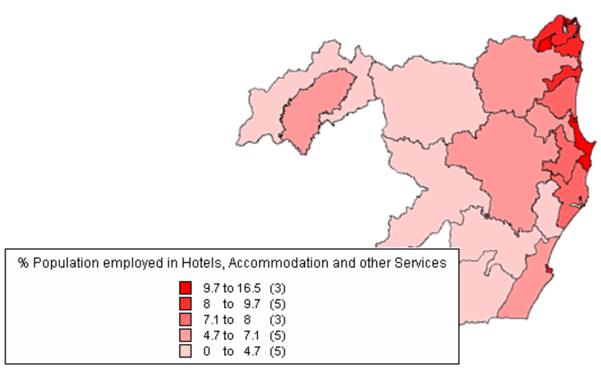
% Population in Cultural and Recreational Industries



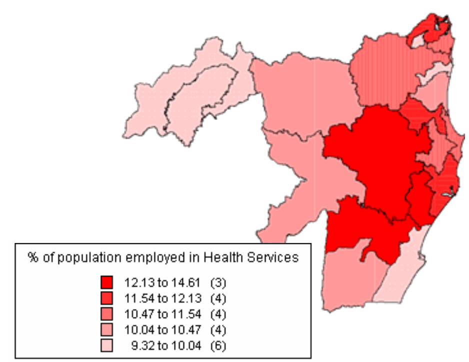
% Population in Wholesale and Retail Trade



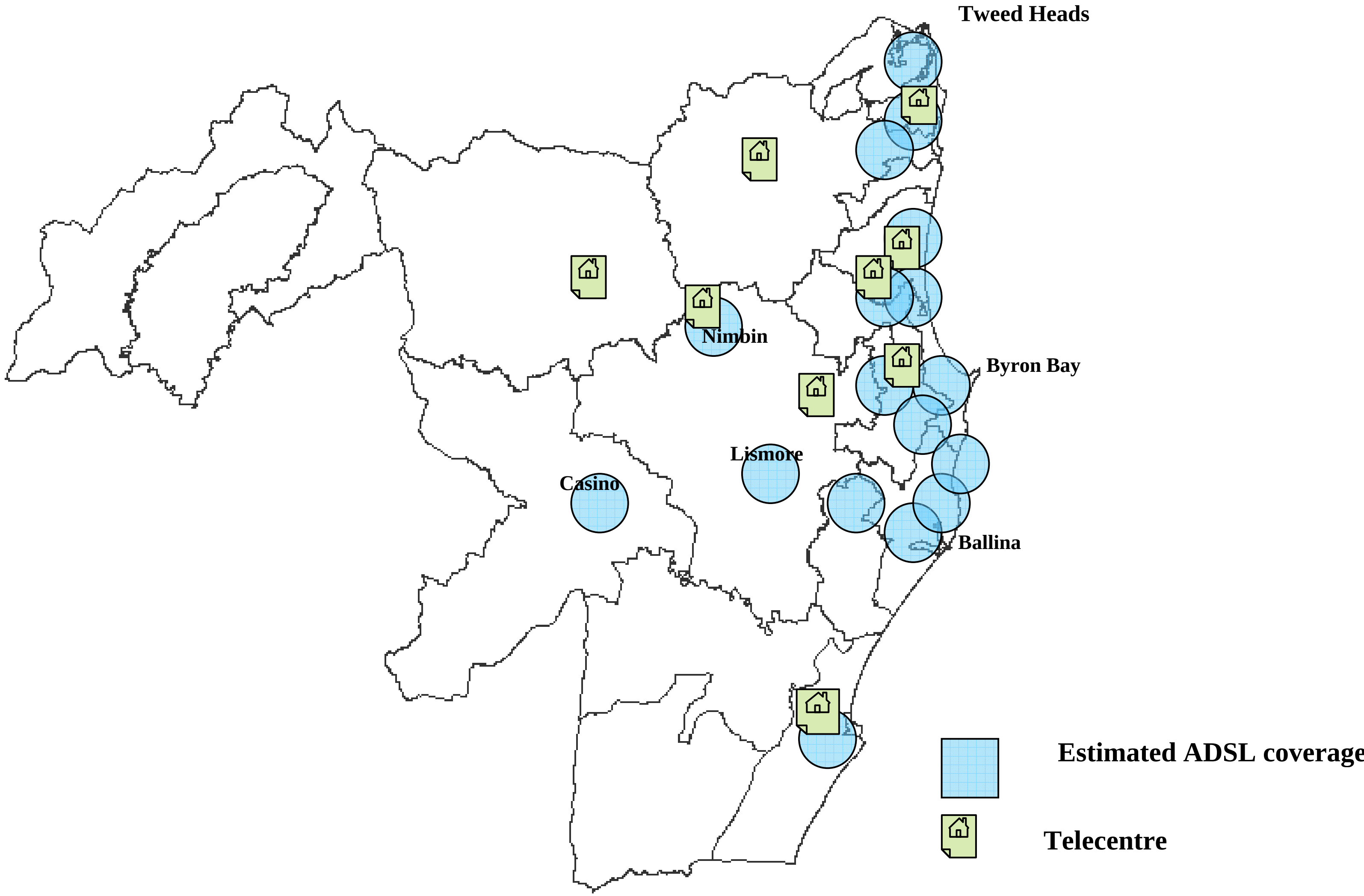
% Population in Government, Education and Financial Industries



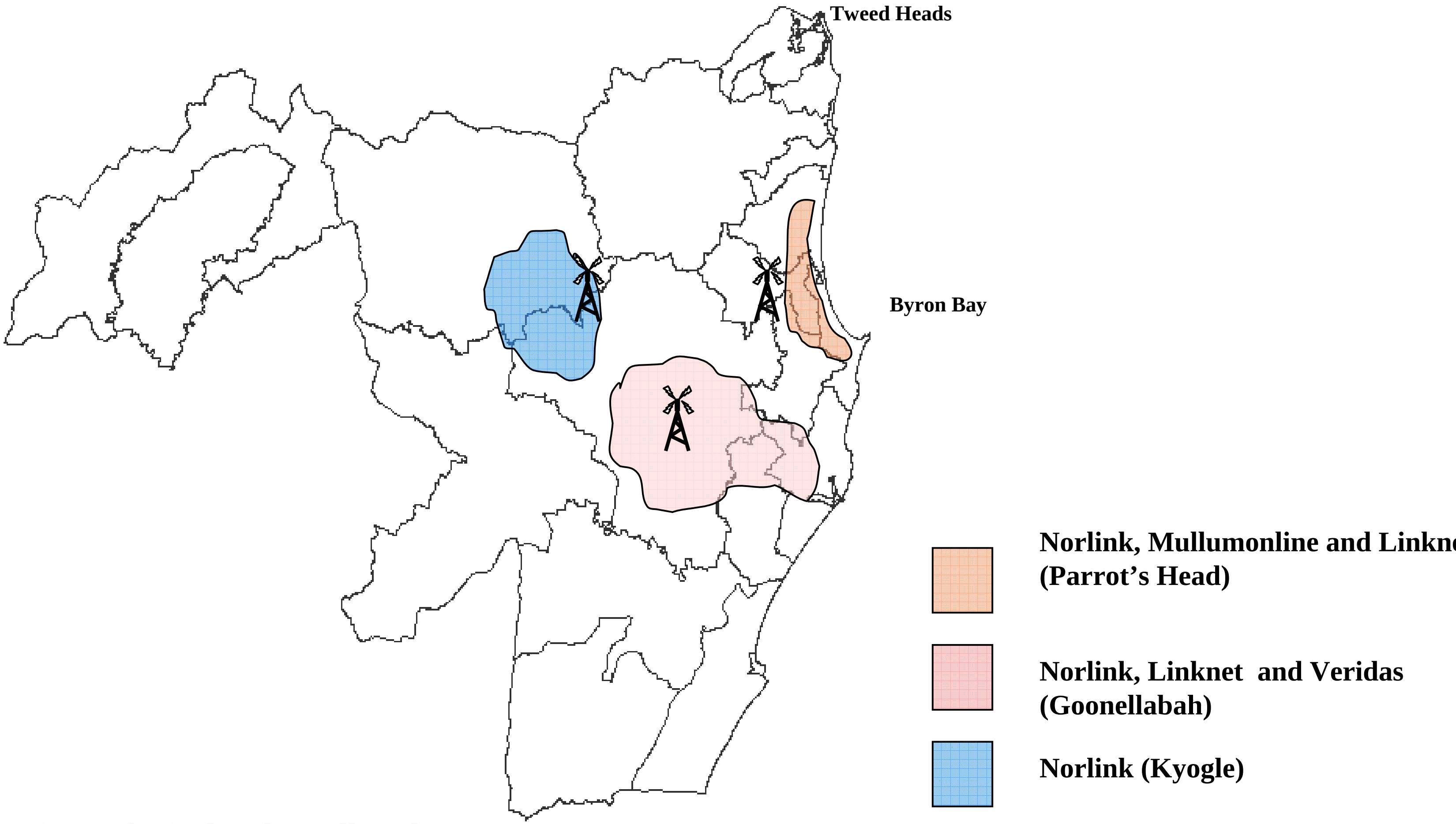
% Population in Hospitality (hotels and accommodation)



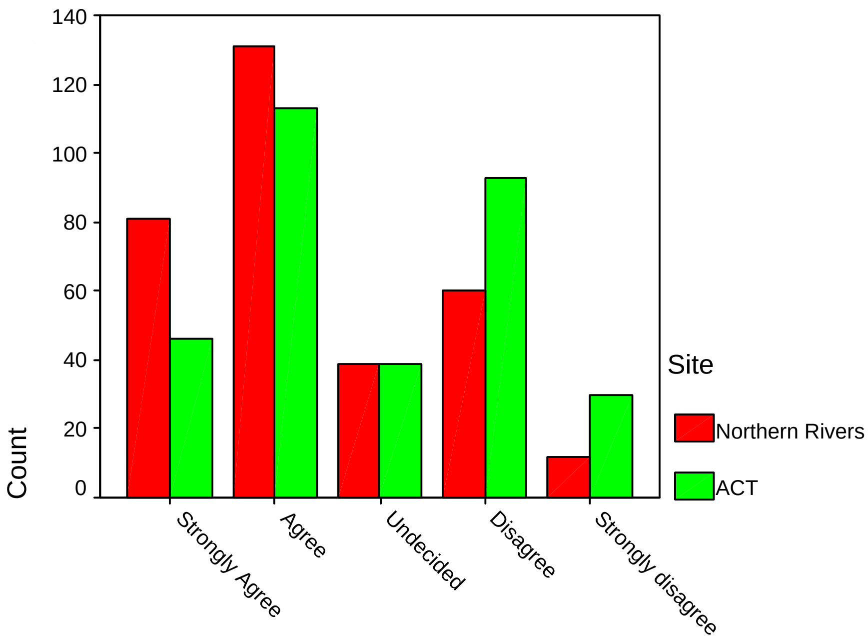
% Population in Health Services



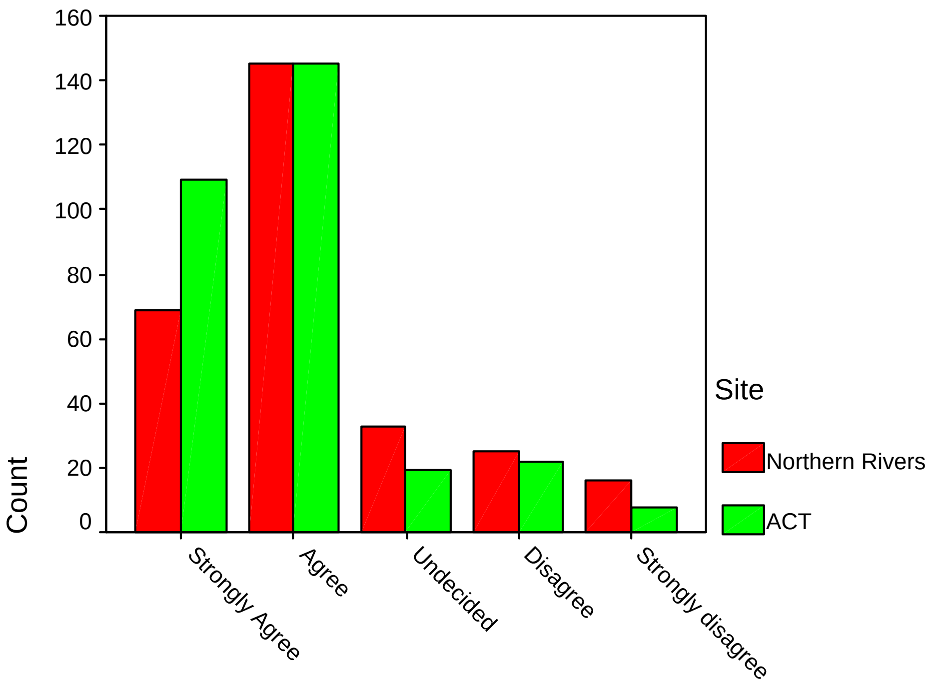
Estimated ADSL coverage based on location of enabled exchanges (late 2003)



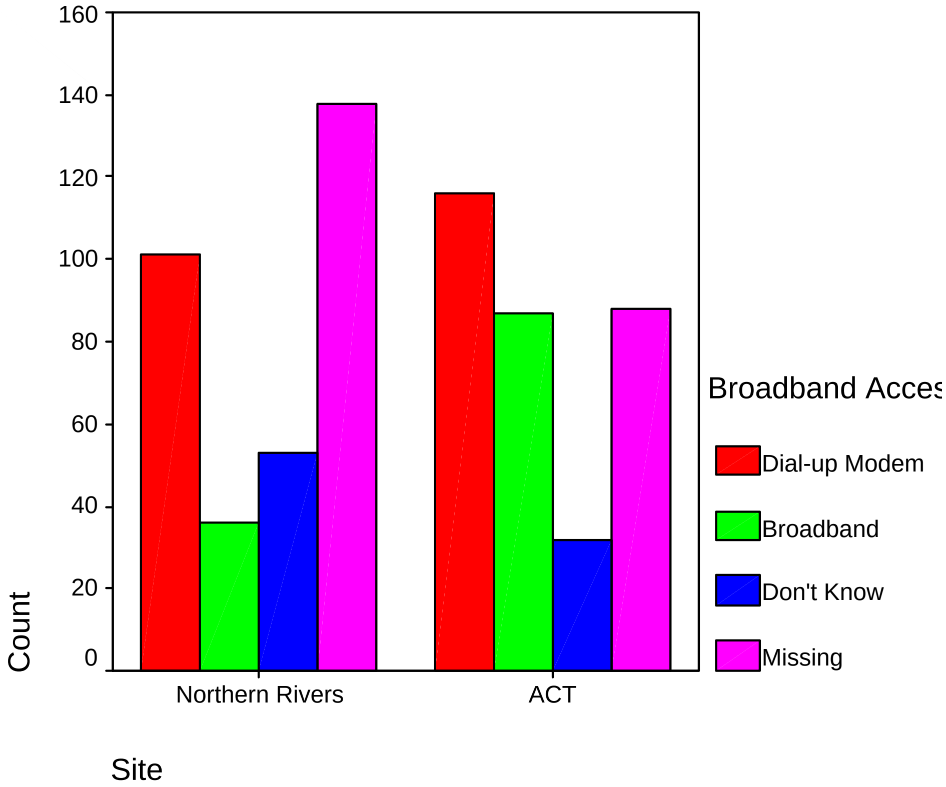
Estimated wireless broadband coverage

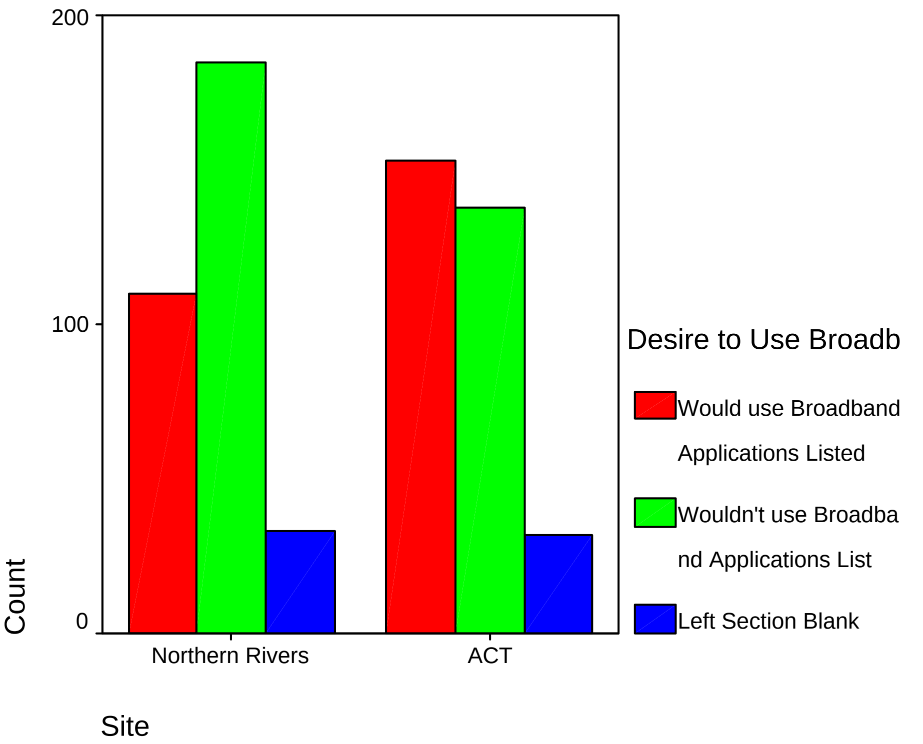


“As a society we have become too dependent on computers and high technology”



“The Internet is providing me with opportunities I didn’t have before”


Count
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Northern Rivers
ACT
Site
Broadband Acces
Dial-up Modem
Broadband
Don't Know
Missing


Count
200
100
0
Northern Rivers
ACT
Site
Desire to Use Broadb
Would use Broadband
Applications Listed
Wouldn't use Broadba
nd Applications List
Left Section Blank

Drivers of Digital Content Creation

1. Access to Bandwidth and Equipment

Early broadband adopters - content creators not just consumers (creators of webpages, blogs, contributors to Internet communities).

2. Access to knowledge

Virtual and face-to-face networks

Institutional and organisational drivers

Organisations with multiplier effects in knowledge transfer:

education;

research; and

media institutions

3. Competitive stimulus: whetting the appetite for creation

Events and competitions

Local competitors/collaborators in the industry

Community spaces

Policies that have helped content creation in regional areas

- Bandwidth access schemes (HiBIS, NTN and broadband in education institutions);
- Unlicenced spectrum bands;
- Work-for-the-dole programmes in conjunction with community media organisations;
- Competitive arts funding and state/national competitions;
- Support for community groups;
- Regional TAFE and higher education institutions - teaching and research sectors;
- Some regional development programmes.

Impediments to Digital Content Creation in Regional Areas

- Bandwidth charges (traffic not connections);
- Cheap overseas labour markets;
- Trickle-down models of service delivery - lag damaging;
- Political view that regional residents are service recipients rather than service providers/content creators;
- Disinvestment in education and training in regions and the new push for regional higher education to be ‘teaching only’;
- Restructuring of arts funding - New Media Arts Board (NMAB) and Community Cultural Development;
- Reduced support and greater reporting requirements for community media organisations;
- Lack of forums for information exchange/not seeing the opportunities of new media development - “ when you have a slow moving environment out your window you tend to forget that the world is fiercely competitive and moving rapidly” - Mitra, 2005

The Role of Community Media

- Northern Rivers: rich in community media organisations

Examples

- **TV** - LINC TV (Under ABA review)
- **Radio** - 2NCR, CowFM, NimFM, Bay FM
- **Print** - Echos - Byron Shire, North Coast

- History of political/environmental activism
- History of new media innovation - Pegasus ISP, SCU server.

Community Media

- Convergence is leading to media being a nebulous term
- Community media traditionally combined education and media functions (technology blending)
- Community media allows enhancement of training - space for experimentation with low-cost production/portfolio building
- Provides the region with global networks for content distribution
- Provides forums for creative exchanges - fundraisers, screenings, dance parties, competitions and film festivals

The Case for the North Coast New-media Centre (Media eXchange)

- Concept around since 1993 - Similar to models used in Ireland (Digital Hub) and Korea.
- **Building to co-locate:**
  - LINC TV
  - 2NCR
  - North Coast Camera (video training)
  - NRG - Privately owned ISP/local telco
  - 100 seat Cinema/studio/exhibition space
  - Privately owned Internet café/gaming rooms
- **Services provided:**
  - TAFE training in video and new media production
  - Competitions, festivals and exhibitions
  - Access to high-speed bandwidth and participation in new technology trials
  - Consultancy advice to individuals and local businesses

Future for Digital Content Creation in Regional Areas

- Mobile and wireless applications
- Infrastructure to support development (?)
- Greater integration with global networks and labour/capital markets
- Greater demand for local content design - Front door, back office - geographically more separated
- Lifestyle areas - more retirees and sea-changers /higher demand to work from home